

# **POLITICS OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION IN AFRICA: A CRITICAL REFLECTION ON THE IDEA OF AN AFRICAN UNIVERSITY IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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## **Abstract**

Politics of knowledge production is an attempt to explain the centrality of knowledge in sustainability of human society through time. The article examines how knowledge was produced from the pre colonial, colonial and post colonial Africa and its implications in development. The role of university as the centre piece of knowledge production is interrogated to the extent to which the institution may engineer innovative ideas to catalyse development. The role of politics is also crucial because knowledge production and dissemination operates within specific political trajectories that may constrain or promote it. It is the thesis of the article that Africa's stunted development agenda is largely due to the trajectories of knowledge production and politics associated with it.

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**Keywords:** Key words, Politics, knowledge production, idea of African university, sustainable development

## **Introduction**

The terms knowledge and education are used synonymously in this paper because of their correlation. Hence education is a process of gaining knowledge for useful application whereas knowledge is facts acquired from good education. The article examines the politics of knowledge production in the three phases. Phase one is about the pre colonial Africa and how knowledge was produced and used to sustain humanity. Phase two is about the colonial era and processes of knowledge production to suit imperial motivations. Phase three interrogates the model of an African university, knowledge production and its implications on development. Lastly is the conclusion and recommendation.

## **Pre colonial Era**

Education in Africa before colonialism was meant to preserve the heritage of the community and adapt members to the physical environment and to perpetuate community institutions, laws, language and values inherited from the past.

In societies where Islam had taken root before colonization, Koranic schools were established as well as known established universities such as Fez, Sankore, Timbuktu, Al Ahzar whose focus was Afrikology. The great mosque at Quyravn (836 BC) in Tunisia, Sultan Hassan Mosque and Madrasha and Al hakim Mosque at Cairo in Egypt in the reign of Sultan Saladin from 1172 to 1182 AD ,Sankore Mosque at Timbuktu in ancient Mali in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the great Mosque of Jenne in Sudan in the middle ages served as institutions of higher learning.

### *2.1 Afrikology and the idea of sustainability*

Education was the center piece of sustainable society in pre colonial Africa. Knowledge production in Africa was communal, transferable from generation to generation and was focused on societal needs.

### *2.2 Technology and industrial knowledge*

From Nok in Nigeria, Meroe the so called the Birmingham of Africa, Egypt, inter-lacustrine kingdoms to the ancient kingdoms of Ghana technological and industrial based knowledge was the center piece of a sustainable development. Technology and industrial knowledge was constantly modified and adapted to societal needs (Mokhtar: 1990).

### *2.3 Science of food production*

The transformation from food and hunting economies to food producing economies was based on human ingenuity and the adaptative capacities to meet societal food demands to sustain human generations. Ancient Egyptian history provides examples of such a brilliant transformation of jungle swamps of the Nile delta into a brilliant food production economy courtesy of technological and industrial knowledge (Ogutu and Kinyanjui: 1997).

Africa also boasted of pharmacology to manage both human and animal disease; a critical factor in the sustainable development. Political Knowledge was also passed from generation to generation not only for posterity but to ensure continuity and sustainability of society.

It is noted from these examples that knowledge production revolutionised food production and established complex political institutions courtesy of indigenous education systems. Education in these societies was about adaptation, self reliance and sustainability of generational societies.

### *2.4 Centers of knowledge production*

There were notable centers such as the University at Sankore or the University of Timbuktu in Timbuktu in Mali which was an icon of Afrikology and a great intellectual nucleus. The University had four degree levels. The primary degree level at Quran schools introduced students to the holy Quran, Arabic language and basics in science. The secondary degree or general studies level students were introduced to grammar, commentaries of the Quran, the *hadiths*, prophetic narrations jurisprudence, mathematics, physics, chemistry, history, trade, Islamic business code and ethics.

The superior degree consisted of highly specialized learning where students were guided by professors and it took about ten years. It was equivalent to a doctoral degree. The University also hosted the Circle of Knowledge which was specialized club of scholars and professors. Students who impressed their teachers were admitted to circle of knowledge and became tenured professors. State leaders such as Mansa Musa of Mali, Asaki Muhammad 1 of Songhay, Shayk Amadu of Fulani caliphate of Massina, and Amirs of Sudan often sent questions on major issues to Circle of Knowledge for guidance demonstrating centrality of university education in the sustainability of society. The Circle of Knowledge provided a ruling that was often respected and binding on the issue at hand.

Scholars of Sankore included Ahmad Babu as-Sudane (1564-1627) the final chancellor of Sankore University before the Moroccan invasion in 1593. He wrote more than 60 books in law, medicine, philosophy, astronomy, Mathematics. Others included Muhammed Bagayogo as-sudane al-Wangari al-Timbuktu. He was conferred with honorary doctorate degree from Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Madibo Mohammed al-Kaburi, Abu al-Abbas Ahmad Buryu Ibn Utman, Abu Abdallah, Mohammed Ibn Al Mukhtar An-Nawahi and Ahmed Baba.

These repositories of Afrikology were to be destroyed in the era of colonialism that introduced an education system that was dialectical to African traditions, economic orientation and governance.

### **The Colonial State and Education Policy: A Synopsis**

Colonialism and colonial education Africa were relational. The complex relationship between colonialism and education is best understood by unraveling who and what dictated the kind of education offered and to whom. Since the colonial state was the agent of imperializing powers it is important in a nutshell to understand its nature and dynamics

#### *3.1 Nature of Colonial State*

The colonial state since inception was pacifist, extractivist, predatorial and assimilationist and isolationist. Its structure was pyramidal in which the administrative hierarchy was first informed by notions of superiority of the white race. A practice based on their political philosophy

and the then prevailing social themes in Europe among them social Darwinism, idea of progress and renaissance that became the guiding principles of the colonial administration. These was to be reflected in colonial administrative hierarchy where Europeans occupied top position and Africans the bottom positions

Where colonial administration was assimilationist it was interpreted as an experiment on territorial, political and cultural integration particularly in French colonies. Where the colonial state was isolationist such as the policy of association; it was based on the preservation of customs, manners and religion of the colonized and partly informed by the belief that Africans were inferior to the Europeans and would not acquire the same status as the Europeans. The colonial state went head to implement policies that were relevant to their countries.

The extractive nature of the colonial state was to meet the economic needs of the home country. The colonial economy happened to be extractive, destroyed indigenous modes of production, implanted capitalist structures and characteristics of commodity production, migrant labour and dependency

Colonial education was to fit within these motivations of the colonial state. Firstly colonial education was not determined by Africans. The colonial state and colonial agents and not African determined the kind of education to offer.

### *3.2 Colonial Education as Ideological Pacifier*

Colonial education was an ideological pacifier. Ideological pacification was insidious and humiliating idea that was decisively implanted in African psyches and accepted by African as their destiny that they (Africans and their educational values) were inferior. Colonial education was used to modify the beliefs, thoughts, behaviour and mental thinking of African that they are inferior to the white race. This notion was capture by James MacQueen, British geographer: *If we really wish to do to Africa, we must teach her savage sons that white men are their superior* (Falola 2007). Olive Whitehead in a critical examination of the British imperial educational policy points out that indigenous people were brainwashed to discard their own cultures and embrace western cultures which were supposedly superior (Whitehead 2005). Similarly Frantz Fanon in relation to colonial education asserted that the colonizer did not stop his work of breaking in the colonized until the latter admitted loudly and clearly the supremacy of white values (Seraqueberhan: 2010).

In the words of W.E.B. Du Bois education became an agent of changing one's consciousness ... *this sense of always looking at one self through the eyes of others...* Equally on education Carter Woodson spoke

about “mis- education” of the negro and in this context mis-education of an African during colonialism:

*...the negro's mind has been brought under the control of his oppressor. The problem of holding the negro down, therefore, is easily solved. When you control a man's thinking, you do not have to worry about his actions. You do not have to tell him not to stand here or go yonder. He will find his “proper place” and will stay in it. You do not need to send him to the back door. He will go without being told. In fact if there no back door he will cut one for his special benefit. His education makes it necessary (Falola 2007).*

Ngugu Wa Thiongo in his book *Decolonizing the Mind* is critical of colonial education as ideological pacifier:

*The process annihilates people's belief in their names, in their language in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves. It makes them see their past as one wasteland of non achievement and it makes them want to distance themselves from that wasteland. It makes them want to identify with that which is furthest removed from themselves (Thiongo: 1981).*

### *3.3 Colonial education as dialectical to indigenous knowledge system and culture*

In the words of Frantz Fanon, colonial education apart from emptying the natives' brain of all forms and content it turned into the past of the oppressed people and distorted, disfigured and destroyed it (Fanon 1991). Colonial education became an instrument of destroying indigenous cultures, values, education system and replaced with ambivalent versions (Kahinde: 2006.) It produced instead a class of people in the words of Antonett (1926) ‘*parasites of the working community*’ and Aime Ceassaire (2000) subordinate functionaries, brainless elites and degraded masses

### *3.4 Colonialism and skills development*

Colonial education became a tool for the realization of the social and economic development and social transformation desired by Europeans. The missionaries desired catechists messengers and other handlers, merchants required personnel to handle their business transactions; colonial settler required skilled native labour. Colonial education was tailored to provide required skills to service the needs of the Whiteman in Africa (Urch 1971:249-264; Omolewa: 2006:267-287). Taking Kenya as an example the influx of white settlers in the early 1920 and 1930s and with increased land

alienation there was an increase demand of African labour but their inadequacy in certain skills necessitated training.

The above analysis clearly demonstrates that colonial education had specific mission in Africa:

- i) To service the European political and social and economic motivation.
- ii) Colonial education was far removed the meeting the needs of the African population nor was it geared towards filling the African skill gap in order to meet the social, political and economic demands or make Africans self reliant. Consequently colonial education was not built on African social values and economic needs simply because the colonizer perceived that the black races of Africa had not attained a complete and coherent civilization of their own nor did they possess necessary foundations on which to build up a real system of education (Charton: 1930).
- iii) Colonial education had a different socialization that was in conflict with African traditions and authority structures. For example colonial education was not built on African culture such as language. Indeed Africans were even forbidden to speak their language and adopt to foreign language such as French and English (McGarvey 1977).
- iv) Colonial education alienated, de-culturalised and brought those educated African into direct conflict with their traditions and values.

### **Colonial University Education in Africa**

#### *4.1 The Idea of Colonial University in Africa*

Colonial education in Africa dates back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC when Alexandria was founded as Greek colony and the University of Alexandria was founded in the same century in Egypt. Alexandria developed from Rhakotis an ancient Egyptian town was home to library and many scholars from 295 BC. Alexandria apart from being centre of Hellenic culture it was home to Jewish community and local Egyptians. In 1827 Fourah College in Sierra Leone and Potchefstroom University for Christian higher education in South Africa was founded by Church Missionary Society. Fourah College was affiliated to Durham University in 1876. In Frenco phone Africa it dates to 1896 when France established a medical training institute in Tanarive in Madagsacar, William Ponty training school in Goree in Senegal in 1903 and in 1918 a medical training institute in Dakar. Colonial higher education begun to take shape leading to the establishment of universities that were affiliated to major universities in the mother countries.

Colonial university education had a different motivation as reflected in the following discussed points.

#### *4.2 Failure to locate University Education on African Needs*

In 1936, the Secretary of State for colonies appointed a commission under Earl De La Warr on the development of higher education in East Africa. Its findings became the basis of British policy on university education in tropical Africa. The report noted that basing University education in Africa on African needs would in effect be limited. From the onset it is clear that idea of colonial university in Africa was not based on indigenous knowledge or its aim to serve the needs of the African populace.

#### *4.3. Failure to Indigenize the Curriculum*

The report also noted that European education was perfect. Though the report saw an anti- thesis between the needs of African society and European education that was to be imposed from outside. It concluded that universal higher education could simply not be based on the cultural peculiarities of emerging African societies. The report further noted that there was a risk of indigenizing African universities in terms of curriculum by losing acceptance by the international fraternity of universities

#### *4.5 Structural Dependence*

Institutions of learning in Anglophone, Lusophone and Francophone Africa were structurally linked to the imperial colonies. Indicating lack of autonomy. The imperial colonies recommended the setting of university education in line with structures established at home. For example the 1936 De La Warr report and the Asquith commission on higher education in the British colonies of 1943 recommended the setting up of university colleges in association with University of in the United Kingdom such as the University of London. .

In West Africa Walter Elliot Commission that was set up, recommended the setting up of two regional universities in the Gold Coast (Ghana) and Ibadan (Nigeria) in 1948 for the whole of British West Africa. In East Africa Makerere University college was established. In Anglo – Egyptian-Sudan, Gordon University College was established. The Universities colleges that were set were subjected to following conditions indicating lack of autonomy for the local institutions. These conditions were replicated in other European colonies.

There were also political and economic reasons to the set s. The colonial authorities wanted to insulate Africans from dangerous political ideas modeled along the American black liberation theology. In America black iconic figures like Booker T. Washington had found colleges for black Americans which were also attracting African students hence exposing them to revolutionary ideas. This realization prompted the colonial authorities to

establish university colleges under strict supervision in order to insulate students from dangerous political ideas (South Hall, 1974; Mills: 2006)

When it was absolutely necessary for students to go abroad as in the case of British colonies there were several British universities that absorbed colonial students at Bristol, Liverpool, Belfast, Sheffield, Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham, Nottingham, Southampton, Exeter, and Wales. This universities trained African graduates for public service whose design was colonial in structure and operation.

University education served a specific training to fill certain skill gap in the service of imperial economy

#### *4.6 External Curriculum, examination regulations and awarding of degrees*

The Universities in tropical Africa were subjected to external curriculum. They were to teach for instance the University of London degree programmes. The Setting and marking of examination was regulated by the University of London. Degrees given were those of University of London. All these were aspects of imperializing university education in Africa. In Belgian colonies of Rwanda and Burundi University education followed the Belgian model. In French colonies such as the democratic republic of Congo the University of Luvanium (1954), University of Lubumbashi (1956) were certified copies of major universities in France. In all Franco- phone Africa all colonial diplomas and certificates were until 1968 issued French Ministry of National Education (Evans 1970). In Lusophone Africa university curriculum, examination regulation and awarding degree was issues by the Portuguese ministry of education (Cross 2003)

#### *4.7Funding and Facilities*

The satellite campuses were dependent on British government for funds and other university facilities. This was similar in French colonies where funding and management was done by France.

#### *4.8 External Oversight*

In the British colonies the university colleges were not independent for they were regulated by two important institutions in Great Britain namely the inter University Council for guidance, policy, academic appointments and University of London for approval and control of details of degree regulations. In Franco phone the French Ministry of National Education was the oversight body that regulated the activities of the universities in her colonies. The Universities in French colonies such as the University of Dakar were linked to University of Paris and Bordeaux. When the University of Dakar was established in 1951 a decree was issues from the French ministry of National Education naming it as the eighteen the university in French higher education system (Lulat, 2003:21). In Lusophone Africa with reference to the University of Lourenco Marques (University of Eduardo



Mondlane) established in 1962 in Mozambique and the University of Luanda in Angola (1968) were governed the state under the ministry of education. (Cross2003)

#### *4.9 Colonial University Education as Cultural Imperialism and Assimilation*

The practice was not different in French colonies in Africa. The French system of education and in particular university education was informed by the policy of assimilation whose underwritten motivation was to expand the French culture abroad. The French policy on university education and in general colonial education was hampered by inadequate funding, pedagogical limitations, language and cultural barriers and its elitist orientation. The French government also relied on the outreach efforts of Catholic and Protestant missionaries in the provision of education. However, it was always a very slender system and slow in growth. There was no mass educational growth.

Among the earliest institution of higher learning include the Cheikh Anta Diop University that grew out of several French institutions set up by the colonial administration. In 1918, the French created an African medical school to serve white population. In 1936, the institute for the study of African culture was opened in Dakar. In the 1950s the, the French administration expanded institution and, added science faculties. In 1957, a new campus was constructed and, attached to the University of Paris and University of Bordeaux. This became the University of Dakar and in 1987 renamed Cheikh Anta Diop University.

#### *4.10 Pauperized University Education*

Côte d'Ivoire had a more pauperized education system with the first secondary school opened in 1928. There were more serious pedagogical and socio-cultural dilemma inhibiting the growth of primary and secondary school system and even university education. More crucial French administration perceived higher education, as a potential long-term threat. Colonial officials were worried that further education might nurture a climate of resistance against the established colonial order. Because of such misgivings, higher education was never developed to its full potential until after independence (Burns 1965; Watson and Furley, 1978). This was a similar practice in Portuguese colonies of Mozambique and Angola where university was limited to the children of Portuguese colonists and African comprador class such as son of chiefs (Cross, 2003).

#### *4.12 Training Needs*

The idea of colonial university paid more attention to needs of the colonial empire than to the needs of local people. University education was designed to train men for the bureaucracy and in the service of the colonial empire. For example Felix Eboué after receiving French education training

was appointed governor of Chad in 1938 and from 1941 to 1944 served as the governor of French Equatorial Africa, a federation encompassing all of the French territories in Central Africa, including Chad, Gabon, Republic of the Congo, and the Central African Republic<sup>1</sup>

#### 4.13 *De-culturalisation of Africans*

The formulation of education in the colonial period contrasted sharply with the cultural background of African societies pointing out that African universities that emerged in the colonial period did not assume an African identity nor did they embrace Africanist approach. Colonial higher education was completely de-culturalised and deliberately failed to integrate multi cultural traditions of African societies. It relegated the traditional African education system to the margins and more so undermined African value system .Consequently it produced graduates who were unable to fit into their cultural backgrounds. This is clearly illustrated by Ali Mazrui:

*Western education in Africa conditions was a process of psychological de-culturalisation. The educated African became... a misfit in his own village... when he graduated... His parents did not expect him to continue living with them tending cattle or cultivating the land (Mazrui,1978:16).*

#### 4.14 *Elitist*

It created social classes that did not exist before the advent of colonialism. It was elitist and minimal in nature because its beneficiaries were small. For instance the French education system focused on the on a minority of the most talented and tried to develop their capabilities to a very high level They were separated at an early age from the majority (streaming); because education of the majority did not have as high a priority. In the C'ote d'Ivoire, only the sons of local tribal chiefs were selected for secondary education and later sent to France on scholarships for postgraduate training.

The education of personalities like Houphouet-Boigny who became Côte d'Ivoire's first president in 1960 is an illustration of the fact that colonial education was elitist .The son of Baoulé tribal chief, was educated in private elementary schools and then sent to Dakar, in French Senegal, to attend the prestigious medical schools. After graduation in 1925, Houphouet-Boigny returned to Côte d'Ivoire, where he practiced medicine. He later became mayor of Abidjan, was elected a congressman to the French National Assembly, and was ultimately appointed to a cabinet minister post in Paris.

#### 4.15 *It was Eurocentric*

Colonial education was European biased. This was reflected in the medium of instruction and in the curriculum. Teaching was conducted in the language of the colonized. The French for instance always insisted on French as the language of instruction. The education system followed the French pattern, with oral and/or written final exams administered at the end of the year. All courses at the university were taught in French and only those who had acquired a high level of proficiency in French could acquire education. The curriculum was almost exactly the same as in France. The textbooks were the same and this is illustrated in history textbooks among them “Our ancestors the Gauls” This ironic statement opened up history textbooks in France and in its colonies.

## **University Education in Post Colonial Era**

### *5.1 Afrocentricity or Afrcanisation of University Education?*

Independence of African countries was modeled along the nationalist ideology and the spirit of Afrocentricism against the backdrop of Eurocentric colonial mentality. These two contending ideologies caught up with university education in the early years of independence. This was to be seen in the expansion of university education and Africanisation of faculty. As there was speedy process to this; two areas that lagged behind was the Africanisation of the curriculum and funding of the institutions. Though there was a move away from curricula originating in the colonial period by incorporating indigenous knowledge there still is large retention of curriculum content and theory associated with colonial period. The emerging universities were caught in the web of Africanisation and yet offering educational courses that drew heavily from European models. Even so the language of instruction ironically was the language of the “oppressor”. The idea of creating an African university from the onset was caught up in these contradictions.

In the first decades of independence there was demand to open the education system to wide majority of African populace. This led to quantitative transformation of university education due to pressure from African political elites to open up university education to the African population to train Africans and replace Europeans in the civil service. The populist stance that was strongly espoused by the political bourgeois did not change the high cost model of higher education of the colonial yesteryears.

### *5.2 Bridging the man power Gap.*

The UNESCO conference held at Tananarive in 1962 and the Ashby commission on post secondary education became major land marks in the history of university education in Africa. The UESCO underscored the economic role of the university in nation building through the supply of high and middle level specialized manpower. Further to this, the Ashby report

emphasized that post secondary education was a national investment and attempted to establish the link between higher education and national development by recommending the expansion of higher education for man power training in order to meet the need of the emerging nations in Africa. From the onset university education was perceived by the political elites and those in government as a functional service through the provision of highly skilled manpower for national development. Governments began to put funding and training emphasis in those fields such science and technological in order to bridge the gap between knowledge and industry. But the quantitative transformation did not in any way bring about intellectual renaissance.

### *5.3 Global Policy Environment and its Impact on University Education in Africa*

Major international institutions such as the World Bank shape the policies of university in Africa also made several recommendations that affected university education in Africa. The policies apart from their economic value were political. The 1988 World Bank report; *Educational Policies for Sub Saharan Africa: Adjustment, Revitalization and Expansion* criticized the role of higher education in Africa in national development . The Policy paper indicated that higher education is a poor investment. The policy paper further indicated that the social rates of return from investment were higher for basic education than for higher education. African governments were impressed upon to give more emphasis on basic education if they were to get assistance from the lending institutions. The immediate effect of this policy was the withdraw of bilateral support and funds from higher education by lending institutions and other donors. Individual African countries also withdrew from supporting their own institutions (Teferra, 2005).

The stringent policies laid by Multi-lateral bodies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund had serious implications on education in Africa, The introduction of fees, student loans and withdraw of student personal allowances led to strikes, riots and campus closures in Kenya, Zambia, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast and Senegal.

Financially strapped governments also begun to shift the cost of higher education to students and guardians. This is because governments in Africa perceived higher education as more of a private good than a public one. Private institutions begun to emerge in Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe (Stone and Teferra, 2004). The net effect of this was the deterioration of higher education prompting the world Bank to issues a series of policy papers; *Higher Education: the Lessons of Experience* (World Bank 1994); *Higher Education in Developing Countries: Peril and Promise* (World Bank and UNESCO 2000); *Constructing Knowledge Societies* (World

BanK:2002). The policy documents identified major areas of reform in higher education in Africa;

- i) Promotion of private institutions in higher education
- ii) Modification of funding policies
- iii) Redefinition of role of government in higher education
- iv) Promotion of quality and equity
- v) Role of university in sustainable human development in knowledge and information society

Consequently the Association of African Universities and African government begun to implement policies under the guidance of the World Bank. Whether the policies produced positive results or not is another matter .What is of concern is the manner in which the *yoyo* type of World Bank policies impact on Knowledge production and manpower trainings to fit into the various sectors of the economy.

#### *5.4 Research, Publication and University Ranking*

Research is the powerhouse of knowledge production and publication is the process by which knowledge s organized and disseminated. Countries in the North invest billions of dollars in knowledge production. In 2006 and 2007 USA companies invested 212 billion dollars and 219 billion dollars in research (Naik, 2007). India spent 24 billion dollars in research n 2004;China 94 billion dollars' in research Sub Saharan Africa contributed only 1 percent of global knowledge in 1991 and 3 per cent in 1997( Gilliard 1991; Gilliard ,Hassan and Waas 2005)

Africa remain at the bottom of knowledge production ladder because African scientists depend on funding from the north ,pursue methodologies and academic values governed by international regimes. Though the procedures followed in the course of undertaking research, peer review process to authenticate and legitimize research, styles and formats employed are universal; they are perpetuated by forces that are located in the North and tend of serve a different developmental agenda

These instruments that are used to establish institutional hierarchy, status and prestige and quality are crafted in the north. This does not imply they are not important litmus test at international level. The top quality institutions are based in the North while African are at bottom

No African University is the list of 100 Global University in the world. According to THES\_QS (2007,2008) no African university appeared in in the top 200 except the university of Cape town which was in the 200<sup>th</sup> place. The THES-Qs 2010 rankings there is no afrcan universt in the top 300. . Accordng to Webometrics 2007 ranking of top 100 African Universities the top eight are in South Africa. The science citation Index and social sciences citation index are index used to measure research productivity and impact at global scale.

The Webmetrics 2012 University Ranking is a ranking system based on university web presence or volume of web contents such as scholarly articles. The distribution of the Universities by region (January 2012) is as follows:

Region	Top 100	TOP200	TOP 500	TOP1000
North America	79	99	178	398
Europe	16	66	212	415
Asia	3	20	66	104
Latin America	2	9	19	39
Oceania	1	6	20	35
Arab World	0	0	2	5
Africa	0	0	3	5

### *5.5 Brain Drain and implication on sustainable development*

The motivation among African scholars to migrate to the north and to some of the well do countries in south range from economic, political cultural and personal reasons..The massive outflow of talent undermines the productive sectors such as health, engineering, manufacturing and education including universities.. Though the international knowledge market is liberalized it is designed in such away as to disadvantage Africa. Africa is losing expertise more that it can produce it. The most affected countries include Zambia, Ethiopia with more than its 80 per cent of medical doctors working abroad; .Nigeria Ghana and Zimbabwe. (Weutzman, 2007) It is estimated that Africa loses over \$ US 13 billion in brain drain annually while the North contribute only a third of this figure in talent development This is extractive imperialism.

### *5.6 Language of instruction*

The language of instruction in African universities still remain to be Afrikaans, Arabic, English, French Italian, Portuguese and Spanish (Teferra,2003) African languages such as Zulu and Kiswahili despite their recognition by the African Union have limited usage at university level. This is one powerful legacies of colonialism.

### **Was the African University a developmental University?**

It would appear that what was conceived of an African university by national governments and donors was the idea of a developmental university. The World Bank emphasized on the increasing role of university in economic development by recommending greater differentiation of institutions, development of private universities, diversification of sources of funding for public universities and giving priority to quality and equity..

The words of Julius Nyerere captures conception of developmental university

*The university must put the emphasis of its work...to the nation in which it exists.. we in poor societies can only justify expenditure on a University of any type if it promotes real development of our people (Nyerere, 1966:)*

The words of Nyerere echoed the expectations of many African political elites who expected African universities to take a developmental approach and tackle issues of poverty that bedeviled the emerging African nations. The service function of the university was also emphasized by international donor like USAID by offering grants to university for projects related to development.

The conception had a more retrogressive effect on the university as a agent of development. Universities in Africa were webbed up in the rigidity of bureaucratic control and neo- colonialism. Funding by national governments created close ties between government and national universities. This curtailed academic freedom, and promoted high handedness in university operations. Most governments in Africa used funding and budget cuts as tool to punish universities, the faculty and student radicalism critical of autocratic regimes. Many universities such as the University of Zambia, Ghana (Lagon), Makerere suffered major budget cuts because of deteriorating economies and of hostile relationships with their national governments. The web of neo colonialism did not either spare the universities in Africa.. This is clearly illustrated in the case of C'ote d'Ivoire;

*...When Houphouet-Boigny became Côte d'Ivoire's first president in 1960, he favored the elaboration of an educational system that would both democratize and retain most of the elitist characteristics of his own schooling. He chose not to follow the path of radical Africanization favored by Guinea and Ghana, and against the criticism of neighboring African nations decided instead to continue a close alliance with France ...politically, economically, and educationally (Côte d'Ivoire - Educational System—overview - French, Secondary, School, Boigny, African, and Houphoueth<http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/308/C-te-d-Ivoire-> site visited on 21/7/2011 ;11:41 AM).*

### **African university and the social climate**

University education in Africa developed completely divorced from its social cultural milieu. It is important to note that Africa's nation states were a creation of colonial hegemony that coerced tribal grouping into one or several administrative units and later imposed an education system from a different social setting. The social determinism refers to how social structures and social pressure shape and determine the outcome of education system. In traditional societies social values, pattern and structures shaped the pattern of education system. Independent African countries inherited an education system that that was shaped by a different social cultural milieu. The process of decolonizing education system has been slow. Many times universities in Africa are indifferent to the social climate in which they operate in because they are alien to it. University education fail to integrate the multi cultural traditions of the society in which they operate largely because many of them had their roots in the colonial order. They simply manifest lack of a social responsibility to society. Consequently they are unable to mediate *between* cultural diversity and nation building, ethnic contours and political disjuncture.

### **African University in a globalised Environment**

The era of globalization is characterized by erosion of state autonomy and the rise of powerful non state actors. The net effect of this is the growth of academic capitalism and commodification of knowledge. Academic capitalism which has led to commodification of knowledge is perceived to be forged alliance between the forces of neo colonialism, capitalism and multinational corporations emphasizing on a profit model in higher education before the needs of society. Academic capitalism is critically changing the face of African universities. African universities are adopting corporate profit driven model and abandoning the social needs of their societies. There is also a systematic attempt to annihilate indigenous knowledge that is relevant to social and economic realities of African societies. Academic capitalism is also supportive of increased funding into science and technology courses but this also detrimental to continent because scientific and technological development must be mediated by human values; a critical component of humanities and social sciences disciplines. The burgeoning of E-learning in Africa is also open to criticism as many students and universities do have access to right equipments and infrastructure. More E learning is devoid of African voices and context. Various countries in Africa have witnessed a resurgence of entrepreneurial skills to provide higher education to meet the industrial and service economy. This has seen the growth of higher education in those sectors that closely aligned to the market economy. There is also decline of educational



sectors or fields that are perceived as non market driven. Government policy and donor community seem to be supportive of this trend. There is dilemma whether higher education is meeting needs of society or it simply transforming social need into profitable ventures for the kleptocracy. More so the high rate of unemployable graduates flags out cardinal questions as to whether education and industry merge.

### **Challenges**

Three major challenges that face university education in Africa is the phenomenal student growth against limited facilities, financing of higher education and quality. It would appear that the Idea of an African university is unable to navigate through these issues in the provision of university education. There is also the challenge of mediating between development and national building; between social need and profit; between market driven courses and provision of knowledge for posterity.

### **Conclusion**

The idea of an African university should be multi faceted. It should be revolutionary and reclaim the dignity of the Africa by focusing on Afrikology and propagate its universality.

The university should be at the forefront of laying the structures of nationhood and nation building. One of the major challenges in Africa is the failure to bridge the contours of ethnicity, divisive politics and social classes. University education should invest in multi cultural studies to create awareness and enable society to appreciate the multi ethnic nature of our societies

It is equally important for an African university to be developmental by forging strong links with industry so that knowledge is not dysfunctional but have an immediate value or utility to industry.

In the era of globalization the idea of an African University should navigate Africa out of the dangers associated with the movement including cultural, economic and scientific imperialism.

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