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Higher Education, Higher Education Mergers and Africanisation

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Introduction

Itumeleng Mekoa

It is important at the very outset, to mention important documents essential for analysis of the South African education system. These are, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (May1996), the South African Schools Act (1996) No. 84, the Higher Education Act (1997), which all impacted on the committee for development work on the National Qualifications Framework (Feb1996). To these we may add: African National Congress, A Policy Framework for Education and Training, Johannesburg (1994), the South African Qualification Authority Act (1995), the Gender Equity Task Team and the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (1998). These are authentic testimonies of national consensus, national values and ideals and the kind of education required to fulfil them. They influence the philosophy of education required in South Africa. They all deal with values in a society free from domination in political, economic, social and personal relations.

The South African constitution for instance stipulates that every human being has the capacity and the will to determine his destiny as individuals without infringing on the rights of others. There are also various agencies established in terms of the constitution to protect the rights of individuals in society, place of employment and other avenues. These are the South African Human Rights Commission, the Commission for Conciliation, Meditation and Arbitration, the public protector, and the labour court. To what extent do the new educational policies of South Africa translate these fundamental elements of human rights into reality particularly with regard to education still remains to be seen.

Transformation of Education and Higher Education in General in South Africa

Any talk about the transformation of higher education and education in

general in South Africa is incomplete without reference to the history of this country. The history of education in this country is littered with elements of injustice, inequality, repression, denial etc. Access to higher education and education in general has been a problem particularly for African people. Various indicators have shown clearly that access to higher education in South Africa has been unequal (Bunting 1994: 39).

A major inequality that exists in the RSA's higher education system as indicated by Bunting as early as 1994 is that: blacks have a very small chance compared to whites of entering the university system; and most of those that do will have to do part-time studies by correspondence through UNISA or will have to do undergraduate diploma studies through Vista University (Vista University has since merged with UNISA) (Bunting 1994: 41). The major causes of these inequalities in access can be found in the socio-political circumstances of South Africa, and again in particular in the unfavourable schooling offered to blacks. Other factors which have generated these inequalities according to Bunting (1994: 42ff) have been economic ones, and the language and admission policies of universities, which to a very large extent still impact on universities.

1. Black applicants and students from economically deprived background have generally not been able to afford the fees charged by House of Assembly [which does not exist anymore] residential universities. Black students at these universities have often struggled to maintain their registrations under increasingly heavy debt burdens. [This is still the case in the new South African democratic dispensation.]

2. The admission policies of all but a few ... residential universities have tended to be based on requirements that successful applicants achieve a certain level of performance in their matriculation or school leaving examinations. This has led to the competition for places at these universities being inherently unfair – applicants from disadvantaged black [background] have not been able to compete on an equal footing with applicants from privileged white schools. [Little change has also taken place on this issue in the new South African dispensation.]

3. The use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction by the majority of the ... residential universities has effectively closed off these universities to the majority of black applicants. [Little change has also taken place on this issue in the new South African dispensation.]

4. Most of the ... English medium universities have language requirements which affect the admission of black applicants. Applicants are required to display a competency in English which is determined normally by the subject symbol, which they achieve for English in the standard 10 or matriculation [Grade 12] examinations.

5. Poor school results in mathematics also have an effect on the admission of blacks to universities. Their failure to achieve a prescribed minimum in mathematics at matric level [Grade 12] prevent many black applicants from gaining admission to faculties of agriculture, commerce, engineering, medicine and science.

6. A final inequality, which must be highlighted, is that of access of female South Africans to universities. Even though their share of total university places is dropping, male students have a majority share of both the total enrolment of universities in South Africa and the first time entering undergraduate enrolment.

Another level of tertiary education, the technikons (now referred to as Universities of Technology), shows that access at this level has been a problem. These institutions, like universities, have admitted many more white students than black students. Another point about access to technikons is that of gender inequalities which were more serious than those at universities (Bunting 1994: 45). In addition to the problem of access to higher education in South Africa, has been the inequitable spread of qualifications offered between the residential universities – who have been established to serve mainly the interests of whites. White students have benefited from the past and current university systems, which enabled them to follow professions, which few blacks have accessed. The history of higher education therefore in South Africa, is that of inequality and inaccessibility.

Therefore any debate about the role funding for higher education, for example has to play today, will be incomplete without recognizing this history, already sketched by Bundy in 1994, and still continuing to detrimentally impact on the tertiary sector in South Africa.

Challenges Faced by the Higher Education System in the New South Africa

One of the key challenges facing the higher education system is outlined in the White paper: 'to redress past inequalities and to transform the higher education system to serve a new social order, to meet pressing national needs, and to respond to new realities and opportunities' (White paper 1.1).

The white paper goes also further to indicate the role of higher education in a knowledge-driven world as three-fold:

- Human resource development: the mobilization of human talent and potential through lifelong learning to contribute to the social, economic, cultural and intellectual life of a rapidly changing society.

- High-level skills training: the training and provision of person power to strengthen this country's enterprises, services and infrastructure. This requires the development of professional and knowledge workers with globally equivalent skills, but who are socially responsible and conscious of their role in contributing to the national development effort and social transformation.

- Production, acquisition and application of new knowledge: national growth and competitiveness is depended on continuous technological improvement and innovation, driven by a well organized, vibrant research and development system which integrates the research and training capacity of higher education with the needs of industry and of social reconstruction (White paper 1.2).

The challenges also have to be understood in the context of the impact of the

phenomenon of globalization on the higher education system throughout the world, especially the changes and alignments it requires (National Plan for Higher Education 2001: 65). The 21st century has also brought changes in the social, cultural and economic relations as a result of the revolution in information and communication technology. In South Africa the victory over apartheid and the dawn of democracy forced policy-makers to change the social, political, economic and cultural institutions in order to democratize them. There is no doubt this set South Africa on a road with many challenges but also opportunities. Whether South Africa is ready to meet these challenges remains to be seen. Higher education therefore faces a multiplicity of problems. These are the socio-political pressures for democratization, globalization and deficiencies within the higher education system itself.

Added to this complex of issues, it is further imperative that relevant perspectives which are all having a profound impact on the character of the higher education system currently, such as Higher Institutional mergers and the challenges 'Africanisation' pose for Higher Education, be addressed. This issue of *Alter*nation addresses a selection of these issues, especially as it has been experienced at the recently established University of KwaZulu-Natal.

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The Challenges Facing African Thought and African Universities in the 21st Century

Itumeleng Mekoa,
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Introduction

We live in an age of intellectual uncertainty, of paradigmatic change and disorder – the age of globalisation and information technology. This is also the age of post-isms, from post-modernism to post-colonialism or vice versa. As Zeleza (1997: 494) explains:

> This turbulence is a product of new currents and ferment in both scholarship and society, of transformations in disciplinary epistemologies and global politics, especially owing to the rise of feminism, the evident crisis of both socialism and capitalism in the contending blocks of the old cold war, and the unravelling of the project of national liberation in the post-colonial world. While no national or regional narrative is immune from fragmentation, it is the decomposition of the dominant 'Western' metascripts that has received most attention, which is frequently credited to the rise of post-modernism in western academies, a creed now being exported to the rest of the world with the missionary zeal of past Eurocentric discourses. Often overlooked are the challenges and confrontations from African, Asian and Latin American Studies, which have played a vital role in the fragmentation, explosion, and deconstruction of the hegemonic western paradigms.

These deconstructions, which are often articulated in post-structuralist theories, are desirable (Zeleza 1997: 494). They become desirable when they attempt to dismantle western discourses. 'from their pedestal of universal claims to knowledge, they strip western modernity of the will to truth, and open up spaces for previously silenced and dissident voices' (Zeleza 1997: 494). The idea of African thought in education, there can be no doubt, has likewise made an important impact. It is however important that the related changes needed in higher education not be driven by outside organisations and markets.

At one level, therefore, it is of concern that higher education institutions should be responsive to the changes that are taking place in society in virtually every country globally. Even though the nature of the changes differs from region to region, and even within some regions, specific changes often vary from place to place (Zeleza 1997:494), we can assume that there are major challenges that higher education institutions have to face. At another level, scholars should take into consideration the new contexts, methods, insights, and theories that have revolutionized many disciplines, so much so that old western approaches have lost their paradigmatic prestige and coherence in favour of more localised – and in our context, African – perspectives.

This article focuses on this complex of issues in the light of the attempt to develop African thought in university education.

The Challenge of Globalisation

Global restructuring of economies has had a major impact on higher education systems of the world. According to Kuseni Dlamini the term globalisation:

> Describes some key aspects of recent transformation in world economic activity, which includes deregulation, financial liberalisation, and technological advancement as well as the socio-economic and political effects associated with these (cf. Vil-Nkomo 1999: 273).

Dlamini further states that:

> Deregulation and financial liberalisation have accelerated the movement towards an integrated global market economy with serious implications for the domestic and foreign macro-economic [realities] for policy formulation. Technological advances are making natural frontiers more porous as the movement towards an orderless world gains momentum regardless of what states do or do not do (cf. Vil-Nkomo 1999:274).

Africa mainly functions as raw material and resource for global capitalist economic forces. In terms of the forces of globalisation, this situation may worsen. Even though globalisation presupposes that the world interact and collaborate on economic matters, the picture portrayed by Dlamini means that the third world or so-called developing world will be even worse off than during colonial times when many indigenous cultures and societies remained intact despite the destruction of these cultures. With the arrival of multi-national companies from imperialist countries like the USA and Britain, local economies may be threatened with extinction. Supported by international market forces like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, it seems as if local economies will suffer through this one-sided approach – there is no mutuality, or even mutual investment and equal collaboration in this scenario. Even more important is that globalisation cannot be exclusively treated as an economic entity. It is a package of economic, cultural, imperialist domination in the post-colonial era. It is colonialism undercover or dressed differently. African intellectuals and politicians have not conscientiously addressed this complex of issues.

Africa in the Global Economy: What Implications for Politics and Policies?

Timothy Shaw argues that Africa and even non-African states have to recognize strategic economic and political changes brought about by the global economy. These are:

> (a) Internationalisation of state in terms of relations and directions of economy, polity, society, ideology, population, culture, etc.

> (b) Divination of the state given cumulative impoverishment, internationalisation adjustment, and communication.
> (c) Erosion of democracy at the national level [giving rise to] the irony of democratic practices being advocated and advanced when they are simultaneously becoming less efficacious.
> (d) Rise of sub- and supra-state actors from internal as well as international 'civil society' in response to novel challenges and opportunities as the state declines.
> (e) The rise of new 'mix' actors coalitions aimed at responding to the dialectic of globalisation and fragmentation, which may yet come to challenge and even supersede the established neo-liberal hegemony in terms of labour/employment, gender, ecology, democracy, peace/security, etc.
> (f) Popular pressure for sustainable democracy at all levels, from sub- to supra-national – i.e. from local communities/NGOs to non- and inter-governmental organizations at regional and global levels in part in response to continued tendencies towards authoritarianism, corporatism, anarchy, irregularities, etc.
> (g) Redefinitions of foreign and security policy in terms of both actors (i.e. not just states) and content (i.e. new highly politicised issues of crime, drugs, ecology, migration/refugees, gender, etc.) leading towards 'popular' responses along with 'new' functionalism and religionalism; i.e. defined by communities rather than only by governments (Shaw 1995: 1).

In such a context the sovereignty of the state will be eroded, rather than being peripheral in confronting these global issues. Africa will be forced to toe the line. Africa will be a property of the international market forces worse than it was in the colonial period. The emergence of global policy has encouraged not only formal constitutional changes, national conventions and multi-party elections, but also facilitated the expansion of global NGO networks and the popularization of the notion of civil society. These new social movements tend to cluster around a set of contemporary issues, from democracy, peace, and security to human rights. They also have the tendency of demanding accountability and transparency from governments. When the sovereignty of the state is eroded, such a state cannot singularly redirect its

economy. The interest of global capitalist organisations is always profit, not local development. Hence they always demand peace and security from the local governments to protect their interests, and they pay lip service to the imperatives of human rights. Globalisation, therefore, as it defines this relatively new world order might prove to be more harmful to local communities and their aspirations than what they have experienced hitherto at the hands of Western imperialism and colonisation. The question here remains as to the kind(s) of local and national politics and policies needed to intervene in this complex.

African Culture in the Global World

Africa has been to Europe a source of raw materials and cheap labour for its commercial enterprises and lucrative profit. In order to fulfil this historical mission and profit realization in Africa, the foreign organisations had to subdue or even destroy local systems catering for the needs and aspirations of local communities. There is no respect for different cultures of the world. The dominant culture is European culture, which is universalized. This needs to be studied and analysed in local contexts. As Vimbi Gukwe Chivaura (1998; 1990) wrote:

> After we have understood Europe's destruction of African cultural and economic institutions and their replacement by its own as business, then, we will be in a position to know the appropriate action to take to liberate Africa's creative potential from continued repression and exploitation by Europe.

From the evidence of history, European culture in Africa cost lives, human worth, and minds (Chivaura 1998: 191). European culture as part of a global package indicates nothing else but the extinction of local cultures. This comes about when African leaders and intellectuals turn away from their own cultures and put 'the destiny of their countries in European hands' (Fanon cited in Ngugu 1981: 77). With globalisation European systems in Africa will continue with their hegemony. By continuing to embrace these systems, African leaders and intellectuals continue to turn their backs on their own people, culture, and history and surrender themselves to Europe for direction, in political, social, cultural, and moral matters.

European culture in Africa has also become big business. This culture is sold to Africans through the media, science fiction, magazines, school textbooks and other sources of information. Many movies Africans watch on television and movie theatres, and songs broadcast on radio, promote the culture and values of Europe, with no relevance to Africa. English language has become no more a language of international communication but marginalization and subjugation of local languages. Ousmane is right therefore by saying that:

> New leaders of Africa today are all-ears to Europe ... and speak to their people in European languages. Neither their radio, ... television, ... press nor cinema uses the national languages, which are not used at any level in the schools either. The media, which should constitute right schools to replace the traditional evening gatherings ... to create awareness, are simply ... relay stations for the former mother country. African capitals are chief provinces of New York, Paris, Rome, London, Madrid and Lisbon. There is the mad rush of the African heads of state to be received in Moscow, Peking, Washington, London, Bonn, ... extending their cups, vying with each other for prestige, ... claiming non-alignment and hypnotizing slogans ... based on no economic or cultural reality in their respective countries (Ousmane 1979: 9f).

African leaders and intellectuals therefore through global culture have lost their minds to Europe by losing their own culture. They have become possessed and a property of Europe. Carter G. Woodson says:

> When you control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his actions. You do not have to tell him 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 cut one for his special benefit (cf. Smitherman 1986: 201).

Global culture propagated by Europe ignores the fact that Europe and Africa are different. They have different beliefs, cultures, and institutions that impart opposite cosmologies. Not only does globalism ignore the fact that Africa is different from Europe but that the entire globe is multicultural.

Local cultures therefore are undermined over against the superior European culture, with no recognition of the multicultural complexity of the world.

Competing Ideological Interests in Africa

The other problem, which retards the development of African thought in Africa is posed by the many competing ideologies in Africa. Various institutions, governments and organisations have contributed to the problems of postcolonial Africa. In some cases their involvement was direct and in others, indirect. African countries after independence gained admission to the United Nations and for the first time they could participate in international diplomacy. Imperial powers whether West or East competed for Africa's allegiance. Various factors led to this ideological competition. Africa had rich mineral wealth with a potential for foreign markets of its goods. The Eastern block particularly led by the Soviet Union contributed largely to Africa's liberation by assisting the liberation movements with some of them later constituting the first democratic governments of the new independent states. After independence, Africa became a terrain on which the West and East competed for access, power and influence. As a result Africa was ideologically divided between the capitalist West and communist East during the so-called cold war era. Ideological division led to Africa's underdevelopment in that the West was hostile to African countries allied to the communist East. It had a paternalistic attitude of preventing the spread of communism. All countries allied to the communist East and advocating communist or socialist policies could not benefit from international financial institutions like the IMF and the World Bank. By the end of 1990 virtually all previously socialist governments of Africa had crossed over to the West and pursued capitalist policies even though they also were not working in and for Africa.

Competition among Academic Disciplines in the Education Market

Due to their commitment to reason, one would not expect competition among and within academic disciplines. However, the last few years have witnessed a growing tendency of competition among various academic disciplines, particularly between the social sciences, natural sciences

information technology and economic management sciences. This was brought about by various factors. The first factor was the recent market appeal to educational institutions to produce graduates who will be able to fit the demands and requirements of markets. Educational institutions therefore had to be responsive to the needs of the markets and redesign their curricula according to the dictates of the markets. The second factor is that there is an emphasis on science and technology. It is seen as essential for human development. Solutions to human problems like poverty, illiteracy, and other social ills, it is assumed, can only be found in science and technology. This has led to the third factor, which is a dwindling of student numbers in the social sciences and a lack of financial support in these disciplines. In fact, the sciences and economic subjects are better subsidized than their counterparts in the social sciences. African Studies, a branch of the social sciences, therefore, has to compete for survival with the sciences and market-related subjects. As an African discipline which attempts to bring African insights into the predominantly western education, it is perceived as something archival and of no value for modernity.

For some, a productive focus on African contexts and cultures has no contribution to make in education. Western universalistic education and thought is seen as essential not only for knowledge production but also for human progress.

The Under-representation of Black Academics in Universities

There is an under-representation and a low academic status accorded African academics in most South African universities particularly in the previously white institutions. Recent media reports reveal that ten years of democracy have not brought any equity in most of South African universities. Racial inequities have been implicated in the persistent problem of under-representation and the low academic status of African members in South African higher education institutions. In the academic hierarchy, which favours whites over blacks, the latter academics limit their contribution or influence. Higher education institutions are greatly influenced by, and cannot be analyzed apart, from, the larger social, historical and cultural context. Attempts to improve the status of African academics must therefore

consider how higher education institutions particularly in South Africa are characterized by an academic hierarchy, which assigns schools to various prestige levels based on numerous criteria (e.g. student assessment, staff/ student ratio, and selectivity of admission). The opportunities available to African students in South African universities are linked to their degree of access to higher prestige colleges and universities. Historical and ongoing discrimination, the operation of the academic prestige hierarchy contributes to the maintenance of substantial educational inequality. African academics on the other hand face barriers due to the historical, cultural, and social factors that frequently have shaped their relations with white academics generally. Such inequities explain the lack of African thought in academy.

African Intellectual Thought: Ideological and Political Dimensions

One of the most significant obstacles to revolutionary fundamental changes in Africa is mental colonialism, conservative, reactionary and dependent thinking of the African intellectuals or so-called educated class. Trained by colonial masters, African intellectuals are mere students ready to carry out orders of their former masters. Their intellectual training has bred a dependency syndrome in them and left them with the pride of Cambridge, Oxford, London universities where they have been trained to be better colonial agents. Hence they cannot be entrusted with the mission of liberating the African continent. Chango Machyo explains the condition of the African intellectuals:

> Generally speaking, the educated African is not a revolutionary. And the higher up in the educational ladder he or she climbs, the more conservative, reactionary and dependent he or she becomes. The role of the educated African is always to seek to be on the safe-side where the chances of falling into things of eating are brightest. Those who seemed to be revolutionary during their youth, slowly but surely shed their revolutionary outlooks as they grow up. They change their colours and preach 'moderation' and 'we must be realistic' joining the continuing efforts being made to derevolutionize the masses – the peasantry and workers – and urging

> them to forgive and forget (Machyo 1996: 58ff).

The same sentiments are expressed by Chancellor Williams:

> ... Black officials once elected to office, turn out to be as conservative and reactionary as any [white] congressman from the backwoods of Mississippi (Williams 1987: 333).

African intellectuals and revolutionaries, on ascending to power – whether university or state – sometimes carry out the instructions of the ex-colonial masters even more rudely than the masters themselves. Intellectuals' dependence has betrayed the African revolution for political emancipation. Their intellectual training has not only tamed them but also made them better civil servants of the colonial and now globalising systems. Their education has not made them to be better leaders, radical policy-makers, project initiators and developers nor critical thinkers. This is the kind of education that Walter Rodney describes as 'education for subordination, exploitation with creation of mental confusion and the development of underdevelopment' (Rodney 1976: 264).

The history of the struggle for liberation in Africa was intended to change this white paternalism still embraced by African intellectuals including potential leaders. The 'talking on behalf of blacks' and 'thinking on what is best for them' that was acted by colonial masters is still continuing even after colonialism. White people in Washington, London, and Paris decide and blacks implement the decision. When those decisions do not bear fruits they (blacks) are chastised for being inexperienced, corrupt and undemocratic. And the same African intellectuals continue to go to these Western countries for more advice and expertness, which in the end does not work in the African context. Sometimes the African intellectuals make as their own 'the ideologies and value systems of the oppressors ... even when the result is demonstratively against themselves' (William 1987:331). In Africa, foreign ideologies and value systems are embraced in the name of progress, modernization, and even globalization. The development of African thought in both academy and politics will only be possible the day African intellectuals make an ideological shift to Africanism.

Towards the Realization of African Thought: Recommendations and Prospects for the Future

The nature of the challenges highlighted above, primarily those that deal with the challenges African thought faces, imply that solutions are not going to come easily. The recommendations that one can make must point, in the first instance, in the direction of improving African education, namely fostering the capacity for autonomous critical African thought.

a) Developing Critical and Autonomous African Thought

With the above analysis of dominant western thought in education and society, there is a need to change this paradigm. Only critical African thought can change the status quo. The reconstruction of the African consciousness will solve the problem of the imposed western consciousness on African people. Such consciousness is present among African students in particular – to aspire to be white – but then they loose their identity in the process. The same argument can be extended to other dominated groups of the world. One of the goals of African thought is to help reconstruct African culture. The goal is not to recreate the past African culture or to go back to some point in history. The goal is to create and reconstruct African values and genius in the context of hostile Western thought and culture. It is only when there is a developed African thought, that African people will be able to play a central role in world affairs. From this perspective, African thought will enable African people to determine their future.

b) Establishing South-South Collaboration

The second recommendation is that African universities should explore models of education, especially institutional, from other areas such as China and India. In these countries the education system is modelled according to the culture(s) of these countries. African universities can forge long-term links for cooperation with universities or research institutes in those countries because they have demonstrated some intellectual or ideological independence from the West (Crossmann 2004: 336).

c) African Intellectuals must Resist some Research Conditions from Foreign Donors

African intellectuals are financially dependent sometimes on foreign assistance for research. There can be no doubt that foreign donors have

rescued the scholarly enterprise in some African universities from penury. The assistance or foreign donation or funding has not come easily. African intellectuals had to pay a high price in terms of academic freedom and critical African thought. The conditions that usually come with these funding are around themes, parameters, methods and objectives that are defined by them. As David Court candidly admitted, the relationship between the donor and recipient is coherently unequal:

> One has resources, the other would like them. In order to gain access the applicant can hardly avoid adjusting the manner of his approach to accord with the known or perceived preferences of the donor in the process of self-restriction and hence reduction of freedom (cf. Zeleza 1997: 37).

According to Court, donors can also 'eliminate' work in certain areas by constraining the field to certain 'fundable' and manageable focuses as well as their linking to the meeting of 'certain bureaucratic schedules and goals' (cf. Zeleza 1997:37). Thus the donors often set the research agenda. They have succeeded in reinforcing dominant western thought and interests in Africa. They have succeeded to delegitimize or marginalize the production of critical African intellectual thought. African intellectuals therefore should resist such conditions from foreign donors and determine the African research agenda themselves.

d) The Promotion of African Languages as Medium of Instruction

The promotion of African languages (what is sometimes referred to as mother tongues) as medium of instruction appears to be an absolute necessary condition for the recovery and revalorization of African thought and culture. South Africa is a multilingual country with eleven official languages. African people also constitute the majority of the people of this country. The constitution of the Republic of South Africa also guarantees the right of every citizen to communicate and enjoy all the benefits and services of the country in his/her language. The problem in South Africa particularly among white academics is that they still associate African languages with underdevelopment. Just like the indigenous knowledge systems, African languages are seen as of no value when it comes to modernization and

development. They believe that they should be confined to African communities because they are too archaic to enter the academic arena. African languages cannot continue to be undermined in this way. Language is a gateway to defining African identity, to freedom, empowerment. Ngugi wa Thiong'o explains:

> The choice of language and the use to which language is put is central to a people's definition of themselves in relation to their natural and social environment, indeed in relation to the universe (Ngugi 1986; 4).

Matene has this to say also about the centrality of language in human society:

> ... that nobody takes an attitude of neutrality or abstention, when the question of which language in education is raised. It is the acquisition of language, which makes the relationships between life and language very understandable. To silence somebody can mean killing him. And people would sacrifice their own life to defend their language (Matene 1999:165).

During his induction for the second term in office, President Thabo Mbeki took his oath in six official languages, namely siSwati, seSotho, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, English, and Afrikaans. By doing so, President Mbeki demonstrated the importance of our languages before the nation and the entire world. Repeated gestures like these may help to change people's attitude towards African languages. The renewal of Africa will not be possible if African languages are not given their right place. The Department of Education has already initiated a policy to bring tertiary institutions to have one of the African languages as medium of instruction.

Conclusion

African thought, we can conclude is not making headway in academia because of the continuing dominance of western thought in education. This is well translated in Western ideological thought in the education systems of

modernity, of which the universities in Africa have become the locus par excellence. Mafeje writing on the need for African intellectuals to re-Africanize their thought, reminds them of the guiding principles in Socratic thought: 'Know thyself' (Mafeje 1992). Looking at African philosophical thought, Mafeje finds grounds for reconstruction and self-realization (Mafeje 1992). Unwritten accounts of African people transmitted in stories, legends, myths, and so on reflect African philosophical thought in various ways and are a source of high significance and authenticity. In the history of its contact with Western countries, conflict, liberation and since the mid-twentieth century, independence, African intellectuals have developed a body of scholarship and thought that forms the basis from which African thought and the identity and practices of African universities can be fostered and further developed. This is the challenge facing African intellectuals in Africa – to develop national policies of higher education and academic policies on the foundations of African thought.

This will challenge Western systems of thought, that it has something to learn from Africa, particularly in terms of the rampant globalism the world is suffering from at present. Universities in Africa cannot continue to be mere copies of the Western universities. As public institutions African universities have to be shaped by and influenced by their social context on the one hand, and on the other, to address the challenges posed by globalisation. This article attempted to pinpoint some of he key issues. What has to follow is a meticulous addressing of each of these, from within the university's disciplines, and on the foundations of African thought.

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The Philosophy of Funding Higher Education after the Cold War: The Case of South Africa

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Introduction

In this essay we consider issues pertaining to the funding of higher education in contemporary South Africa. This is predicated on the premise that before and after constitutional change in 1994 the philosophy underlying and informing the funding of higher education in South Africa is similar to that which prevails in the West. This premise cannot attain validity without a reflection upon the complex history of the relations between South Africa and the West. For this reason a sustained focus upon this history shall form an essential ingredient of our approach. Here the intention is not to repeat much of what is already well established and well-known history. Instead, the intention is to highlight out of this history specific moments and issues that pertain to the subject of our essay. The historical approach we propose to pursue here is also intended to identify the differences and nuances between the South African philosophy of the funding of higher education and, the West in general but the United States of America in particular.

The thesis examined in this essay is that funding for higher education has been founded and guided more by the pursuit of ideology and less by the pursuit of knowledge for the deeper and better humanization of the human race. Education and learning through the ages in the West, but in particular since the Second World War[1], have yielded significant wisdom

[1] The name, Second World War has been the subject of critical reflection from African voices. These have expressed doubt about the meaningfulness of this name and its application (see Langley 1979: 394-416). In view of these critical voices, we use the name Second World War with reservation.

which continues to have a life of its own in the abstract. In the concrete, practical everyday world, education and learning manifest rather little effect on the humanization or civilization of the human race.

> Our current traditions and institutions of learning, when judged from the standpoint of helping us learn how to become more enlightened, are defective and irrational in a wholesale and structural way, and it is this which, in the long term, sabotages our efforts to create a more civilized world, and prevents us from avoiding the kind of horrors we have been exposed to during the twentieth century – wars, third-world poverty, environmental degradation (Maxwell 2000: 31).

The persistence of these 'horrors' into the twenty-first century calls into question the contribution of education and learning towards making humanity wiser and demonstrate such wisdom through the humanization and civilization of the human race.

The principle of autonomy with respect to institutions of higher learning derives its meaning from the intricate but continual struggle of these institutions against external interference designed to subordinate and guide their pursuit of knowledge according to the dictates of the civil authority or the provider of funds. This is one reason why it is necessary to examine the philosophy that inspires and guides the funding of higher education.

Our examination of the above thesis shall be pre-eminently philosophical. It will identify the presuppositions, principles and ideas underlying, founding and guiding the funding of schooling in general but higher education in particular. This latter is our principal point of focus. In opting for this philosophical approach we intend to conduct a rigorous and critical analysis of the presuppositions that underlie the funding of higher education with particular reference to South Africa. It goes without saying then that ours is a historico-philosophical essay on the funding of higher education.

The Cold War and the Logic of Funding

The end of the Second World War inaugurated the period of broken and fragile peace in international affairs. It was characterized by a legitimate

desire to take stock of the spoils of war[2] and, on that basis to chart the way for the future. This desire could be fulfilled only under peaceful conditions. Yet, the experience of Hiroshima and Nagasaki shattered the peace yet to be born. It changed the ghost of the atomic bomb into the reality of the nuclear arms race. The race has since never come to a complete standstill. Nor is the imperative for comprehensive, total and complete nuclear disarmament anywhere near realization. Thus the heat of the outbreak of another war was suppressed through fear of a deadly and devastating nuclear war. It is the suppression of this heat which inaugurated the Cold War: a war pursued in defence of contending ideologies. According to Yergin (1977:5,48), from whom we have borrowed the expression – shattered peace – when the Second World War ended

> The victors never did find the tie that would hold them together. The Grand Alliance gave way to a global antagonism between two hostile coalitions, one led by the United States and the other by the Soviet Union – those two countries standing opposed to each other as nation-states, as ideologies, and as economic and political systems. After 1945 the two superpowers were able to approximate a state of general mobilization without general war being the consequence .... the United Nations itself represented a yoking together of two separate approaches to the post-war order – a Wilsonian peace, reflected in what became the General Assembly; and a Great Power peace, embodied in what became the Security Council. The genuine tension between these two approaches remained concealed for most of the Second World War. After the war, the conflict became explicit, and a major source of the Cold War.

From the end of the Second World War, the struggle for ideological dominance necessitated and dictated the nuclear arms race in the context of the Cold War. It is in these circumstances that the logic of funding higher education institutions emerged. According to this logic, funding had to be focused in two areas. One was the humanities and the social sciences. The

[2] We have borrowed this expression from Kent (1989).

reasoning here was that the Westerners had to understand and appreciate their political and economic institutions to the extent that they would be willing to lay down their lives if these were to be forcibly abolished by external non-Western forces. This was the sphere of the battle of the mind for winning minds. Thus the Western academic-scientific population had significant and visible expert Sovietologists, among others, whose expertise was placed in the service of the struggle against the ideology championed by the Soviet Union and its allies.

Another area which deserved massive funding was the military-industrial complex. Research aimed at the development of new weapons especially nuclear weapons, was funded in order to maintain a leading edge over the Soviet bloc. Indeed it was in this period that the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) was born (Yergin 1977:362). This underlined the critical importance of the military as well as the necessity to forge ahead with the development and refinement of weapons in general and, nuclear weapons in particular. The Soviet bloc also responded with the birth of the Warsaw Pact (Holsti 1972:1; Remington 1971:10.). Thus two military-ideological alliances were poised against each other in pursuit of ideological dominance. Developing and perfecting the means of war was construed as an important complement to the transmission of knowledge and the defence of knowledge. Under the guise of the interests of state, both the Humanities and the Social Sciences were married to the Natural Sciences for the preservation of the state. This logic of funding encroached upon the autonomy of higher education by using the power of funds to determine and prescribe the meaning and the priorities of education. The university in the classical sense was under threat (Pan 1998:111:76-83). When this threat was actually carried out then the university became corporatised (Bourdieu 1989: 102-107) but not without struggling for the protection and preservation of its autonomy.

Although South Africa was formally not a member of NATO, she nonetheless enjoyed a privileged status within the Organisation. For example,

> In November, 1972, the NATO Council requested SACLANT (the Supreme Allied Command in the Atlantic) to devise plans for the 'protection' of supply routes around the Cape. It wasn't until May, 1974, however, that the NATO press secretary admitted that SACLANT had this secret authorization to develop contingency plans for the protection of the Cape route. He also revealed that NATO planners were examining options to be applied not only in wartime but also in 'crisis situations' .... A key element in South Africa's military links with NATO is the highly sophisticated communication and surveillance center, Silvermine, just north of the Simonstown naval base (El-Khawas & Cohen 1976:39f).

No wonder then that in time, South Africa – with the assistance of some members of NATO (Cervenka & Robers 1978: 2) – acquired nuclear military capability (Barnaby 1977: 19). In these circumstances, South Africa adopted, adapted and pursued the same logic of funding as that which prevailed in the West.

Reactions to the Logic of Funding in Defence of Ideology

The logic of funding higher education during the Cold War did not escape the notice of those inside and outside the spheres of political authority, the owners of finance capital as well as social critics. Accordingly, there were reactions from these spheres. Those who inadvertently made the nuclear arms race a reality through their research in Los Alamos and other scientific laboratories, the scientists, had some moral scruples and hesitated on the wisdom of disclosing to politicians that nuclear weapons were scientifically feasible (Jungk 1956: 15-36). Thus even before the atom and neutron bombs were dropped on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki those scientists who had long entertained moral and political scruples about their participation in the manufacture of the bombs rallied together and mounted a crusade against the object of their own creation. This crusade crystallized into a solid movement of opposition to the use of the atom bomb as an instrument of war. One of its major achievements was the drawing up and the presentation of the 'Franck Report' to the United States of America Secretary of War in June 1945 (Jungk 1956: 311-320). This stamped the United States as the first home of the popular movement for nuclear disarmament.

The 'Franck Report' was the product of five years' work on the significance of nuclear power – both in the sphere of physics and in the

probable application of this power in the field of war. The participants in that work described themselves as 'a small group of citizens cognizant of a grave danger for the safety of this country as well as for the future of all the other nations, of which the rest of mankind is unaware'. Clearly, the main concern of the participants was the safety of all the nations of the world in the face of nuclear weapons. Since the existence of these weapons posed mortal danger to all the nations of the world, the participants considered that the rest of mankind was entitled to become aware of this grave danger. Seen from this perspective, the fundamental thrust of the 'Franck Report' was that while the United States of America could, in the prevailing context of international politics, lay a unilateral claim to its own defence, the emergence of nuclear weapons signified the need, at the very least, to couple the notion of national defence with the concept of genuine multilateral international security. The authors of the document put it as follows:

> In the past, science has often been able to provide also new methods of protection against new weapons of aggression it made possible, but it cannot promise such efficient protection against the destructive use of nuclear power. This protection can come only from the political organization of the world. Among all the arguments calling for an efficient international organization for peace, the existence of nuclear weapons is the most compelling one (Jungk 1956: 312).

The wish of the scientists then was that science should serve and promote peace not merely in the sense of absence of a hot war but through the position of human life under conditions of the progressive humanization and civilization of the world. Away from this aim and, under the grip of financial power which had acquired 'unwarranted influence' over government, the scientific endeavour becomes an instrument for the degradation of human dignity and the renunciation of civilization.

The scientists were not alone in raising their concern over the moral and political significance of nuclear weapons. In his farewell address, January 17, 1961 on the 'Military Industrial Complex', United States of America President Eisenhower expressed a similar concern when he sounded the following warning.

> In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.

The creeping power of finance aimed at influencing government in the interest of industry was thus the source of concern for former President Eisenhower. Even more worrisome was the prospect of the subtle but efficient control over government by the military-industrial complex and, indeed by financial capital in general. The realization of such a prospect would mean the subversion of democracy turning the elected government into an instrument of finance capital. There is little doubt that President Eisenhower's apprehension, expressed more than forty years ago, is true in our time as Noreena Hertz's *The Silent Takeover* testifies. It was indeed an accurate foreboding incomprehensible and invisible only to those committed to wilful blindness.

Writing eight years after President Eisenhower, Noam Chomsky, the social critic and activist, cautioned against the uncritical immersion of the university into the aims and programmes of the ruling elite and industry. He argued for what Bronowski (1971:241) would define, two years later, as the 'disestablishment of science'. According to Chomsky,

> The universities will not be able to isolate themselves from the profound social conflict that appears likely .... The linkage of the universities to other social institutions ... guarantees this. In fact, there may be very serious questioning, in coming years, of the basic assumption of modern society that development of technology is inherently a desirable, inevitable process; and with it, a critique of the role of the university in advancing knowledge and technique and putting it to use .... On the other hand, there is little doubt that government research contracts provide a hidden subsidy to the academic budget, by supporting faculty research which would otherwise have to be subsidized by the university. It is quite probable that the choice of research topics, in the natural sciences at least, is influenced very little by the source of funds .... It is doubtful that scientific education can continue at a reasonable level without

> this kind of support. Furthermore, radical students will certainly ask themselves why support from the Defense Department is more objectionable than support from capitalist institutions – ultimately, from profits derived by exploitation – or support by tax-free gifts that in effect constitute a levy on the poor to support the education of the privileged. It is impossible to escape the fact that the university is ultimately a parasitic institution, from an economic point of view. It cannot free itself from the inequities of the society in which it exists. At the same time, it is dependent for its existence as a relatively free institution on values that are upheld in the society at large (Chomsky 1973: 310f).

It is clear, in the light of the foregoing, that there is a link between the university and society at large. Also, the university is also linked inextricably to funding provided by either the government or finance capital. It is this bounding which renders the university dependent upon the government and finance capital. Herein lies the vulnerability of the university as it is structurally poised to be influenced by the wishes and prescriptions of government and finance capital. It is also necessary to recognize the potential of students to influence the university and, by implication society, towards either complacent acquiescence to the existing situation or a radical critique of the status quo demanding change. Furthermore, Chomsky argues that the advancement of science and technology unaccompanied by a profound understanding of the instrumentalisation of these disciplines is unlikely to be morally responsive. As such it will deepen the social inequities through the protection of the privileges of the few at the expense of the many. Despite its bondage of dependency upon the ruling elite and finance capital, the university ought to defend morally responsive social values questioning the systematic and structural impoverishment of the many for the delight of the few.

It is significant that at the time when Chomsky wrote, the 'student revolt' was a common experience across the West. Students posed the fundamental question: what university, where the university? The meaning and function of the university in society had to be re-examined in the light of these questions. The questions could neither be ignored nor taken lightly for many reasons. One obvious reason was that the students could in future

occupy positions of influence in the affairs of society. To have them ill-equipped for this task would spell disaster. Another crucial consideration was that not all students had the natural inclination or the will to pursue only science and technology. This consideration underlines the point that the strict division between and among the various branches of learning is founded on the untenable presupposition that the human being consists only of either the scientific-technological part or the creative-artistic part. This fragmentation of the human being is reflected in the fragmentation of science and society (Bohm 1971: 27). But the human being, like the universe of which it is part, is a wholeness. Therefore a wholistic orientation and representation of learning is to be preferred to the dominant fragmentative paradigm. The inflexible dogma of specialization is a serious obstacle to the attainment of a wholistic education.

The logic of the strict division between the natural sciences and the Humanities and social sciences was based on philosophical dualism designating two categorially different spheres in one single human being. This in turn became the seedbed for fragmentation in science and society. It nurtured the ascent, backed by finance capital, of science and technology to primacy over the Humanities and the social sciences. The primacy of science and technology reinforced the 'unwarranted influence' of the 'military-industrial complex', of finance capital over democratic government. Thus the door was cast wide open for the substitution of democracy with tymocracy (Singer 2003: 20), that is to say, money-based governance. Economic globalization is illustrative of the tymocratic form of governance.

Economic Globalization and the Funding of Tertiary Institutions

The fall of the Berlin Wall signalled the end of the Cold War. For the Germans, it held out the promise of the reunification of the two Germanies separated by war and ideology. For many Eastern bloc countries it opened up the glittering lure of Western style democracy and intensified the desire to become part thereof. The ideological attraction of the West was virtually irresistible. The 'transition to democracy' became the norm and so the former Eastern bloc countries were dressed in the garb of 'transitional societies'. In these circumstances, the Warsaw Pact was dissolved. One

result of this dissolution was that the military personnel, especially the nuclear scientists, were without employment. At the same time there were fears that if the nuclear scientists were not quickly employed then they could sell their expertise even to those who would undermine the intentions of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. On this basis, the West absorbed some but not all of these scientists. Consequently, the threat to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was not wholly averted.

Another result of the collapse of the Eastern bloc countries was that the vast military weaponry was almost suddenly rendered idle. Accordingly, it remained dangerously available threatening the security of some countries and strengthening that of others. Together with the unemployment of many military personnel this situation gave rise to the corporatisation of the military; a phenomenon which in the past existed covertly. The already cited title of Singer's book, *Corporate Warriors*, describes this phenomenon and, its content defines it.

Instead of dissolving as did the Warsaw Pact, NATO opted for continued existence on the ground – among others, that there was a need to fight 'Islamic fundamentalism' as former NATO Secretary General Willy Claes averred. In the meantime, some former Warsaw Pact countries were admitted as members of NATO and this became the source of enduring concern for Russia. Other former Warsaw Pact countries were also admitted as members of the now expanded European Union. For the former Eastern bloc countries the funding of large and specialized military establishments including the colossal propaganda machinery ended and, was considerably reduced with the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact. The absorption of the redundant labour force into other sectors of employment became problematical and, continues to be so. The situation was comparatively better in the NATO countries. Even so, the problem of assimilating a strategic labour force into the Western employment structures without affecting the prevailing unemployment negatively was not solved completely. These changed conditions did have an impact on the philosophy of the funding of higher education.

One of the implications was that finance capital took charge of determining, through 'unwarranted influence' the course and priorities of funding higher education. It determined that science and technology would receive priority funding. The logic here was that these areas promote

advancement and economic development despite the irreversible damage that they inflict on the environment – thus, exposing humanity to mortal danger became the higher value than the preservation of human life. This calls into question education's credentials as the vehicle for the humanization and civilization of humanity. This questioning is reinforced by the fact that finance capital, inspired by the principles of the 'Washington consensus' (Kelsey 1995:18), preserved the structural unemployment inherent in the free enterprise economic system, to the detriment of the many. The attribution of all this to finance capital is rather too easy and unfair because governments were not necessarily coerced to succumb to the 'unwarranted influence of finance capital'. The point is that

> Western governments saw themselves facing a stark choice between the promotion of profit through the free market, and the protection of the welfare state through government intervention. Pressure and encouragement from international economic interests made the latter increasingly difficult, even for governments of a social democratic stamp. The neo-liberal model implemented through structural adjustment became dominant. Attributing this solely to the hegemony of international capital is too easy. Governments of individual countries, especially those free from 'conditionalities' attached to loans, still had policy choices about which path to take and how far and how fast to move (Kelsey 1995: 17).

In these circumstances, economic globalization announced its advent.

Reactions to Economic Globalization

Reactions to globalization continue to be many, varied and even mutually contradictory. Those concerned over the boundless pursuit of profit cautioned against further advancement along this path of self-destruction. Soros is among those who belong to this category. He argued, in defence of capitalism, that:

> The functions that cannot and should not be governed purely by market forces include many of he most important things in human

> life, ranging from moral values to family relationships to aesthetic and intellectual achievements ... yet market fundamentalism is constantly attempting to extend its sway into these regions, in a form of ideological imperialism. According to market fundamentalism, all social activities and human interactions should be looked at as transactional, contract-based relationships and valued in terms of a single common denominator, money .... But market fundamentalism has become so powerful that any political forces that dare to resist it are branded as sentimental, illogical, and naïve. Yet the truth is that market fundamentalism is itself naïve and illogical (Soros 1998: xxvi-xxvii).

Soros advances an intricate but persuasive argument demonstrating both the naivety and the illogicality of market fundamentalism. He also argues that the capitalist system is like an empire except that it does not have sovereign title to territory over which it exercises authority. Despite this defect, the capitalist system does influence and, even controls the lives of people. It consists of two spheres, namely, the centre and the periphery. The former is 'the provider of capital' and the latter 'is the user of capital. The rules of the game are skewed in favor of the center' (Soros 1998: 105). In this game 'competition' without moral scruples is the golden rule to 'success'.

> The internal disposition to belong may remain – it may be argued that it is innate in human nature – but in a transactional market, as distinct from a market built on relationships, morality can become an encumbrance. In a highly competitive environment, people weighted down by a concern for others are liable to do less well than those who are free of all moral scruples. In this way, social values undergo what may be described as a process of adverse natural selection. The unscrupulous come out on top. This is one of the most disturbing aspects of the global capitalist system (Soros 1998: 199).

For Soros, it is questionable to abide by the rule of moral unscrupulousness just in order to attain monetary 'success'. Even if there may be justification for playing the game of competition according to its rules, 'we ought also to be concerned with the rules by which we play' (Soros 1998: 197). And here

Soros poses the challenge of moral sensitivity to the rules of competition which determine and measure pleasure and happiness on the basis of the amount of money one has. Failure to pose this challenge is tantamount to what we consider to be the fallacy that 'financial markets are not immoral; they are amoral'. Our argument against its fallacy is that amorality can be judged only from a moral standpoint. Accordingly, the definition of one sphere of reality as 'amoral' is, paradoxically, a moral option. Thus the capitalist system made a moral option when

> .... After 1984, the goal of full paid employment, as traditionally understood, was treated by policy-makers as unattainable, unaffordable and undesirable. The rhetoric of the market redefined workers as 'human resources', as mere commodities to be purchased by capital for the lowest market price in the quest to maximise profit, and shed when profitability declined (Kelsey 1995: 259).

The putative amorality of financial markets, reducing human beings to commodities, conceals the metaphysics of killing inherent to the distorted (The Group of Lisbon 1995:90) contemporary understanding of competition. Arnsperger explains this metaphysics thus.

> In a metaphorical sense, firms can 'kill' one another on a market; customers can 'kill' a firm by arbitraging away from it in favor of another firm; and people can 'kill' one another in competing for jobs or positions. In a much more literal sense, a firm can kill people if it decides to relocate and move from one country to another almost overnight, leaving all its former employees with the choice between being jobless and uprooting their current way of life by moving (Arnsperger Discussion Paper 9614, IRES Institut de Recherches Economiques).

Thus 'competition' is the euphemism for the licence to kill under the guise of 'civilised' conditions arising out of the constitution of the state. Surely, the option for this kind of immorality cannot be successfully defended on the plea that financial markets are amoral. It needs no special pleading to submit that the sphere of amorality is inconsistent with Aristotle's definition of the

human being as 'a rational animal'. The sphere of amorality precludes the humanization of human relations (Ramose 2003:467-468). It is an impediment to civilization. In order to appreciate this argument one needs only to consider the abuse of Aristotle's definition in the conception and implementation of colonization as well as the oppression of women (Ramose 2003: 1-4).

From the foregoing, it is apparent that the economic motif has taken precedence over and replaced the primacy of the ideological struggle 'won' by the West. The door was thus cast wide open for economic globalisation to step in and impose its dictat upon the destiny of higher education. In essence, the dictat consists in the hierarchisation of disciplines. According to this hierarchisation, science and technology are positioned at the apex. This means that the biggest slice of funding will go to these disciplines. Although the hierarchisation on this basis is designed to determine funding priorities, it has also had the effect of undervaluing the Humanities and Social Sciences. These are regarded to be of less importance and virtually no value in the quest for the creation and accumulation of wealth. The undervaluation of these disciplines is one of the tragedies of our time because it is based upon the tenuous and dangerous presupposition that science and technology can and, may advance without the benefit of conscience as well as critical self-reflection emanating from the Humanities and Social Sciences. Soros is both sceptical and critical of this blind compulsion towards the self-destruction of global capitalism. In the light of this he warns that

> I can already discern the makings of the final crisis. It will be political in character. Indigenous political movements are likely to arise that will seek to expropriate the multinational corporations and recapture the 'national' wealth (Soros 1998: 134).

This prediction of rebellion may not be dismissed as illusory wishful thinking. On the contrary, it must be taken seriously since it touches upon the exigencies of justice that will ultimately challenge any oppressive and dehumanising power. It is therefore to be expected that the power of finance capital shall not remain forever unchallenged. Indeed,

> An individual may perceive a way of life, or a method of social organisation, by which more of the desires of mankind could be satisfied than under the existing method. If he perceives truly, and can persuade men to adopt his reform, he is justified. Without rebellion, mankind would stagnate, and injustice would be irremediable. The man who refuses to obey authority has, therefore, in certain circumstances, a legitimate function, provided his disobedience has motives which are social rather than personal (Russell 1975:172).

Higher education institutions would undermine the very reason for their existence if they were to permit and condone the condition of irremediable injustice created by market fundamentalism in the name of economic globalization.

The Significance of the End of the Cold War for South Africa

Education in South Africa is inextricably linked with the history of education in Africa as a whole. The relentless exercise of the 'right of conquest' by the colonial conqueror deprived universities in Africa of independence and thus restricted serviceability to themselves and their peoples. For example, the evolution of universities in South Africa is intricately linked with the history of the colonisation of the country. The rise of universities in South Africa was the initiative – and, by virtue of the 'right of conquest' – the prerogative of the colonialists. Accordingly, the inspiration, intention – deliberate or inadvertent – as well as the constitution of universities in South Africa derived from the epistemological paradigm of the colonial conqueror (Phillips 2003:123). The dominance and exclusivity of the epistemological paradigm of the conqueror in the evolution of universities in South Africa is also evidenced by the fact that the rise of scientific institutions in the country is reported as the sole effort of the colonial conqueror (Naude & Brown 1977: 60-85). Having thus established epistemological dominance by virtue of which the colonised were reduced to consumers rather than producers of knowledge the coloniser moulded the university in Africa into a transmission belt for the import and distribution of colonial values and goods into Africa (Mazrui 1984: 273-275). By the same token the university in Africa was moulded into the facilitator of the export of African wealth to the colonising power. It is doubtful if decolonisation has relieved the university in Africa of epistemological subservience to the

former coloniser (Hountondji 2003: 502). Nor is it now beyond dispute that the university in Africa is in a position to facilitate the pursuit of African interests above those of anyone else (Odora-Hoppers 2000. 7). It is debatable if decolonisation has indeed brought about a just and equitable compensation to the enduring miserability resulting from the exercise of the 'right of conquest.' It is crucial, though, to keep in mind that paradoxically, the university in Africa also produced African leaders of the struggle for independence and liberation.

The dominance and exclusivity of the epistemological paradigm of the colonial conqueror in the educational landscape in South Africa preserved and assured the cultural affinity with the West. It made South Africa a natural member of Western culture. Thus South Africa was on the side of the West during the Cold War. This meant that the funding of the military-industrial complex was also a priority for colonial South Africa. As already stated, South Africa also acquired nuclear military capability during this period: a financial venture for which post April 27 1994 South Africa is still saddled with a financial burden. And since the birth of apartheid, South Africa was locked in the defence of two ideologies, namely, the capitalist system and apartheid. The latter also required large amounts of money to initiate and sustain its systems and propaganda.

With the Fall of the Berlin wall, South Africa also had to contend with the burden of redundant military personnel. Some of these formed themselves into private security corporations ready to fight anywhere in the world in return for remuneration. What the security forces did in secret (Shutte, Liebenberg, & Minnaar 1998; Stiff 1999) in the past now became daylight activity and thus the corporatisation of the military became a fact of life of South Africa. Against this background, the present South African government is considering amendments to the Defence Act so that such activity may be regulated. At the same time, the present government is confronted with the problem of unemployment arising from redundant labour produced by the collapse of the Cold War on the one hand and the closure of 'border industries' which could no longer make high profit from the cheap labour coming from the Bantustans. The challenge of unemployment was aggravated by inequities in wealth. The new political dispensation held out only the promise but not the reality of bridging the gap between rich and poor in South Africa. The change in political dispensation increased

considerably the number of those entitled to share the national cake. But it was only the logic of sharing which was inevitable. In reality, those who owned and controlled the wealth of the country continued to do so even in the new dispensation. Accordingly, the larger share of the cake remains in their hands despite the legal force of the Black Economic Empowerment programmes. In the domain of learning the right to education[3] would be recognised but receive fragile protection and insufficient promotion. It is under these circumstances that 'redress' (National Commission on Higher Education, 28 - 29 April 1996: 110) became the continual theme of educational politics in South Africa. The necessity for redress must be seen as part of the structural poverty inherent to and sustained by the prevailing capitalist system in South Africa. It is from this perspective that government comes face to face with the dilemma to either comply with the demands of the already mentioned 'Washington consensus' or to opt for an independent policy responsive to the exigencies of social justice and implementable at the rate determined by government itself. To all appearances, the government chose for compliance and thus gave economic globalization the privilege to prescribe the priorities of the educational curriculum.

The entry of economic globalization into the scene only weakened but did not sever the link between the government and the nation (Green 1997: 186). Education then has served and, continues to serve in the processes of nation-building through the construction of national values (Green 1997: 131-136). But the imposed primacy of science and technology over the Humanities and the Social Sciences undermined the moral authority of the university and thus exposed it to the whims and caprice of the state (Heinrich 1989: 95). The university's compliance with this dictate of finance capitalism weakened the cohesion of democracy (Dlamini 1997: 43). This subservience of the university in a way proclaimed its death as finance capital triumphed over the principle of university autonomy (Pan 1998: 90).

According to economic globalization, the aim of education should be the enhancement of marketability and profitability[4]. From this point

[3] For a discussion of this right in terms of right of access and right to instruction see, Postma (1997: 235-238).

[4] For a critical discussion of this point in the context of the United States of America, see, Pan (1998:3-9).

onward the market rather than the university or society dictated educational priorities (Karnoouh 1989: 113). And so the dogma of the production of an employable graduate was born. According to this dogma, the graduate should of necessity be open to life-long learning since this is the only way to ensure one's marketability. Having rejected Marx's vision of an 'all-round man' globalization resurrected it in different words. The privatisation of university faculties or even an entire university changed from a distinct probability to reality (Kelsey 1998:51-53). Extra labour in the metropolis even under the guise of 'foreign aid' or 'volunteer corps' could no longer be exported either easily or sufficiently to the former colonies. Structural unemployment is continuously tackled by the abandonment of skills which are neither marketable nor profitable. This goes under the benign name of 'right-sizing', or 'restructuring' and hence Economic Structural Adjustment Programmes whose basic message is that there is nothing wrong with the dogmatism of the thought structure of marketability and the making of maximum profit at whatever cost. The only wrong that there is, is the apparent inability of the many to understand that the fault lies with them. Their fault consists in the failure to adjust to the existing economic structure. On this reasoning, the university could not but be transformed into a business enterprise. The perestroika which heralded the end of the cold war in world politics meant 'restructuring' (Berman 1989: 115). In effect funding would be reduced and the question was: who must be on the firing line?[5]

The Mirage of the 'employable graduate'

Under the guise of globalisation, economic fundamentalism has imposed the training of an 'employable' graduate as the overriding purpose of all education. But globalisation in theory and practice undermines the achievement of this goal for the majority of human beings. The youth are educated and encouraged to expect that at the completion of their study money, the sovereign, will provide employment for them. But in the globalizing age just the opposite is true. Against this background, in his Encyclical letter, *Laborem Exercens* (On Human Work), the Supreme

[5] For an answer based on the idea that research is the 'cancer' of university life, see Piccone (1989: 129).

Pontiff, Pope John Paul II, has the following to say about the employment issue especially with regard to the youth.

> ... the question of finding work, or, in other words, the issue of *suitable employment for all who are capable of it.* The opposite of a just and right situation in this field is unemployment, that is to say the lack of work for those who are capable of it. It can be a question of general unemployment or of unemployment in certain sectors of work. The role of the agents included under the title of indirect employer is *to act against unemployment*, which in all cases is an evil, and which, when it reaches a certain level, can become a real social disaster. It is particularly painful when it especially affects young people, who after appropriate cultural, technical and professional preparation fail to find work, and see their sincere wish to work and their readiness to take on their own responsibility for the economic and social development of the community sadly frustrated. The obligation to provide unemployment benefits, that is to say, the duty to make suitable grants indispensable for the subsistence of unemployed workers and their families is a duty springing from the fundamental principle of the moral order in this sphere, namely the principle of the common use of goods, or to put it in another and still simpler way, the right to life and subsistence (*Laborem Exercens* 1995: 376-377, par 18).

The Transformation of Education in South Africa

It is pertinent to note that most of the preparatory material on the transformation of education in South Africa has adopted the logic of the dominance of the market in pursuit of unrestricted profit. As though the adoption were insufficient, the advocates of the transformation of education in South Africa have also borrowed the terminology from New Zealand. For example, we have the 'New Zealand Qualifications Authority', and the 'South African Qualifications Authority' (Kelsey 1998: 65). The irony is that they have done both the adoption and the borrowing at a time when the morality as well as the efficacy of a globalised educational system in New Zealand were called into question. The Green Paper on Higher Education

Transformation proceeds from the correct insight that a new social edifice in South Africa must be constructed. However, it is basically at fault in the belief that the desired new society must be built upon the foundations of the old society. By so doing, it condones the so-called right of conquest and its ensuing consequences upon the conquered people of South Africa. This condonation places the latter in the position in which education will remain beyond the reach of the many because of the structural economic inequality inaugurated by the unjust wars of colonisation. Thus for as long as the beneficiaries of conquest in the unjust wars of colonisation are exempted from material redress of the situation the constitutional right to education will be only formal, lacking in substance. The massive debt owed by students especially in historically Black universities and their assertion of the right to education manifested through virtually endless strikes and damage to university property are deeply rooted in the condonation of the 'right of conquest'. It is pertinent to observe that in their protests against debt repayment or the demand for bursaries, alternatively, a waiver on tuition fees, students have by and large failed to situate their inability to pay in the logic of conquest in the unjust wars of colonisation. This applies equally to the argument for redress as this at best referred to 'historical inequalities or injustice' but without being specific about the content and meaning of this phrase. This vagueness and lack of specificity is not particularly helpful. It continues to have the negative effect of sustaining the myth that the money for both the repayment of debt and the redress of 'historical injustice' shall eventually be found but from nowhere. Instead of recognising the problem as part and parcel of the logic of conquest in the unjust war of colonisation, policy-makers of the 'new' South Africa have been quick to criticise students for clinging to 'a culture of entitlement'. It is odd that for the same policy-makers the conqueror's entitlement – in the name of the questionable 'right of conquest' – to privileged economic sovereignty over the material and 'human resources' of the country has not become the object of criticism as well. The students were told by the then Minister of Education – Sibusiso Bhengu – in a meeting held at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research in Pretoria that the repayment of their debt to the universities was 'non-negotiable'. So they and, by extension their parents or guardians, had to find money despite the meagre wages and salaries they received for centuries if they were lucky to be absorbed into the

'labour market'[6]. Nowhere does the Green Paper on Higher Education Transformation bring under the prism of critical questioning the prevailing orthodoxy that 'higher education provides the labour market ... with high-level competencies and expertise necessary for the growth and prosperity of a modern economy'. But as we have submitted the modern globalised economy cannot and does not intend to engage all the available 'competencies and expertise'.

From the Green Paper to Law

The technopols steering educational transformation in South Africa finally succeeded to have the Green Paper translated into law. The process leading to this end-result was in many ways characteristic of globalisation. For example, the many consultations that took place between the technopols and the various stakeholders in education had only the semblance but not the substance of democratic decision-making. This was because thorough debate was neither encouraged nor particularly welcomed. Instead, the technopols did not tire to alert the stakeholders present of the overriding importance of producing either a declaration or 'consensus' at the end of the sittings. At other times debate was dismissed as either academic or being subject to the strictures of time. Celerity and lack of democratic decision-making were some of the trademarks of the technopols at these putative consultations. As a result, consultations served as vehicles to inform the stakeholders of decisions already made and to legitimise those decisions on the plea that prior consultations took place.

The Green Paper proceeds from the assumption that provision of qualified 'human resources' for the 'labour market' is both desirable and necessary 'for the growth and prosperity of a modern economy'. It also assumes that the 'labour market' and the 'modern economy' are

[6] It is proper to note that the present author personally attended several meetings at university, regional and national levels at which the question of the transformation of education in South Africa was discussed. He was also a member of the University of Venda Committee dealing with the same subject. He has also written an extensive commentary on 'The Green Paper on Higher Education Transformation' in South Africa.

uncontestable and uncontested 'ideas' or 'values'. Accordingly, the structure, governance and funding of higher education must submit to and be shaped in a manner responsive to the imperatives of the 'labour market'. The Green Paper clearly takes the position that the submission of higher education to the dominance of the 'labour market' is a necessary and irreversible reality that stands above the pale of critical questioning. It is submitted that this position is scientifically untenable and morally indefensible.

The Moral Challenge to Globalization

The Green Paper expressly advocates 'moral development'. It identifies one of the 'deficiencies' of the 'existing system' and even criticises it in these terms:

> Despite acknowledged achievements and strengths, the present system of higher education is limited in its ability to meet the moral, social and economic demands of the new South Africa (The Green paper on Higher Education Transformation in South Africa, p. 10).

Unfortunately, this is stated only as a desideratum. The Green Paper does not give substance to what it means by 'moral development'. Yet, even the dumb can talk about, the deaf can hear of and the blind can see the increasing joblessness, the ubiquity of job insecurity, rising crime, the intensification of the poverty of women, resort to commercial sex, the racialisation of poverty and in a word, the deadly poverty increasing by the day in South Africa. This is the content of the moral, social and economic challenge of globalisation. This prevailing reality shows that the structural adjustment of the 'new' South Africa is in many ways similar to that of New Zealand from which it so uncritically borrowed. Kelsey (1995: 271, 283, 285) says in this regard:

> The result of a decade of radical structural adjustment was a deeply divided society. The traditionally marginalised had been joined by growing numbers of newly poor. The social structure was severely stressed. Hundreds of thousands of individuals, their families and

> communities had endured a decade of unrelenting hardship. The burden fell most heavily on those who already had least. This was neither coincidence nor bad luck. It was the calculated outcome of a theory which many New Zealanders viewed as morally and ethically bankrupt .... The impact of structural adjustment was never arbitrary. The fictional level playing-field was premised on the structural poverty of race, gender and age .... The evidence was clear that, with the onset of structural adjustment, the colonial legacy of poverty, dispossession and alienation that operated since 1840 had taken another, equally pernicious form.

The parallels with the history of South Africa since colonisation speak for themselves. For some casting one's eye back to colonisation is an illicit violation of the cult of an eternal present – the present which is supposed to be always better than the past. They regard this look back at history as hollow nostalgia and a spurious excuse for laziness. It is indeed prudent to warn against blaming the past for everything. However, it is wise to discern the causal and logical links between the past and the present. One may argue – reasoning by analogy – that it is impossible to eradicate the natural biological link between parent and child although it is possible to deny any other link between them. From the time she was conquered in the unjust wars of colonisation Africa applied the wisdom to distinguish between the self-righteous blame of others and moral responsibility. In the case of moral responsibility, Africa continues to seek redistributive justice as just one exigency of historical justice. Strategies to conceal and mute this exigency of justice in the 'new' South Africa are a fragile attempt to eternalise the untenable thesis that a long lapse of time transforms an original injustice into justice.

The Africanisation of the Curriculum

Just as Aristotle became known to the West through the Arabs, so did the university tradition of Africa become known to Africa through the European conqueror (James 1954: 154). However, the latter transmitted and conveyed the African university tradition as a distinctive part of their own history and culture (Jackson 1970: 21; Williams 1976:219). In this way the European

conqueror denied their indebtedness to Africa. This denial constituted the basis for the invention of Africa (Mudimbe 1988). The underlying and basic educational problem remains the same, namely, a clash of cognitively dissonant epistemological paradigms. The desideratum for the resolution of this epistemological conflict crystallises into the necessity for the Africanisation of the curriculum across every level of education. The educational curriculum is linked organically to the survival of a people and society.

The school, including tertiary education, is the specific terrain where the struggle for control over the curriculum ensues. This struggle for the control as well as the distribution of both the economic and the cultural capital of a particular society finds expression in the curriculum. The curriculum is therefore the crucial instrument in the struggle for the control and distribution of the economic as well as the cultural capital. In South Africa this struggle has so far been won by the European conqueror. The Africanisation of the curriculum is not simply a struggle for power but it is an exigency of justice. Concretely, the curriculum of the conqueror must be interrogated in relation to:

(i) the fact that its ultimate basis is the so-called right of conquest. This is particularly significant because the dominant beneficiaries from conquest in the unjust wars of colonisation apply the unwritten law that studies by the conquered on conquest shall be ignored (Kelsey 1995: 295).

(ii) its orientation of education to capitalism euphemistically described as the free enterprise system. According to this system, an irreconcilable distinction between labour and employment must be maintained. Upon this distinction, only the employed are likely to survive the vicissitudes of life if they are frugal. The rest of the labourers are assigned to despondency and occasional stirrings of conscience from the wealthy. These stirrings of conscience are known as charity or humanitarian aid. But 'charity cannot take the place of justice unfairly withheld ...' (Quadragesimo Anno 1995: 74: par 137).

(iii) the right to life – which must become an integral part of the curriculum in tertiary education. All mechanisms and strategies designed to undermine this right ought to be exposed through philosophical analysis in relation to other sciences – the social and the natural sciences. In a word philosophy should become an indispensable part of the curriculum in primary through to tertiary education in order to overcome the deification of finance capital, the labour market and its aggressive technology.

Conclusion

We have shown that the right to education in the 'new' South Africa is restricted and frustrated by the retention of structural poverty. Access to adequate and full education remains restricted to the few. The right to education is thus available in form but conspicuously absent in substance. The continuing dominance of the epistemological paradigm of the descendants of the colonial conqueror speaks to the exigency to realise epistemological parity among all the stakeholders of education in South Africa. Without this the struggle for a genuinely South African educational curriculum must continue.

The quest for a genuinely South African educational curriculum cannot be realised without facing up to the dehumanizing and uncivilizing challenge posed by finance capital. Higher education is, by definition, one of the crucial sites in the rise against the challenge posed by finance capital. It is pertinent to acknowledge in this connection that:

> Since the dominant voice in any society is that of the beneficiaries of the status quo, the 'alienated intellectual' who tries to pursue the normal path of honest inquiry – perhaps falling into error on the way – and thus often finds himself challenging the conventional wisdom, tends to be a lonely figure. The degree of protection and support afforded him by the university is, again, a measure of its success in fulfilling its proper function in a free society. It is, furthermore, a measure of the willingness of the society to submit its ideology and structure to critical analysis and evaluation and of its willingness to overcome inequities and defects that will be revealed by such a critique (Chomsky 1973: 303).

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The Africanisation of the University in Africa

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1. Introduction

The debate on the Africanisation of Universities in Africa has been ongoing for several decades, but little has been done to implement theories that have emerged. One might ask whether the debate was unfounded and even mistaken and/ or whether its expectations are simply unrealistic and naïve when one considers the historical and institutionalised socio-political challenges it faces. However, if we consider that the scientific enterprise, including that in Europe, has a vested interest in what African Universities or Africa does with regard to this issue, then it appears that we need to address it at least for our own benefit and the benefit of the people of our continent. Another reason why we need to address it, is that the so-called postmodern condition has opened a space for people faced with the realities and the disappointments of the modern condition and its programmes, to engage the uncovering and legitimising and meaning giving narratives about themselves and their communities. Further, African Renaissance discourse, couched within critical emancipatory indicatives, has created a need or at least an expectation of Africa's resurgence, re-invigoration, and reclamation of its own identity. If these conditions provide possibilities for the re-emergence of this topic, then, from African perspective, there is an even more pressing reason, namely the continued influence and impact of colonising culture on Africa. This, more than any other reason, calls for the re-invigorating of Africa's intellectuals, and the production of knowledge which is relevant, effective and empowering for the people of the African continent, and more particularly, the immediate African societies the universities serve.

In order to engage this topic, this article first addresses the issues of the counter-discursive nature of the debate and what we mean when we talk about the Africanisation of the university. This is followed with a focus on elements within African Renaissance discourse impacting on our topic, and the commitment of the African intellectual.

2. The Nature of Afrocentric Education as a Counter-Discourse to Eurocentric Education

Afrocentric education seeks to foster in its learners an African consciousness and behavioural orientation which will optimize the positive expression of African learners' fundamental humanity and ability to contribute significantly to the total growth and development of the African community of which an African learner is a member. According to Makgoba (1998:49) Afrocentric education is a process or vehicle for defining, interpreting, promoting and transmitting African thought, philosophy, identity and culture. It encompasses an African mind-set that permeates all sectors in society as they are influenced by (an Africanised) education apparatus.

This said, however, and given the colonial past of the African continent, Afrocentric education has not materialised as yet. In order to pave the way for this to happen, education needs to address the challenge of creating a mind-set shift from a Eurocentric to an African paradigm. Ntuli (1999:186) has this to say about Eurocentrism:

> ... eurocentrism is a culturalist phenomenon in the sense that it assumes the existence of irreducibly distinct cultural invariants that shape the historical paths of different people. Eurocentrism is therefore anti-universalist, since it is not interested in seeking possible general laws of human evolution. [Yet] it does present itself as universalist, for it claims that imitation of the Western model by all peoples is the only solution to the challenges of our time.

Afro-centric education then cannot exist without recognising its counter discursive challenges. Since education systems in Africa are by definition influenced by their colonial past(s), they need to engage this reality head-on. This needs to be done as Leifer (1969:111) showed, by analysing eurocentric social power, among other subjects, as this still impacts on educational institutions in Africa, and continues to influence the lives of individuals and

societies in our continent. Following Ntuli, eurocentrism's 'universalist' claims need to be exposed as in fact 'anti-universalist'. Central to Afrocentric education, is then too, to conscientise Africans of the subconscious conditioning practices of Eurocentric education systems wthat make them to respond habitually and unconsciously to Eurocentric social cues, to Eurocentric authorities and social contexts (cf. Leifer 1969:111). For the African, Eurocentric consciousness as a dominant discourse is a state of unconsciousness representing itself as consciousness, and it is part and parcel of Afrocentric education to expose this reality for emancipatory purposes.

An emancipatory Afrocentric education system is a system that makes African peoples aware of how the various education institutions and practices on African soil which defines Eurocentric culture are utilized to control Africans' mind and behaviour and prevents them from developing the social skills and produces knowledge necessary for them to master their own destiny. Africanised education on the other hand maintains African awareness of the social order and rules by which culture evolves; fosters the understanding of African consciousness; facilitates a critical emancipatory approach to solve the problems of their lives; and produces the material and capacities for Africans to determine their own future(s) (Nkoane 2002: 5).

In addition, an Afrocentric education system can successfully counter the hegemonic dominant Eurocentric discourse by helping African peoples to reclaim their African consciousness, identity and social interest, by founding their consciousness and behaviour and accurate perception of, and respect for, reality, and to passionately foster their love of truth. It fosters a knowledge and acceptance of their African heritage and cultivates a dedicated passion to achieve and maintain conscious, and thoughtful commitment. Central is to cultivate their ability to first love themselves, to maintain affectionate relations and positive regard among themselves, to cultivate the achievement of a collective, cooperative, unifying consciousness and behavioural orientation and, encourage the ability to engage in productive pro-social, proactive, rather than counterproductive, self-defeating and reactionary activities (Leifer 1969: 118).

It is true that many African learners continue to be caught in the West's mirror of fascination. Here, Afrocentric education is of critical importance, since this affects the direction(s) Africa must negotiate. It involves the interrogation of cultures that impacted on African cultures with

the purpose of identifying elements which need exclusion or incorporation. Ntuli (1999:189) asserts that since African people have been interpolated into the Western ideological machinery, they need to decolonize their minds. To be able to do so we need to carry out a detailed analysis of who we are as a people determined by various ideologies. Since, as Ntuli says, Eurocentric dominant discourse has deployed its notion of education and/ or culture to shape our thought and control our minds as African people, this needs to be interrogated by African people. As is the case in all cultures, African culture will adapt, integrate but also exclude values and practices. In this way, Afrocentric education will be infused by African visions and interpretations that will provide the dynamism, evolution and adaptation that is so essential for survival and success of peoples of the world. What is true for peoples of other cultures of the globe is also true for people of African origin in the global village.

An Afrocentric education is not only dynamic with regard to its own roots and socio-political realities; it is also alert to how Eurocentric social agents, attempt to mould an African learner's behaviour to fit particular Eurocentric self-serving legal, moral, political, social, and economic systems. In distinction, it defines and designates certain states of levels of consciousness and forms of behaviour relative to the needs of Africans and imbues life goals and methods for achieving them through the cultivation of social meaning, purpose and creative power.

3. Africanisation of Universities: What do We Mean?

Considerable ink has flowed to define and/ or deal with the concept of the Africanisation of universities. This article only aims to highlight and condense a few of the challenges which have been identified.

It has been stated that the projected Africanisation has not come about as expected. Seepe (1998: 63) for instance says that Africanisation has, for some, caused much anguish and anger, while for others, it has generated much enthusiasm. For some opposed to it, it is a form of insolent and misjudged provocation – 'education is education' – while for those supporting it, it is a flag around which to rally. For yet others, it has generated confusion, anxiety and irritation. Such confusion, we are told, is derived from lack of clarity, coherence and detail on the definition and implications of Africanisation. The anxiety is derived from the images that

Africanisation evokes. The images, poignantly cover a whole spectrum of existence: in politics, it is military coups, and unstable governments; in economics it is poverty and famine; in development terms it is a total lack of education, campus trashing and poor scholarship; in health it is memories of mutilated bodies, witchcraft, diseases etc. (cf. Makgoba 1996a: 26). These images are precisely not what Africansation means.

Ramose (cf. Seepe 1998: 64) proposes the following definition of Africanisation, i.e. that it

> ... holds that the African experience in its totality is simultaneously the foundation and the source for the construction of all forms of knowledge. On this basis, it maintains that African experience is by definition non-transferable but nonetheless communicable. Accordingly, it is the African who is and must be the primary and principal communicator of the African experience. To try to replace the African in this position and role is to adhere to the untenable epistemological view that experience is by definition transferable. Clearly, Africanisation rejects this view. It holds that different foundations exist for the construction of pyramids of knowledge. It disclaims the view that any pyramid is by its very nature eminently superior to all the others. It is a serious quest for a radical and veritable change of paradigm so that the African may enter into genuine and critical dialogical encounter with other pyramids of knowledge. Africanisation is a conscious and deliberate assertion of nothing more or less than the right to be African.

The majority in Africa are Africans and part of a historical complex which may be termed the 'African experience'. As such, all existing African knowledge articulate with African experience. It is therefore right to ask that all knowledge production by institutions of Higher Learning, link up with this notion of 'African experience'. They should be reflective and be informed by the culture, experiences, and aspirations of this majority on our continent. For Asante (cf. Seepe 1998: 64) this view recognises Africans as subjects of historical experiences rather than objects on the fringes of Europe. 'Experience' as primary unit of definition, then pays primary attention to 'data', and how one views data, and not categories derived from

ethnicity, race or even class. To Africanise universities means bringing change to African universities by making them relate to the African experience and the societal needs which have emanated and continues to emanate from such experience. For Seepe (1996: 35) this means making the African experience a source of ideas leading to the formation of institutional and public policy. This is true for both historically White and historically Black institutions. African ideas deriving from the African experience were not given an ear in these institutions equally and this needs to be changed.

More generally the Africanisation of universities means that they be grounded in African worldview and culture. Makgoba in his 2005 inaugural Vice-Chancellor's address at the University of KwaZulu-Natal argues that:

> ... African universities to be truly useful to Africa and the world have to be grounded in African communities and cultures. This does not mean that the African university is an insular or parochial entity .... African university is an institution that has the consciousness of an African identity from which it derives and celebrates its strengths and uses the strengths to its own comparative and competitive advantage on the international stage. The African university draws its inspiration from its environment, as an indigenous tree growing from a seed that is planted and nurtured in African soil (p. 15).

Given that the African university needs to represent the African experience, ideas and finds its resources from within African culture, it also has to play a pivotal humanising role both locally and internationally. It needs to help liberate African people as well as the international community, from inhuman and dehumanising ideas and practices. This should be one of the primary objectives of the Africanising university across the sciences, and needs to include mental decolonization from stereotypes and strictures from the past, and mental emancipation for socially and communally engaged scientific projects. Mekoa (2004: 16) argues that African universities should aim at providing Africans with ideas, methods and habits of mind with which they need to investigate their societies, to critically address everything which dehumanizes them and other people with whom they live and work.

The African university needs to be relevant and responsive to the needs of the African people from which it draws its identity. It needs to show respect and acknowledges the culture of the people it is serving. Given its

function as university, African universities need to imbue or permeate their clients and African communities with an African conscious science which will maximize the positive expression of fundamental humanity and ability to contribute to the growth and development of African communities of which the university is a member.

The main problem of African universities however, is that they have taken too much pride in maintaining themselves as copies of foreign institutions and systems, that they are not responsive to the needs and challenges of our continent, and that they show little or no regard for their own social milieu. African universities need to move away from Eurocentrism and move towards Africanisation. They should stop representing foreign erstwhile colonising powers' culture(s) even though they are constantly exposed to cultural neo-imperialism with no roots in African culture (cf. Mekoa 2004: 17). Ki-Zerbo (1990: 56) also shares the same sentiments when he says the African universities must not be a mere reflection of a foreign and strange light, but must be a flame which, lit from the inner recesses of the mind, is basically nurtured by the domestic hearth. Africanisation of universities is about turning the globe over so that we see all the possibilities of the world where Africa assumes a role of a subject rather than an object that is positioned at the margins. Presently, it can be argued, that the African universities continue to enhance individualism and an elitist westernised mentality. African students coming out of our universities hardly encourage communalism, which is a central African value (Msila 2004: 3).

Makgoba (1998: 50) states that African universities should avoid imitation of the 'great' nations (the so-called first world). African institutions should not be built through imitation. Universities in Africa should be trans-educating, trans-orienting, trans-socializing and harmoniz the various perceptions and paradigms in which the African community has its roots.

In addressing the concept Africanisation further, we also understand that it is not about simply having black faces in institutions. It is about the grounds for knowledge, about the epistemology, about objects of our intellectual inspiration. Africanisation and transformation are much more than change of structures of management, or change of the racial composition of both staff and students; it entails an interrogation of curricula and media of instruction and its relevance and appropriateness in addressing itself to continental objectives and societal demands. For this agenda to be

implemented, it is a basic requirement that the Africanisation of universities also means that these institutions not only show respect and acceptance of our culture, but are permeated with African cultural values. As such, the university is therefore, according to Yesufu, called upon to be

> ... committed to active participation in social transformation, economic modernization; training and upgrading of the total human resource of the nation. It should emphasize that which is immediately relevant and useful. The university should be the source of intellectual leadership. In manpower it should increasingly involve itself in the more critical areas of the middle power, and should actively participate in the planning, organization, curriculum development and superintendence of institutions training such manpower (cf. Mekoa 2004:18).

It is not only the academic focus of the university that needs redress, but also the actual management and functioning of the university. On this level, equity, governance, access, affirmative action, and similar topics need to be addressed from within the Africanisation paradigm – African cultural values and how they impact on the Africanisation of the university in its totality. These two perspectives on Afrocentric education and the Africanisation of universities now raise the issue of the African Renaissance paradigm and how it articulates with the topic of this paper.

4. Africanisation and the African Renaissance

According to *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 'Renaissance' first indicated the revival of art and letters under influence of classical models in fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth century Europe. The noun 'renaissance' means rebirth and/ or renewal, and the concept of renaissance was first used by those who thought of the Middle Ages 'as a dark, trace-like period' from which, according to Palmer (cf. Magubane 1999: 13) 'the human spirit had been awakened'. It was called a rebirth in the belief that fifteenth century Europe, after a long interruption, took up and resumed the 'civilization' of the Greco-Romans. Simultaneously, the Middle Ages began to be thought of as in the 'middle', i.e. between the glory of Greco-Roman civilization and the rise of modern Europea (Magubane 1999: 12).

Also signalling a new dawn, the 'African Renaissance' indicates a message of hope and simultaneously poses a challenge to the ingenuity and determination of Africans to meet its agenda (cf. Prah 1999: 43). Its central idea is that of a renewal, an awakening, a reawakening, a risorgimento for Africa. The origins of the idea go back to the nineteenth century and were born out of the spirit of westernized anti-colonialism and as a reaction to colonisation by the westernized African elite – freshly brought into the international capitalist order during the era of free trade which followed the end of slavery. The 1868 Fanti Confederacy nationalists are generally regarded as the earliest representatives of this viewpoint in Africa.

The term 'renaissance' has been appropriated in Africa because it captures processes of rebirth, revival, re-invigoration, re-animation, revivification, resurgence, reclamation, recovery, restoration, etc. Because of its fluidity the term refers to many human activities and areas of human life (Roscoe 1998: 67). Flowing from these, South African President Thabo Mbeki also used this term to capture the complex of challenges facing the African continent and its people(s). Whatever the divisions amongst Africa's peoples, the challenge is posed to all equally to collectively make constructive contributions to Africa's rebirth, its peace, prosperity and respect for its people(s). It needs to address all derogatory language used by fellow Africans with regard to one another; redress the effects of underdevelopment and miseducation; change material living conditions from abject poverty, exclusion, marginalization and ghettoised existence to self sufficiency and independence; change instability and uprootedness to stable societies; change living conditions from insecurity to security; and move from being consumers of material goods and knowledge, to owners of production and producers of knowledge. For this to happen, Africans need to redefine their African-ness, through hard work and committedness to our people and continent. Africans need to believe in themselves and their potential. African universities need to transform and transcend the negativity of our unfortunate educational and social legacy, draw on our own African ontology and epistemology, and play a central role on the continent for this to come about. There is no shame in this, because as Ntuli (1999: 185) says,

> ... if Africa was perfect would she need the renaissance? If Europe did not have a third of its population die of Black Plague and the

> church being so corrupt would Europe have needed a renaissance? It is precisely because things are not right in Africa that we need to find solutions to our problems.

To meet the challenges the African Renaissance poses, the contribution of the Africanisation of the universities in Africa means at least five things: 1) a redefining of African-ness; 2) a recollection of the roots of knowledge production; 3) the adaptation of curricula to African needs and aspirations; 4) the fostering of indigenous languages as media of instruction; and 5) the responsiveness of education to African culture.

4.1. Redefining African-ness

According to Mamdani (1999: 128) the concept Africa is not African in its origin. He points out that,

> ... Africa, in the beginning, was a name Romans gave to their province in North Africa. Africa then was Africa north of Sahara. It is from the Romans that the Arabs took the name 'Ifriqiya'. The Arab name for Africa south of the Sahara was 'Bilad-as-Sudan', the land of the black people.

This is an indication that the meaning of the concept 'Africa' is foreign and not the making of Africans themselves. Further, during the centuries of slavery, it was referred to negatively, as the part of the continent ravaged by slavery. This indicates that as is the case with any name, 'Africa' too is fluid and dynamic. More substantially, the appropriation of this name means that within the context of the African renaissance, the notion of African or Africanness, is still in the making. Chinua Achebe spoke about the difficulties of defining the 'African Identity' and then continues to say,

> African identity is still in the making. There isn't a final identity that is African. However, at the same time, there is an identity coming into existence. And it has a certain context and a certain meaning ... Africa means something to some people (cf. Makgoba 2005:13).

Africanness is then primarily defined by its dynamism – it is something in the process of developing and becoming, and is dynamic and

vibrant, and not fixed or static. It is not overdetermined by geo-political, socio-economic, ethnic or cultural definition. Rather, given the history of the continent and the conditions and challenges its people(s) face today, 'African-ness' implies a positioning in discursive spaces and practices of power and knowledge relations which are fluid. The recognition of the fluidity of such definition, opens the way for Africans to take hold of their own destiny in order to shape it according to their own socio-political dynamics. Similarly, Mahlomaholo (2004: 4) says that African-ness is not about biology or anatomy – these are nothing but *markers* that people have used to single out and target people for oppression, exclusion and marginalization. African-ness just like the concept Blackness exists more in people's minds than in reality (Mahlomaholo 2004: 5). The colonial system and apartheid had to find ways that would justify the marginalization, oppression, exploitation and social degradation of people and they used negatively charged cultural constructions to achieve this goal.

As part of a counter-discursive strategy, African-ness and Blackness similarly refer to positions from which people can assert themselves. Such positions, because of history and the experiences that this category of humanity (people) have had (and still have), cannot be denied, because to some extent it has come to define who they are, and it is an important position from which their human rights, privileges and interests can (and should) be argued, advocated and struggled for (Mahlomaholo 1998: 45). This implies having a particular state of mind, and comprises of individuals who have been victims of colonization, disempowerment and marginalization and who have been thrown into social dustbins by dominant western ideologies. There is a need to re-invest African-ness or Blackness with beauty as espoused by African intelligentsia such as Marcus Garvey, William DuBois, Steve Biko, Mwalima Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah and many others who see it as a symbol of beauty. These African intelligentsia have constantly alluded to an expected resurgence of Africa, spoke of an awakened Africa which will not go back to sleep. They conceptualized it as the emergence of the African personality and offered pan-Africanist solutions.

4.2. Knowledge Production: The Pre-colonial Era

A rebirth means the re-constituting of that which has decayed or disintegrated. This is especially true of our institutions of learning. Despite

claims by colonial scholars and historians that universities are not African but were transplanted on this continent as a central feature of Western or the dominant tradition of education, it has been proven beyond any reasonable doubt that Africa has actually been the birth place of civilization (cf. Lebakeng 2003: 5). It may be true that Euro-centric history books have emptied Africa of any contribution to the international human civilization, but the truth remains that this is where civilization was born but also where the very significant institutions of learning were based.

Ki-Zerbo (1990: 15) reminds us about the fact that well before other continents, Africa was a producer of knowledge and of teaching systems:

> ... it is forgotten, all too often, that Africa was the first continent to ... institute a school system. Thousands of years before the Greek letters alpha and beta, roots of the word alphabet, were invented, and before the use of the Latin word schola, from which the word schools derives, the scribes of ancient Egypt wrote, read, administered, philosophized using papyrus.

The university tradition in Africa predates colonization and any institution of learning in the world (cf. Labakeng 2003: 8). The existence of educational institutions and traditions in pre-colonial Africa, particularly the universities of Djenne, Timbouctou, Djami al-Karawiyyin in Fez and al-Azhar in Cairo and the great university of Alexandria and universities of Northern Sahel – Egypt – represent examples of a long tradition of higher education that historically preceded the colonization of the continent (cf. Lebakeng 2003: 8). Nowhere in the world has sophisticated mathematical computation produced the mammoth pyramids we witness in Africa. Even great ancient trade and business ventures existed in Africa. After all, how does one explain the great ruins of Great Zimbabwe, the remains of Thulamela and Mapungubwe found in the Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces? There is a new orientation in academia that has begun to recognize the contribution of experiential knowledge that does not necessarily derive from Europe. This orientation has produced a growing research industry in ethno-mathematics, ethno-botany and ethno-chemistry. For instance, ethno-mathematics studied the mathematical patterns embedded in murals of the Ndebele homes in Mpumalanga, and the notion of a circle embedded in the huts in Southern

Africa. Research interests in local herbs which have been used from time immemorial to cure certain illnesses, some of which have stood the test of scientific and medical scrutiny, continue to grow (Seepe 1998: 64). It is not the intention of this paper to go back into history and extol evidence to show how powerful and great Africa has been. It only attempts to outline some facts and encourage the African intelligentsia to not discount the greatness of Africa's past. The recognition of this fact is important for a focus on the future and the African Renaissance. The African intelligentsia need to move away from dependency syndromes, recognise the universal significance of knowledge production on the African continent, and take up the challenge to produce knowledge(s) and technologies which are relevant to our people and not rely on others and knowledge(s) and technologies from elsewhere.

4.3. Transforming Curricula

Eurocentric and dominant western discourses have monopolized the parameters for the interpretation of realities. This domination was secured by marginalizing whatever has not been determined by the Northern hemisphere or western conquest, and by domesticating other subject positions as historically obsolete, irrational, pre-modern, non-modern, non-literate, un-democratic etc. (cf. Odora-Hoppers 2000: 7).

The dominant discourse has continued to teach African people that everything indigenous and African is posited as being most pitiful, despicable, and embarrassing and should be the object of consistent fumigation and cosmological cleansing with western tools (Odora-Hoppers 2000: 10). This is quite evident in African Universities where the spontaneous process of symbolic fumigation, cosmological cleansing and mandated acculturation begins with the first academic year in the university. It can be seen in the nature of curricula and the medium of instruction. African academics and students unconsciously participate in a process of subjugating local indigenous values, by starting a process of preparing students in a one-way conveyer belt system that moves outwards, and westwards on a journey of no return (Odora-Hoppers 2000: 14). To counter this dynamics, the Africanisation of curricula is of central importance.

Africanising our universities in broad terms is about changing our curricula, the centre in which teaching and learning takes place and/ or organized. It is true that some intellectuals do not support this idea, holding

that knowledge is not culture and context relative. However, we need to recognise that animals are not skinned in the same way all over the world, and also not for the same purposes.

Most modules and/ or academic programmes (such as education, science, law, psychology, sociology, political science, law) in different disciplines at African universities are not anchored in or linked to African cultures and realities. The disciplinary problematisations, classifications, examples, illustrations, comparisons, models, social systems and structures, institutions, interpretations and misinterpretations, mistakes and solutions all come from Western realities and socio-cultural constructs. African students are trained in these systems but expected to work and follow a career on African soil. African culture is often only brought up in passing. It is presented as devoid of any epistemological content. This practice perpetuates the myths of either European superiority or its purported valour.

Now that African intelligentsia and Higher Edcuation institutions are on the move to self-realization, their voices can now invoke issues of intellectual justice, reciprocal valorisation of knowledge systems and strategies for linking epistemology with African cultural and societal realities. In order to provide this drive with more pace, African intelligentsia need to deconstruct the dominant discourses and their practices embedded in curricula and prescribed materials and replace these with African-focused content and values. As Mazrui (1998: 19) shows, this will lead to a more humane and tolerant society than the one enforced on Africa and into which African students are still being groomed. As he says, African scholarship should be protected, saved and not be trampled upon because it does not have the greed and killer instincts of Europe. African scholars are beginning to make a case that no system – whether legal or political for example – into which students are trained can claim to establish itself as a social system and work effectively and efficiently if it is not founded on the fundamental cultural rhythms of the masses of the continent (cf. Odora-Hoppers 2000: 23).

4.4. Media of Instruction

It is indeed difficult for African universities to enter the global scientific dialogue on equal terms with scientists from elsewhere, because during colonization – which had apartheid crystallize in its wake in South Africa – Africans were made to believe that the only scientific language is English

(and later Afrikaans). These were the dominant languages and used in courts, universities and other public institutions while other African languages were marginalized. The development of the indigenous languages as scientific languages addressing local realities has been sidelined, which in turn means that scientific discourse engaging these realities did not come into being. Central to the African Renaissance, is that this historical accident be rectified. This move will assist in eradicating and demystifying the thinking that being educated in language other than English retards one's intellectual development. Kwesi Prah reflected as follows on this subject:

> ... the use of French or English in the elementary school is but a destruction of the African mind because these fragile minds are impressionable ... when you impose a foreign language as a language of culture, you are systematically destroying them ... the use of a given language leads you to assimilate at the same time the culture and the vision of life of those whose language you have borrowed .... the problem we face here is that through the colonial encounter Africans in most areas of human activity have acquired a syndrome of inferiority. The language problem and dependency on colonial languages is a reflection of this (Prah 1998: 4-5).

According to Vilakazi (1998: 72) European languages became dominant in their areas of influence because they 'have had to develop new concepts, words, and flexibility, in order to be the means of communication for industrialization and scientific revolution'. The languages of the colonised were marginalised at the expense of the developing of the colonising languages. For instance in South Africa, Afrikaans was developed to be used in education, medicine, law and many other disciplines and was promoted as a second dominant language during the apartheid era, using massive state resources to achieve this objective.

Promotion of indigenous languages as media of instruction (teaching *in,* and not about) appears to be an absolute necessity for the recovery and revalorization of African knowledge and culture. The fact that this question raises a Pandora's Box of technical linguistic problems notwithstanding, it is clear that colonial history has considerably distorted the whole field of indigenous languages. The work of scholars like Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986) and Kwesi Prah (1994; 1995) not only points to the urgency of the issue but

also to a variety of ways in which the problem can be addressed. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, in *Writers in Politics*, raises this issue by saying,

> ... who is the audience targeted by African writers when they write in languages such as French, English and Portuguese? ... if a Kenyan writer wants to speak to peasants and workers of any one Kenyan community, then s/he should speak in a language they speak and understand. If on the other hand one wants to communicate with Europeans and all those who speak European languages, then s/he should use English, French, Portuguese, Greek, German, Italian and Spanish (wa Thiong'o 1986: 27).

The Language issue in education is very central, because it is through language that people understand culture, produce knowledge and interact with the world. The mastery of language in which any discipline is taught is the perquisite to the mastery of subject matter. The problem for non-English speakers, in institutions of learning in which English is the language of instruction, seems to be that such teaching and learning does not build upon the linguistic and conceptual resources derived from one's lived experience or home environment, but seeks, as it were, to implant linguistic and conceptual apparatuses from somewhere else, and as such cultivating a learner who is alienated from his or her home environment and the challenges the local context faces (Vilakazi 1998: 84).

These perspectives on the language issue show the interrelatedness of language, culture and knowledge production and possession, interactiveness, meaning-making and relevance. Moreover, they follow the view that language and knowledge development always originates, and moves from the local to the universal, thus meaning African indigenous languages are as vital to our own development as European languages are and have been for Europeans.

It is true that knowledge is a universal heritage and a universal resource. It is also true that the development of the European languages matched the diverse and varied developments in knowledge. However, the various forms of underdevelopment, marginalisation and suppression colonised societies suffered is equally true. In order to turn this tide, the scientific development of African languages is of absolute necessity. It will make both universal and localised knowledges more widely accessible and

also provides African people with greater opportunities to be recognised for their contributions to knowledge production.

4.5. Education Responding to African Culture

Intelligentsia in Africa are imbued with *xenophilia*, having to survive by denying their identities. It is perhaps understandable that indigenous education can be swept under the carpet as 'static' , 'restricted', 'inadequate', 'unscientific' or even 'undemocratic'. None of these proclamations can, however, cover up the sheer monstrosity one sees in the education system of the type in vogue today in which education is divorced from African values and norms, and is unfamiliar with, and alienated from the socio-cultural environment of the great majority of its clients (Odora-Hoppers 2000: 30). The values and norms embedded in, and cultivated through any education system should suit or meet the cultural needs of a particular society. Culture includes education, which, put in the simplest terms, is the learning process in which the mind, the body and the spirit grow up and mature. Culture helps us to master our environment and live creative lives. Education is a carrier of culture while it is itself part of culture (Mphahlele 2002: 91). If education play its cultural role, the kind of moral society a particular community wants can be realised. It is the vehicle through which a society can ensure its continuation and the creation of the kind of community its wants. Mphahlele further asserts that,

> ... African culture can provide this moral force if we listen to voices that echo the wisdom of our African ancestors. Knowing who we are, where we have come from and what has happened to us as a result of the dominant discourse that determines our lives, this will help us map out our cultural destiny (Mphahlele 2002:91).

University Africanising processes, will give a sense of purpose and destiny.

It should be understood that African culture is not a museum specimen. It is a dynamic feature of our lives. Dynamism means that African culture is not static, ever changing and evolving. This should be the nature of African universities too, both in their continuously becoming more relevant to the African continent, and excluding dominant European discourses. It is only Africans who can both draw on indigenous cultural values for society's

reinvigoration, as well as decolonize our institutions, to liberate them so that we can be able to determine the quality of our emancipation with moral strength derived from the freedom of our academia, and our intelligence (Mphahlele 2002: 101).

5. African Intellectuals: Are We Expatriates in our Own African Institutions?

When lost, it's better to return to a familiar point before rushing on (African proverb).

Quoting the famous African proverb above, Ki-Zerbo (1990: 48) urgently calls on African Intellectuals to design an education that is ***of*** Africa and ***for*** Africa. He notes how the anachronistic system of colonial epistemology has replaced African education with an absolutely different epistemology designed to serve the overall aim of the subjugation of the African continent to a European dominant and dominated discourse.

Captured in the heading of this section is the metaphor of exile. To be exiled is one of the saddest fates that can befall a person. It does not only signify geographical, social and cultural displacement, but may also mean feelings of never being at home, being not accepted in new circumstances, being an outsider, being always at odds with the environment, inconsolable about a lost past, and bitter about the present and the future. Exile here, indicates restlessness, movement, constantly being unsettled, and unsettling others in meaning making (cf. Said 1996: 47).

If universities are not Africanised, if they do not represent African culture, values and aspirations, if they are conduits of foreign influence, then they play an exiling role. Its intellectuals become the exiling agents, and its students, the exiles as they are being alienated from their own geographical, social and cultural locations. The irony is that even though these people still live and exist in their own areas, they are being alienated through the university system. In this case, to be exiled or to have experiences similar to that of an exile, does not have to mean that one is totally cut off, isolated, and hopelessly separated from one's place of origin. One is immersed in these experiences without even the consolation of knowing that what you have left behind is, in a sense, still there. African intelligentsia know what is

needed in African institutions of learning, however, they do not engage this task. An African intellectual who considers him/ herself to be part of a more general condition affecting the displaced African masses and who attempts to address this issue is therefore likely to be a source not of acculturation and adjustment, but rather of volatility and instability, recruiting others to join him/her in the world of the unknown. It is in this situation, that African universities have to go back to their African cultural roots.

6. Conclusion

The theorization that this paper is contesting is that African universities are 'static' or predestined to assume a colonised disposition. It also focused its outline of items to be addressed on the local realities. If colonisation means the almost literal removal from history (cf. Odora-Hoppers 2000: 5), the genealogical death of the defeated lineage and institutionalized marginalisation of the alienated person (Miller 1991:16), then the Africanisation of the university signals the institutionalized reintegration of the institution and its agents into history and the lineage system of our continent.

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Epistemicide, Institutional Cultures and the Imperative for the Africanisation of Universities in South Africa

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A. The Problem

The thesis that we need to advance is that: The higher education institutional cultures which have been spawned through epistemicide at universities in South Africa perpetuate epistemological injustice and, therefore, their retention is unjustified both ethically and politically. This seemingly 'battle cry' thesis is a function of the fact that despite major transformations which have been taking place and the need for an education system consistent with the emerging socio-political imperatives in South Africa, institutional cultures and associated associational aspects such as groups dynamics have not changed fundamentally and correspondingly. Higher education institutional cultures continue to privilege western symbols, rituals and behaviours imposed as a result of epistemicide. In this sense, academic institutions in South Africa remain stubbornly untransformed despite the fact that the new constitution offer space for constructing a discourse that mainstreams local relevance and vocalises silent voices. In a spirit of self-criticism, this should be seen as a failure to reverse the implications of epistemicide and to appreciate that not only constitutional rights but educational justice should constitute the foundation of transformation and the total overhaul of higher education.

As part of structural transformation and mergers, universities changed their mission and vision statements to appear more politically

correct. This was intended to provide an intellectual focus and a sense of a 'new' identity for the institutions. Among these can be mentioned self-descriptors such as 'premier university of African scholarship', 'first class African university' and 'world class African university'. Despite such self-descriptors which imply a relationship between the university and the African continent, there has been no visible transformation of institutional cultures to reflect such a relationship. This is so because, in the case of mergers, the most important effect of mergers may be, quite simply, the physical combination of two former entities (or the disappearance of at least one of them) rather than a recasting of institutional cultures or programmes or profiles of productivities (Jansen 2004).

This has overlooked the fact that epistemicide closed the African cultural space, hence African culture as a heritage was never allowed to be shaped and moulded. Rather it was presented as some baggage to be thrown away. This Eurocentric attitude simultaneously valorised and affirmed western epistemology and absolved it from its existential and epistemological violence against indigenous epistemology. Therefore, not only the institutional structures but, more importantly, the institutional cultures manifest in university systems and structures were implicated in the colonial-apartheid social formation (Lebakeng & Phalane 2001). In particular two mainstream traditions splintered: a liberal tradition accommodated in the English-speaking universities and a further-entrenched conservative tradition in the Afrikaner universities (Jansen 1991a).

In discussing the impact and legacy of epistemicide on higher education, this article does not focus on the whole spectrum of institutional cultures which include management practices and student politics. Rather, it will be confined to the academic institutional culture, namely, mimetism as illustrated in the philopraxis of university academics and intellectuals. Academic mimetism is a function of the failure to cut the intellectual umbilical cord from the western epistemological paradigm and move away from borrowed discourses.

B. Higher Education Institutional Cultures: Characteristics of Mimetism

Learning institutions are supposed to be created to nurture and encourage the activities of knowledge production, language usage, aesthetics, writing and

other verbal and non-verbal forms of systematic symbolism to support the growing knowledge heritage of humanity. Universities and technikons are the modern institutional forms of this process of knowledge production and dissemination (Keto 2003).

The inauguration of western higher education in the colonies, however, reflected cultural parochialism. Its basic assumption was that a university system 'appropriate for Europeans brought up in London and Manchester and Hull was also appropriate for Africans brought up in Lagos and Kumasi and Kampala' (Ashby 1964). In the light of the preceding quotation, we concur with Ramose (Ramose 2002a) that colonial epistemicide and the consolidation of colonisation were founded upon and continued to thrive on the false claim that only one segment of humanity namely, the Euro-Americans had prior, superior and exclusive right to reason. One of the consequences of the de-recognition of the rationality of the indigenous African anthropon was precisely the upholding of the so-called right of conquest. By virtue of this questionable right the Western colonisers appropriated the sole, unilateral right to define and delimit the meaning of social experience, social knowledge and social truth for indigenous Africans (Ramose 2002b; Lebakeng 2004a). The colonialists' claim to the questionable right of conquest extended not only to the spheres of religion, politics, law and economics but it included the spheres of education. In this sense it was a comprehensive epistemicide.

On this basis, indigenous African epistemology was inconceivable and whatever knowledge emanated from indigenous Africans was considered defective, inferior and in need of being developed and refined through Westernisation. What the colonisers deliberately overlooked was the fact that knowledge is legitimately constituted and become dominant knowledge through a social process rather than because it is. Moreover, they ignored

> the unique demonstration of the human genius that people in different parts of the world have employed different pathways to knowledge creation, transmission and dissemination successfully (Keto 2003).

The thrust of Western education was to deny the colonised indigenous

people of South Africa useful and relevant social knowledge about themselves and their world and, in turn, transmit a culture that embodied, and was designed to consolidate dependency and generally undermine the colonised people's capacity for creativity in all the spheres of life (Lebakeng & Phalane 2001a).

One of the fundamental problems facing African scholarship is the dependency syndrome. Little wonder that institutions of higher learning in South Africa were (and still are) copycats whose primary function was (and still is) to serve and promote colonial Western values (Mazrui 1978; Makgoba 1996). Universities in South Africa lack a preoccupative autonomy, and scholarship is essentially derivative. Their defining characteristic is that of the phenomenon of the 'captive mind' or 'mental captivity' since their scholastic roots are defined more consciously and consistently within the framework of the various Western philosophical and methodological schools. Running the risk of being accused of reification, they have a way of thinking that is dominated by Western colonial thought in an imitative and uncritical manner. Among the characteristics of a captive mind are an uncritical approach to ideas and concepts from the West (Myrdal 1957; Bondy 1969; Alatas 1972; Altbach 1977), the inability to be creative and raise original problems, the inability to devise original analytical methods and alienation from the main issues of indigenous society (Bondy 1969; Alatas 1974) and failure to tap indigenous resources such as indigenous languages (Thiong'o 1986; Wiredu 1995). Prah has argued consistently over the years that the absence of African languages has been the 'missing link' in African development (Prah 1998). Paradoxically, African languages continue to be taught in English because of the claim that such languages do not have any scientific concepts in their etymology. Because universities in {South} Africa are enslaved to the preoccupative benchmarks (and blinkers) of the dominant Western scholarship and its methodological paradigms, African intellectual representations are inconsistent with the lived experiences of the majority African people. The dominant curriculum continues to be a source of alienation. Our verdict is that colonial and post-colonial education extremism has been a cognitive and epistemological disaster not only for indigenous Africans but for all those who had to endure it. Often the curriculum does not speak to the experiences of learners since the curriculum does not reflect the philosophical, social and

technological realities of their environment. For instance, despite the pervasive philosophic racism in the philosophies of such philosophers as Locke, Hume, Kant and Hegel, indigenous African learners in philosophy were (and still are) treated to an overdose of the epistemology, ethics, political philosophy, philosophy of history and even the philosophy of religion and law of these and other Western philosophers (Ramose 1999).

In the light of the above, we propose a reversal of epistemicide through an inscription of indigenous African epistemology and warn that to deny the existence of African philosophy as a basis of African education on grounds of maintaining standards is to perpetuate epistemological injustice. Furthermore, it is apparent that this is no less than the insistence to force us to set aside the question: by what right do the successors in the title to colonial conquest dictate the educational 'standards' for everyone in South Africa? According to Vera, an evaluation of the intellectual thinking behind the standards argument is the fear that most white intellectuals and academics will experience erosion of their power base (Vera 1996). The actual motive for wanting to protect the current standards is essentially to spawn a 'law of inertia of privilege' that guarantees that there is no reversal of epistemicide and reclamation of African epistemology. The reversal of epistemicide will inevitably undermine existing dominant interests and challenge the citadel of western paradigms and scientific epistemologies of knowledge. Hence we should expect processes of circumscribing and pre-empting the entry into discourse of indigenous African epistemology.

From the perspective of the sociology of indigenous knowledge, the assumptions which constructed Western thought, literature and traditions are not universal but are derived from specific and discreet Western experiences prescribed by specific historical levels of economic and industrial development. Implicit in this perspective is that standards are not universal but contextual. In fact, Western claims to universalism, including universalism of its standards have been exposed as false (Amin 1989; Jansen 1995; Ramose 1997; 1999; Nabudere 2002). Jansen takes issue with the idea of decontextualising the notion of academic standards (Jansen 1995). According to him, standards are tentative, constructed, historical and contextual and, therefore, certainly not universal, permanent, objective, neutral or invariant. This is so because standards are constructed to serve a useful purpose not because they are necessarily true. We can thus conclude

that there is no single fixed or universal definition of standards that may be applied and upheld regardless of context. Clearly, the notion of standards must be subjected to a careful, specific and historically sensitive analysis. Ramose advices that rather than maintaining and applying given academic and educational standards, we need to continually create and redefine them (1997) and this cannot be done in abstracto. Africanisation is essentially part of continually creating and redefining educational standards within appropriate contexts of relevance. In other words, the focus on relevance and usefulness is not antithetical to high standards. More importantly, the imperative for the inscription of indigenous African epistemology into the curriculum and underpinning education with African philosophy is, in the first instance, a question of rights, and thus a matter of natural and historical justice.

C. Towards an African University

In times of crisis the tendency is to revisit fundamentals. The university in Africa is plagued by a plethora of crises: the crisis of identity, the crisis of legitimacy, the crisis of degeneration of research, the crisis of the 'brain drain', the crisis of relevance, the crisis of authority, the crisis of appropriateness of epistemology, the crisis of historical representations and the crisis of student politics. This is symptomatic of a deeper crisis namely, the crisis of the mission of the African university against the backdrop of that university being in Africa but not being an African one by characterisation. This is what accounts for the university in Africa lacking lustre and credibility. These universities have been maligned and lampooned as transplants from the former colonial countries and for being instruments for the transmission of western culture, values and morals. The spectrum of university crises in Africa stems from the fact that the educational systems in the continent have by and large been founded essentially on Western models and have remained so even in the post-colonial era.

Precisely because the condition of the university in Africa remains unchanged since decolonisation we cannot talk of an African university with a distinct African philosophy of education. Any talk of the existence of such a university would necessarily imply that the imposed epistemological paradigms have been replaced. The reality is that the core epistemological

paradigm established through epistemicide remains unscathed and retains its undeserved predominance. This is because the initial interest in asserting the Africanity of universities in Africa which was decidedly expressed in the immediate post-colonial period has dramatically waned without the goal being achieved. In this sense, although there are no obvious protagonists directly opposing or undermining the right to be an African university as was the case during colonisation, this right speaks to such necessity precisely because such a university is yet to be born. In the light of the above, we propose a reversal of epistemicide and warn that to deny the existence of African philosophy as a basis of African education on grounds of maintaining standards is to perpetuate epistemological injustice and cognitive arrogance.

In the light of the preceding section, many African scholars have accused African scholarship of mimetism of the worst kind (Hountondji 1992; Prah 1989) especially mimetic philopraxis (Ramose 1999). Moreover, this state of affairs has spawned various reactions from African academics and intellectuals in South Africa and the developing countries in recent years. What binds these various reactions is what Wiredu calls 'conceptual decolonisation', that is, the avoidance or reversal through a critical conceptual self-awareness of uncritical assimilation of those categories of thought embedded in the foreign language or philosophical traditions which have exercised considerable influence on African life and thought (Wiredu 1995).

Therefore, in advocating for the reversal of epistemicide, we necessarily seek to place indigenous knowledge systems of the conquered peoples of South Africa on the same level of parity with other epistemological paradigms in order to achieve both formal and substantive equality (Ramose 2003; Lebakeng 2004a; 2004b). Because of the struggle for relevant knowledge and resilience of indigenous African epistemology, some elements of these still survive at the periphery of the dominant western educational paradigm in South African academia. Thus, the right to be an African university is a claim to justice. However, we are aware that having a right to something does not necessarily imply having the ability to obtain and realise such a right. Moreover, where such a right is not exercised, it accounts for little in practice. For rights to translate into justice they must be substantive and not merely formal. In this respect, we concur with

Greenstein that Africanisation poses what may well prove to be the greatest challenge to the renewal of South African education in general and curriculum policies in particular (Greenstein 1997). Regardless, the total transformation of higher education institutions in South Africa would remain incomplete without the necessary changes in institutional cultures.

The mimetic and the decontextualised character of the teaching of sociology and philosophy in South Africa and, indeed, of the entire educational system, call for a radical overall of the whole epistemological paradigm underlying the current educational system. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that Africanisation, which inevitably contains the deconstruction of Eurocentrism, should not be construed as an absolute rejection of the influence of European thinking on African scholarship but rather as a rejection of assumed European intellectual hegemony.

In order to depart from mimetism or intellectual dependency or derivative scholarship, South Africa and the institutions of higher learning need a domestic intellectual infrastructural capacity to adapt and translate foreign knowledge for local use. This is a critical point in ridding the continent in general and South Africa in particular of intellectual and academic mimetism or dependency.

Dealing with problems of higher education should be part and parcel of reversing epistemicide and establishing intellectual traditions, scholarship and research culture that are rooted in contemporary African imperatives. To depart from mimetism or intellectual dependency, universities in South Africa must, of necessity, Africanise. Epistemologically this should entail jettisoning western epistemological paradigms and mainstreaming indigenous African epistemology into the educational paradigm (Lebakeng & Payle 2003). This should speak to their intellectual orientations stemming from the African social history, by the subject matter that is African societies as the central topic. We will, for purely heuristic purpose, privilege only six levels or components of Africanisation as appropriated from Lebakeng (2000).

(a) The meta-theoretical level of Africanisation refers to the analysis of a shared African world view and includes the ontological, epistemological, paradigmatic and ethical assumptions underlying what is taught and researched in higher education. African academics and intellectuals will

have to stop being derivative and being peddlers of Western assumptions in these areas.

(b) The theoretical level refers to the generation of concepts and theories from African socio-historical experiences and socio-cultural practices. It is noteworthy that here the problem is not that of lack/poverty of theory but that of theorising or under-theorising.

(c) The methodological level refers to the methodological approaches adopted and the assumptions underlying them. This level should not be conflated with that of methods and techniques (which is not discussed here). Rather the two should be subsumed as part of methodology to include philosophical, ideological and politico-ethical issues.

(d) The pedagogical level is also implicated in that the African university should devote more effort to evolving and sharpening teaching methods that are responsive to or consistent with the socio-cultural background and educational needs of African learners.

(e) The empirical level refers to a strict focus on socially more relevant issues particular to the African continent that have, hitherto, been neglected as non-issues. Most problems raised and addressed emanate from the Northern Hemisphere. Herein lies the concern for relevance and appropriateness.

(f) The level of applied knowledge refers to the specification of remedies, plans and policies. Most remedies, plans and policies have been imposed by aid donors and foreign project funders. Thus new modalities of intervention are required so that policy-oriented research and development projects are informed by the needs and aspirations of everyday African social reality such as street children, squatter camps, child and women abuse, landlessness, HIV/Aids and other social scourges.

By so doing African academics and intellectuals will be rejecting the traditional Western scholarship that proceeds from the premise that Africa has no civilisation, methodologies, theories, history or traditions. Moreover,

this will confirm the position that theories, concepts and methodologies can be derived from and nourished by African historical conditions and socio-cultural practices and imperatives. Clearly the issue is not just about including a few African academics in the academy but is fundamentally epistemological in nature (Jansen 1991b). This particular issue speaks to the realisation that universities in Africa – if they are to be truly African universities – should not emulate their cognate institutions in the metropole.

Having advocated for the reversal of epistemicide, we are not oblivious to the prospects and problems of such an undertaking (Lebakeng & Payle 2003). On the one hand, we are aware that not many academics are actually involved in the struggle for the reversal of epistemicide and the affirmation of African epistemology. In fact many have been cowed or convinced to believe that the academic status quo is intellectually of high standards and there is no need to interfere with it. In other words, they have bought into the argument of the protectionists and apologists of 'things as they stand are good'. On the other hand, we are inspired by the deconstructive intellectual activities of the older generation of African scholars such as Professors Thandika Mkandawire, Dan Nabudere, Archie Mafeje, Peter Anyango, and the late Claude Ake and the emerging generation of African scholars such as Malekgapuru Makgoba, Mahmood Mamdani, Jonathan Jansen and Mogobe Ramose. Their overall contribution has resulted in the general trend of thought which now accepts, acknowledges and affirms the existence of African epistemology. Their intellectual battles led to the appreciation of the fact that epistemology is universal regardless of culture, tribe or race. In this sense the deconstructive component of reversing epistemicide was not a case of being captive to the tyranny of trivia.

D. An Overview of the Concept of Africa and the Global Threat

The centrality of the adjective African in our title necessitates that we preface our submission by stating that there are many senses in which the term 'African' is used depending on whether emphasis is placed on skin pigmentation, geographic location or self-declaration/self-definition. In this case, we do not wish to generate an impression that there is a consensus on

who is an African and what Africa is. It is noteworthy that etymologically, the term Africa does not arise from indigenous African people who are the original inhabitants of the continent now called Africa. Rather, its origins are colonial and spoke more to the historical experiences of the West, specifically the Greeks and Romans in their interactions with the peoples of the northern region of the continent (Ramose 2003). In the Western use the term did not immediately refer to the self-understanding of the inhabitants of the region and their indigenous philosophies and epistemologies. The term 'Africa' spoke to the Western European experience with the climate of the continent as a hot one. After all, in the perceptions of Western Europeans the peoples of the continent were merely nonentities without civilisation, rationality and history. This is so notwithstanding the acknowledgement by, among others, Aristotle that some of his philosophy was influenced during his contact with ancient Egypt (Osuagwu 1999).

Thus, despite its initial reference to a climatic dynamics and silence on the identities and epistemologies of indigenous Africans, the term Africa was retained by post-colonial Africans and strategically adopted and extended as a political move towards self-definition, self-identity and self-assertion. Writings of Aime Cesare, William E. Dubois, Leopold Senghor, Edward Blyden, Frantz Fanon and Cheikh Anta Diop demonstrated efforts towards African self-definition and self-identity. However, most of these earlier writings were essentially political, historical and sociological (Olagoke 1995). We can only wonder if they would have been otherwise given the difference between the political, historical and sociological nature of the environment within which they wrote and current conditions. From these writings Mazrui (1986) identifies two main schools of African reaffirmation. The first one is the school of romantic gloriana which emphasises the glorious moments in Africa's history, defined in measurements such as material monuments, and as represented by Cheikh Anta Diop. However, we find such a presentation of Cheikh Anta Diop unfair since his works took cognisance of cultural aspects. The second one is the school of romantic primitivism which does not emphasise past grandeur but validates simplicity and non-technical traditions as represented by Aime Cesaire.

Mazrui's synthesisation of the two positions in his concept of Africa's triple heritage seems to condone classical colonisation of

indigenous Africans by both Europeans and Arabs. According to him, the triple heritage has become a social reality of contemporary African culture (Mazrui 1986). We posit that, it is an imperative of practical realism to situate the two alien cultures of Western European and Arab conquerors in fundamental dialogue with indigenous African cultures. The purpose of this dialogue is to liberate and resurrect indigenous African epistemologies from centuries of epistemicide. By this, we do not mean to espouse either 'romantic gloriana' or 'romantic primitivism'. On the contrary, we seek to reaffirm Africanness in its own right despite the fact that inheriting the term 'African' can be problematic in both ethical and political terms. What, then, are the possibilities and prospects of Africanisation in light of the growing global influences and global issues in knowledge discourse? Moreover, how comfortable are we with the descriptor 'African' prefixing our knowledge?

Globalisation is increasingly becoming the defining characteristic of contemporary nations. In fact, it now articulates one of the dominant characteristics of modern existence (Miller 1991). One cannot make pronouncements or representations on the economy, education, social welfare or any other area of life without reference to globalisation (Lebakeng & Phalane 2001b). So overwhelming is the process of globalisation that it has also spawned a litany of terms bearing the adjective 'global': global system of governance, global society, global consciousness, global civil society, global culture, global discourse, global social agenda, global science and knowledge and so on (Munyae & Munyae 2001).

Regardless of the above, the conceptual status and practical implications of globalisation, especially for developing nations have not been settled. Consequently, the debate on globalisation still rages on as the precise nature and extent of the process remains a matter of tendentious contention. Unfortunately, with no shortage of passion from either side of the divide and neither side prepared to disabuse itself of evaluative and honorific undertones, the debate has sometimes degenerated into an intellectual tavern brawl. From the point of view of sociology of knowledge, it is inevitable that perspectives on globalisation should be shaped by the respective vantage point of those viewing the process. The proponents of the process of globalisation see it as bringing with it opportunities, benefits and great prospects for prosperity to the marginalised regions and nations. In this regard, the process is seen as having inherent enormous potential to enhance

the rewards of sound social, economic, cultural and political policies.

For the opponents of the current patterns of globalisation, the globalising changes are no more than the latest configuration of late capitalism re-ordered to cope with the latest crisis of capital accumulation (Jameson 1991). This is so because although the concept of globalisation is, in historical terms, a very recent one its core features are not. Hence we have the arguments that globalisation is western imperialism coached in a political language that is more acceptable, because 'western imperialism' is less palatable (Amuwo 2001). Others argue that globalisation is actually a third phase of colonialism as it is an extension and strengthening of the unequal social, economic and political linkages established between developing countries and western nations. In other words, the process of globalisation brings with it the same deleterious consequences for marginalised regions and nations as the imperialist era did. Thus, globalisation in the 1990s is neither a historically unique process nor necessarily the harbinger of a world society (Gordon 1998).

Premised on this understanding, globalisation is thus portrayed in the anti-globalisation position as a process that is continuously benefiting only the developed nations and causing untold misery and leading to massive levels of inequality between nations and within developing nations. In other words, developing nations cannot reap gains from globalisation since the benefits of the process are largely bypassing marginalised and poor regions and nations of the world. It is in this sense that globalisation should not be understood as a value-free and disinterested allied force.

Critics of structural adjustment policies have over the years pointed out the fact that short-term adjustment policies are undermining long-term development prospects by destroying the social capacities of the affected countries, undermining the legitimacy of the state, reducing social and physical investment, and worsening income distribution that accentuate conflict.

Thus, parallel to the integrating effects of globalisation has been the incapacitation of the state in developing countries. By this we do not imply that the state is decreasing its presence, on the contrary, there has been fast-paced state-building. The problem lies in that as a result of globalisation the capacity of the state to formulate national policies has been minimised. These developments have telling consequences for countries in Africa in

particular. Globalisation is increasingly emptying the African state, as it is doing with states from developing countries, of the capacity for auto-centric development (Lebakeng 2001). The post-independence state in Africa was the principal hegemonic and organising force in socio-economic and political change (Milazi 2000). The developmental state in Africa played a major role in social, cultural, political and educational issues by taking front-line responsibility in policy formulation and implementation. This is because the post-colonial state in Africa assumed office under tremendous pressure from all sides to drive development. As a result the state had to adopt an interventionist posture in policy, planning and implementation terms. In the post-independence era, African governments went into a frenzy of compensating for the colonial legacy. They built schools, clinics, etc.

Given the history of colonial economic exploitation, racial discrimination, political oppression, cultural alienation, marginalisation of indigenous knowledge and practices and social dehumanisation of African people, to address these problems would require continuous and massive pro-active state intervention rather than an incapacitated and minimalist state. Unfortunately, there is an ideological assault against pro-active state policies (Mkandawire 2001). It is noteworthy that although we support state consolidation for benign purposes, we are not apologists for corrupt post-colonial African states. The lessons to learn and unlearn are many from the problems that confronted such states. Such states became overblown, over-centralised, patrimonial, authoritarian and elitist and constituted the reliable avenue for personal accumulation of wealth by kleptomaniacs. These were internal factors that rendered the African states dysfunctional. However, globalisation is presenting a more lethal threat to the state in Africa.

It is against this background that we see globalisation as a major threat to the development of indigenous knowledge and indigenous knowledge systems in South Africa. Thus in South Africa (and other developing countries) where western traditional epistemologies are already firmly established and institutionalised, the state will have to be proactive by massively investing resources and creating space for the development, mainstreaming and legitimation of structures and institutions for indigenous knowledge and indigenous knowledge systems. The state, which globalisation threatens to incapacitate and render dysfunctional by taking away its core responsibilities of formulating and implementing national

policies for developmental purposes, will not be capable to execute its functions (Lebakeng 2001). Globalisation thus could be considered as a modern challenge to the enterprise of indigenisation as it leads to the erosion of national policies. Generally speaking, the withdrawal of the state or lack of its involvement will render any discourse on indigenous knowledge futile.

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Stop Beating about the Bush – The UKZN Merger: A Tragic Mishap

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1. Introduction

The perceived "failure to consolidate the Historically Black Universities (treated) as undergraduate colleges" in the first years of the much celebrated political transition in South Africa, led a number of senior educational researchers and subsequently senior state officials to argue that there should be *"no more beating about the bush"*; there was an urgent need for systematic planning of the post-secondary education system (Badsha 1992). The question of what the future role of HBU's would be remained hanging until the discussions ensued in regard to the transformation of the higher education landscape in 1996.

The current mergers of educational institutions in South Africa are a brainchild of the first democratically elected government of our country. Mergers, rationalization, cost-efficiency, and outsourcing have become the key and fundamental terms defining the "transformation" of the universities in post-apartheid South Africa (Van der Walt 2003:9). It is understood then that the orientation and structures of the institutions in the process of their development, would take new directions and forms, in relative material and intellectual autonomy - though never in isolation - from global forms of education (Crossman 2004). Hence there is no middle road; the choice faced by higher education planners is one that either prioritises and pays homage to an abstract market economy or one that speaks to the needs of flesh and blood people (Vally 2000: 72).

Decades of Bantu education inflicted severe wounds on the hearts

and the minds of the majority of the country's population, and the recent government initiative of transformation of higher education is seen as an attempt of healing these wounds. The reality is that these wounds inflicted are too deep indeed, hence no matter what the government does; the scars will bear testimony to the harsh histories of the past.

A scientifically-based historical analysis of the dynamics of the country's education will inform that it will take the new University of KwaZulu-Natal which came into existence on 1 January 2004 more than a few years to get rid of the worm-eaten roots of the structure whose ideas are inherited from the Verwoerd's thinking. The first few years will be understandably marked by the struggle for survival which will entail taking one step forward while in the meantime taking one step back. Mamdani's (2003) hypothesis that those institutions which survive the first five years are likely to have more than even chance of surviving into a ripe old age is very relevant to today's mergers. Nyerere (cited in Eze 1998) emphasised the relevance of time when he said *"nothing has a perfect beginning; time is required for anything to be perfect"*. Mkandawire (1996) analyses the condition of universities by her phrase that universities are *"born in chains"*. Her analysis is adopted from the social contract theory of Jean Jacques Rousseau[1]. The thoughts that follow are by no means exhaustive but merely highlight certain very central and pertinent issues related to the UKZN merger.

2. The Vision and Mission of UKZN

The vision of UKZN is to be the premier university of African scholarship and its mission is to be a truly South African university that is academically excellent, innovative in research, critically engaged with society and demographically representative, redressing the disadvantages, inequities and imbalances of the past. The analysis of this paper will be in line with whether the vision and mission statement of the new university can be

[1] The French philosopher, Jean Jacques Rousseau, made the famous statement that man is born free, yet he is always in chains, and that he cannot furnish the answer for this dilemma. The answer is his social contract theory and this is very relevant to today's livelihoods.

attainable given the diverse nature of the socio-political, economic and cultural dynamics inherited and still rooted in our education system. Subotzky and Cele (2004:342) argue that, addressing the basic needs of South Africa's majority poor as well as enhancing the nation's emerging engagement in the new global economy should be reflected in our knowledge production. What is ironic is that for the higher education sector in particular, the precise policies that are being promoted and implemented impact on its ability to fulfil the increasing demands that are made on it in the present era. The expectation for instance that graduating medical doctors, IT specialists financial practitioners and others would stay in their home countries and work to raise living standards or increase national competitiveness is constantly being undermined by the opportunities to migrate elsewhere thus earning higher salaries and enjoy a "better quality of life" in the global knowledge economy (Manuh 2002: 43).

3. Reforms at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

Throughout the world, there is a conscious re-thinking of the structure of the entire higher education system and, as it concerns the university, debates are taking place on two interrelated fronts simultaneously: what the future holds for the university and what the future might look like (Olokoshu & Zeleza 2004). In the absence of a clear framework for higher education, many governments have been drawn into destructive interference in the internal affairs of tertiary institutions. This according to an intellectual of the broader left spectrum must be seen as a sign of weakness of state institutions in these countries, rather than simply the actions of an all-powerful state (Nzimande 2004)[2]. In understanding the nature of the problem, the historical source of conflict cannot be overlooked.

At the heart of the problem is a fundamental conflict over the nature and social responsibility of universities in the post-apartheid era as Mantzaris (1993) and Van der Walt (2000) have argued. Balintulo (2004) argues that given the educational context characterized by vested interests,

[2] Dr Blade Nzimande as part of the leadership of the South African communists strongly feels that state intervention in education should be minimal.

multiple stakeholder contestations and conflicting and competing agendas within and between institutions, the tensions between these variables are inevitable (2004)[3]. Furthermore such tension is fuelled by the role played by the council in managing the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Dr Blade Nzimande was certainly correct at the time when he said eight years ago that:

> When I talk of transformation, I do not mean that we simply have to change the faces that serve on councils. We have to change the roles the councils play. Many University councils merely endorse the administrative decisions of management. In fact, they should be seen as crucial instruments in implementing, evaluating and monitoring the transformation of our institutions. It is not enough for the University to adopt a progressive mission statement. University councils need to examine the extent to which these missions are translated into a programme of action for the University. The councils should be taking up policy matters relating to access, redress and curriculum transformation.

It will be interesting to follow closely the role of the new university's council in respect of these fundamental aspects of governance, especially as one of the selected few in it is Dr. Nzimande's former activist wife as well as a number of struggle participants, professionals, Black Economic Empowerment achievers, and ex-politicians.

4. Power Relations in the New Institution

Ideally, institutional transformation should be driven by the university in a process that includes all stakeholders (Nzimande 1996).However, the fortunes of the university and other higher education institutions have been

[3] Dr Marcus Balintulo's contribution is more valuable in the higher education debate, since he was once an acting Vice Chancellor at the former University of Durban-Westville and now the Vice Chancellor of Peninsula Technikon. Thus his arguments are not based on theory but on daily experiences and engagement with the merger process.

tied to those of the state, which also determines the kind and levels of funding available, and the level of institutional autonomy and academic freedom (Manuh 2002:43)[4], forgetting that the honeymoon between the intellectuals and the political class has never lasted (Zeleza 2003). Thus the positive statements made by the most senior manager of the University, its present Vice Chancellor, in the press before the 2004 elections are instrumental in our understanding of institutional intellectuals and the state. Thus the newly elected rector cited President Thabo Mbeki as his chief source of inspiration and a role model who inspires him in his approach to all issues of importance (Metro 2004). This he said a few months before his uncontested election as the Vice Chancellor of the University. It is rumoured that there were several applicants for the position, but their names and qualifications were only known to Council members. Professor Makgoba was only name in the shortlist of suitable candidates. The honeymoon started long before the Principal's election, the question is whether and how long these bonds that shape and bind will last.

Sitas's (2002), analysis of this scenario is that when the bonds that shape and bind individuals and the state are broken, you need to start digitalizing victims. Manuh's (2002) hypothesis quoted earlier is supported by Olukoshi and Zeleza's (2004) argument that reform issues tend generally to be understood only in terms of proposals for change sponsored by governments and donors. While this dimension of the quest for reform is critical, it is important to asses the reforms which are being autonomously generated within the university system itself and the ways in which these interface with reform proposals driven by interests external to university.

4.1. Management

It has been said by one of the most penetrating minds in the history of revolutionary progressive thought that in any transformation process, *"the proof of success lies in a whole (management) social structure being changed from the bottom up"* (Fanon 1963, e.a.). In transforming the newly University of KwaZulu-Natal, putting Africans and Blacks generally first on

[4] The role of the funding institutions such as the NRF needs to be thoroughly scrutinized.

the agenda should be the main priority. This is precisely the whole argument advocated by the newly elected Vice Principal himself in one of his many provocative popular press articles (Sunday Times 2004). This is in line with Crossman's (2004) hypothesis that by Africanisation the intention should be the nationalization of the agenda, that includes amongst others the replacement of foreign staff and the indigenisation of all university structures. This in itself is a complicated process and can take place through an evolutionary and gradual movement forward .The same *tabula rasa* approach should have been adopted at the UKZN.

For example, the recent Executive management appointments created serious controversy within the university community with regard to the future of the merged institution. With the exception of one executive posts, all other posts had only one candidate shortlisted, interviewed and appointed for the job. The university community and the population of the province and the country were left in the dark as to names and qualifications of the candidates, their credentials, background and relations with the future. Despite serious reservations and counterproposals in the Senate, the highest academic decision making body at the university, all advertisements were internal with the exception of the Vice Chancellor's one. The question asked in the Senate was simple: "How can one build a new University with a vision of excellence if it does not appoint the best available in the South African market in terms of equity, representativity, talent , capability, research excellence, international recognition and administrative capacity? Why advertise the position of the Vice Chancellor externally and all Deputy Vice Chancellors ("College Heads") internally?" In the end, as predicted, the new university ended up recycling its current leadership with a few new faces. The vast majority of posts were recycled with a few new faces, almost all of them from what was known as the University of Natal (Howard College Campus) Jansen (2003) has argued, that had such a thing occurred under the draconian 'emergency' legislation of the apartheid regime, it would have provoked public outrage and widespread debate. Yet it passed without sustained protest and outrage from the public and public intellectuals. Although a number of serious questions have been asked on these issues at public meetings, the Senate and the Joint Bargaining Forum, where management and the unions negotiate day to day and other issues, such fundamental considerations have been well hidden under metal,

impenetrable carpets. The provincial and national press has been silent, especially after the closure of *THIS DAY*. Questions raised in the press by concerned parents and students at the university have been bypassed and unanswered. (See *Witness* 09/12/04, Where the idea comes from? What if Maritzburg Varsity was to go it alone?). There seems to be a triumphant silence, celebrating the birth of a new baby. Strategically, however it will be wise to think that changing the jockey and not the horse, does not guarantee that the jockey will win the race, maybe nothing was wrong with jockey but the problem was with the horse.

4.2. Institutional Forum

The Standard Institutional statute published by then Education Minister Kader Asmal in accordance with section 33 (3) of the Higher Education Act, 1997 Act No. 101 of 1997 , makes provisions for the establishment of the institutional forum. The primary function of this body is to play an advisory role to the council on institutional matters. From several years ago the institutional forum at the two universities (especially the University of Durban Westville) was a contested terrain of ideas and actions. In the new university the composition of the forum alone, indicates clearly that the body is not in a position to properly advise the council because the majority of its members are either involved directly or indirectly in university politics. Lack of autonomy from the institution renders such a structure a toothless dog, hence, its mediation and dispute resolution role is compromised. The current Chair of the Forum, the Vice Chair and the Secretary are all employees of the institution, with the Chair being a senior manager. Will a manager be accountable to the constituencies comprising the Institutional Forum or to management of which he is a strategic link because of his organic position? There is evidence of lack of accountability and transparency in the Forum as to what issues are being engaged at a forum level.

4.3. Unions

Waterman (1995) argues that trade unions are in crisis not only in South Africa but internationally. This crisis goes beyond policy, ideology, particular world area, it is to be found at the very nature and form of

unionism. The distributional logic has been altered and the barriers, boundaries and fences have been shifted; institutions too, have been transfigured, creating a new milieu for movement and settlement. A materialism sensitive to that will instantly be able to pre-suppose that subsistence, survival and settlement are closely related (Sitas 2002). The role of Combined Staff Association, National Education Health and Allied Workers Union, National Tertiary Education Staff Union and University of Natal Staff Union in advancing and protecting the workers interest is now either reduced or sandwiched because of subordination to management or co-option; hence they are not in a position to make an independent assessment of the merger. The current position that the 4 Unions find themselves in can be best described by quoting from Fanon (1963) who once said,

> In every political or trade-union organization there is a traditional gap between the rank-and-file who demand the immediate bettering of their lot, and the leaders, who, since they are aware of the difficulties which may be made by the employers, seek to limit and restrain the workers' demands.

Hence Waterman's argument should be seen as an open invitation to thinking unionists as well as to shop stewards to rethink and re-strategise the future of unionism at the university. For example, when it was announced by the then interim Vice Chancellor of the former University of Durban-Westville, Dr. Saths Cooper, and the current Vice Chancellor, Professor Malegapuru Makgoba, that "THERE WILL BE NO DUPLICATION OF STAFF IN THE NEW UNIVERSITY", this signals future job losses[5].

It is important to note that a society which represses the individual spirit by denying employment will rapidly degenerate into stagnant mediocrity (Ohaeto 1997). There are still a number of major problems facing the unions in the merged institution, including harmonization of salaries and

[5] See the University of KwaZulu-Natal policy on interim deployment of university academic and support staff. The four page document is actually a redeployment policy for the purposes contemplated in Section 189 and 189A of the Labour Relations Act 1995.

benefits, job grading, representation on council, unresolved grievances from the past and contract staff. These have been entrusted in the hands of a nationally-based human resources consultancy (21st Century), which will attempt to solve such chronic problems. Only time will tell.

4.4. Student Challenges

Students at institutions of higher learning are facing serious threats with the recently unveil plan by the government to curb what they referred to as 'unsustainable' growth in student numbers (Stephen 2004). Ahmed Essop, the chief director of higher education planning in his parliamentary statement lashed out at institutions who are enrolling students in areas such as humanities rather than science or business because the government does not consider them as a priority. Such a statement should have sparked debate among student leadership, but the silence is deafening. The possibility of robust debate on this issue was nullified by the fact that the days of student activism have died a slow and painful death at a very critical juncture of the country's intellectual and academic history.

Students are now left at the mercy of Senate senior bureaucrats and academics and university staffing committees whose job is to rubberstamp without interrogating the future implications of such policies. With the increased new point system at UKZN, students from disadvantaged background are facing a serious challenge of being turned back. The following case study serves as an example: *A potential new student from Vukuzakhe High School at Umlazi Township with 35 points wishing to do a degree in Commerce majoring in accounting was told that he cannot be accepted because he did not have 36 points. Instead he was advised to do a one year bridging course. This despite the fact that he has passed Mathematics with a B and Accounting with a C in higher grade*[6]. The access principle has been severely compromised at UKZN by educational gates with a huge sign that says Private Property, No. 13, Keep Out. Access has been impeded. Thus entrance requirements have been unilaterally increased e.g. BA entrance has increased from *24 to 32* points. This automatically disadvantages Black students and African students in particular.

[6] A township student with such a high percentage deserves access if transformation is on the UKZN agenda.

5. Challenges Facing UKZN

The corporatisation of management (the adoption of business models of organization and administration of universities), especially when strategic decision making positions are still occupied by white conservative bureaucrats, makes one wonder whether the much talked about transformation will ever take place. This despite the much talked about "massification" propagated by the then Minister of Education Kader Asmal when the mergers were forced upon HBUs. UKZN can no longer persist on providing superannuation to a whole cadre of White retirees. This is not transformation but retrogression. Having an African Vice-Chancellor and few Africans in management positions does not mean that transformation has taken place. Fanon (1963) argues that in some instance you will be surprised to find out that the very same Blacks are whiter that the Whites[7]. Given that the merger is an extremely complex undertaking it would be unwise for one to accept uncritically the glowing reports of huge success of this merger portrayed in the 100 days report and the Saunders report (Report of Higher Education Merger Study Group on the Progress OF University of Natal and University of Durban-Westville to form University of KwaZulu-Natal). The truth has not been told, easy victories have been claimed.

5.1. Excessive Influence by the Donors

One would be naïve to take for granted and unquestioned the impact of globalization on higher education in South Africa which is directly linked to the construction of knowledge economies. Manuh (2002) argues that to a large extent, reform efforts are mostly donor-driven and do not necessarily reflect strong commitments by national governments to rebuild their higher education systems. For decades, the West through its principle agent, the World Bank have been attempting in vain to infiltrate them. Mamdani (2004:4) argues that the World Bank has failed in its attempt to close African universities by starving them of funds; the Bank is now getting ready to choke them with conditionalities that will go with the provision of much

[7] When Blacks speak English with a Victorian accent, one wonders whether the future of our younger generation in Universities lies in the right direction.

needed funds. This is presumably one of the reasons why the new Vice Chancellor, travelled extensively last year.

Olukoshu and Zeleza (2004) argue that foreign donors have a significant role in African Higher Education which includes setting the broad policy frameworks. These donors include governments, multilateral institutions, philanthropic foundations and international scholarly associations. They further noted that the questionable role of the donors although significant is also worthy of sustained investigation. Intellectually African scholars are feeling the brunt of the brain "drain" imposed upon them institutions abroad[8].

Another strategy being used by the West is to offer African Scholars funding to study at universities such as Harvard and Boston with a belief that they will path way with their native background. While a local economic system can be effectively stifled by global conditions, the human mind can never be reduced to global determinants (any more than to local ones) despite the fact that these may impinge on its expression (Crossman 2004).

5.2. One Hurdle too Many to Cross in Academia

The contexts and content of the challenges to academic freedom of course differ between countries, but they all centre around the challenges of institutional autonomy, ideological controls, internal governance, and intellectual authority (Zeleza 2003). In the quest for African Scholarship, it should be noted that Africans want to prove the richness of their thought and the equal value of their thought to the world at all costs. But in doing so, one cannot simply shy away from the established fact that African institutions heavily depend on institutions of the developed world for knowledge production consumption, creation and dissemination. While a degree of institutional autonomy is important for the health of the higher education system this must be balanced with the need to create a co-ordinated higher education system that is responsive to the national needs to reconstruction and development (Nzimande 1996). This means that the primary emphasis

[8] This is part of the entire rush to the bottom process, where there is competition among the hegemonic states for brain drainage in the once so-called slave nations of Africa.

must be on the poor and the working class as well the populations of the rural areas which are still undeveloped or underdeveloped. If the University of KwaZulu-Natal wants to be success story it should divorce itself from the thinking that African countries are the home of small and fledging scientific communities that are often ineffective in the creation and communication of knowledge (Teferra 2004). African intellectuals and academics need to assert and re-assert themselves in the globalised environment. They have no choice.

It is disturbing times for South Africa as the vocation of the intellectual has fallen on hard times. Persons are under attack and reputations are muddied. Courageous voices have been severely attacked for daring to pose uncomfortable questions about the merger[9]. This is further fuelled by the fact that any criticism of the merger by academics has been seen as anti-nationalist and anti-developmentalist, and has led to fallout between academics and the state. With UKZN adopting an assorted Western style college system, one questions the very purpose of our educational prerogatives. Crossman (2004) poses a penetrating and probing question by suggesting that, in contextualizing and interrogating the African scholarship debate, one cannot deny that they are very real historical and racial issues linked to the circumstances of the debate and to the conditions for our understanding and clarifying the concepts. One needs to add the class dimension here as hundreds of deserving students have been already excluded because they are poor. (*Isolezwe* February 9 2005) Members of the academic community are not homogenous, and are divided along gender, class, ideological, regional, ethnic, and racial lines. Among these different groups, the freedom to study, teach, conduct research and the like is as much a struggle taking place within the academy as a struggle against outside forces (Manuh 2002:45).

As the country enjoys our 10th year of our democracy and one looks beyond the UKZN 1st merger anniversary, the main task is a sober reflection

[9] Dr Ashwin Desai is a prominent Sociologist banned from Westville Campus from 1997 to date because he is regarded by our very own democratic government as uncontrollable. Prof. Sipho Seepe refers to our democracy as 'democrazy' because our universities are worse than apartheid ones.

on how to rise to the challenges of the future, including how to do so in a manner that will give credit and foundation to the vision of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. In doing so, one needs to acknowledge that African Universities are a product of African Nationalism, hence scholarly research of the University of KwaZulu-Natal should be driven by Africa's needs, defined within the African borders. Neither universities nor countries have much control over the products that they have invested in, and do not directly enjoy the benefits of that training, which the global world, with its need for 'global workers' absorbs, further reducing the growth of national human capital and national knowledge, and consequently, the ability to compete in the so-called global market-place (Manuh 2002:43).

The question of transforming the curriculum is of course at the heart of academic freedom; curriculum transformation should not be resisted in the name of academic freedom and there is a need to further develop our vision of teaching in the South African context (Nzimande 1996). Mahmood Mamdani (1993:15) argues that the problem faced by African Universities as identified is:

> We have nurtured researchers and educators who had little capacity to work in surrounding communities but who could move to any institution in any industrialized country, and serve any privileged community around the globe with comparative ease. We ended up creating an intelligentsia with little stamina

The few current crops of African Scholars WITH STAMINA are faced with a difficult and challenging task of identifying, grooming, mentoring and retention of the next potential generation of African scholars.

With the decline of the nation-state and the rise of the composite state in the context of globalization, the organization culture of the new institution should lay the foundation for the next generation of African Scholarship. Olukoju (2004) highlights the fact that in merged South African universities, academics are distracted from their primary assignments of teaching, research and supervision of students' research, and are made dissipate energy confronting official neglect and wrong-headed policies. They are either:

- Pre-occupied with other things, especially university administration and external politics
- Involved in struggle to make ends meet (2004).

Examples of pre-occupation with university administration are evident at UKZN as well respected academics have assumed the roles of administrators, leaving young generation of successors to perish. A house can never been built without a foundation and the younger generation cannot fit in the shoes of the older generation because they are oversized. To make ends meet, a number of academics have emigrated to the HSRC where they operate as government technocrats. Others spent their time bemoaning the state of affairs in the merged institutions in the corridors without tackling the real issues head on, publicly and with honesty.

Rising political ecologies of intolerance and intervention by states and cultural actors into university affairs, coupled with the curtailing of their fiscal responsibilities for higher education, threaten academic freedom, as Zeleza (2003) has warned tacitly. The ability to carry out institutional transformation depends on the existence of some measure of academic freedom, which will in turn be reinforced and guaranteed by the extent to which universities are able to forge links with wider communities and identify with their needs and aspirations (Manuh 2002). Crossing the bridges of academia designed by conservative scholars of all religions, colours and creeds is a mammoth task for progressive and thinking African scholars, especially those young and up and coming. Currently the South African research editorial boards of accredited journals are still dominated by the old generation of white scholars. The very same problems are facing the West African state of Nigeria, whereby editors and their friends published themselves and attained Professorships and latter lost interest in the journal (Olokuju 2004).

It is of significant importance that research work engaged by scholars needs to identify itself with the African problem in all its dimensions and angles. A good example at UKZN can be found at the Centre for the AIDS Program of Research in South Africa (CAPRISA), where intensive investigation and practical engagement with the AIDS epidemic is underway. However, it needs to be emphasised that such research also ought to seek African solutions to the problem concerned. Most scholars' research

within African communities but such work is not translated to indigenous languages for people to access it. It ends up in the high ivory tower libraries without being read for years, if ever. Zeleza (2003) argues that the hegemony of European languages in African institutions of higher learning and in African intellectual discourse poses a major constraint to the expressive freedom of students and even faculty. Unless we tackle this issue at UKZN, countless generations of Africans will remain mediocre, and in the end failures.

6. Scholars' Views on the UKZN Merger

There have been voices that describe the UKZN merger as a government strategy of rewarding formally historically advantaged (White) university with a takeover of the historically disadvantaged institution-University of Durban-Westville, in the form of a hostile takeover (Mantzaris 2004). In fact this takeover was described vividly before it occurred by the Combined Staff Association (REFERENCE/LETTER TO ASMAL). Renowned sociologist and analyst A. Desai (2004) sees the recent initiative by government of merging institutions as a strategy of McDonalisation of higher education in the name of transformation .

Universities might end up functioning as a franchise and the breeding ground on neo-liberal agents. The adoption of such route will not allow much room for the legitimation of African views. How possible will it be to create a Premier University of African Scholarship when the African voice is marginalised and academic performance is measured in terms defined by Western standards of scholarship and research (such as frequency of publication internationally refereed journals)? Under such circumstances the average African scholar is already severely handicapped, no matter what the subject matter may be (Crossman 2004).

Pitika Ntuli's analysis (cited in Makgoba 1999) that we are chasing the gods that are not our own, enlightens the debate. As learning becomes increasingly valued for its instrumentality, more emphasis is put on the technical and professional fields at the expense of humanities and the basic sciences, on applied research over basic research (Zeleza 2003). Singh (2001) argues that reforms in higher education embody narrow economistic

cost-efficiency principles and do not sufficiently integrate the broader social purposes of public education.

7. Conclusion

Fanon (1963), once said,

> The unpreparedness of the educated classes, the lack of practical links between them and the mass of the people, their laziness, and let it be said, their cowardice at the decisive moment of the struggle will give rise to tragic mishaps.

The same tragic mishaps happened with the merger at the UKZN as people were not thoroughly prepared for the challenges ahead, academics never raised a voice of dissatisfaction over issues of governance, and those who took the front seat in the process did it for positioning themselves for positions of power. This renders the so called transformation of higher education process a tragedy of historical significance and future repercussions. One of the authors of the article speaking as a unionist stated openly that, "The merger is doomed because all university committees are dominated by white former UN employees" (*Mail and Guardian* 9/7/2004). Majoritarianism in decision making bodies such as the Senate, the Faculty Boards, and the Staffing Committees is the order of the day and they rubberstamp decisions that will bear lasting consequences at all layers and levels of the new university. A merger is never an event. Although some people have treated it as one it is a process of pain, struggle and tenacity. Those who are decisive will triumph; those who are silent will ultimately face the consequences of their decision.

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Women in Academic Leadership in South Africa: Conventional Executives or Agents of Empowerment?

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> Although women represent more than half of the world population, there is no country in which women represent half, or even close to half, of the corporate managers (Adler & Israeli 1994).

Introduction

In South African there is a conscious and deliberate political commitment to address women's issues and participation in political participation and other social institutions. This commitment is expressed in the social policies of the ANC led government and the policies that universities such as KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) have adopted to effect and enhance their gender and equity promotion programmes. According to South African Statistics (2003) the average number of women in senior management is about 24% across all the current institutions of higher learning. In the corporate sector, it is about 20%, and the majority of the 20 percent is Caucasian (The South African Business Woman, South African Women in Corporate Leadership Census, 2005). These statistics indicate that South Africa faces a challenge when it comes to the participation and visibility of women in leadership both in academia and the corporate sector.

The ANC quota system is a strategy that ensures women representation and participation. At present South Africa ranks 15th in the world with regard to the number of women in parliament. In 2004, close to

thirty percent (29.8%) of members of parliament were women holding substantive portfolios such as foreign affairs, health, mineral and energy, agriculture and justice (Gouws 2004). In academia and the corporate sector a similar pattern is emerging.

This study is engaged with the understanding that institutions of higher education are going through a stage of transformation and identity-construction for themselves in the context of the country's nation building agenda and their own visions and missions, which talk strongly to transformation and redress. Part of the transformation and redress agenda expresses itself through the demographic profiles of students, staff and women in management and governance structures. The University of KwaZulu-Natal is experiencing an increase of the female students registering at undergraduate levels between 2004 and 2005. The female student population increased from 43% in 1990 to 57% in 2003; male student population decreased from 57% to about 43% during the same period. The total student population has doubled during the same period from 14,065 to 29,000 in 2003 but the academic staff remains inconsistent with the student profile. The distribution of academic staff by rank and race (2002) show that there are 3 African full Professors, 0 Coloured, 21 Indian and 149 White, 17 African Associate Professors, 1 Coloured, 5 Indian and 83 White. The majority are white and male. The pattern is similar with Deans of Faculties, and Heads of School and nationally when it comes to student and staff profile the pattern remains the same.

A similar trend of increase of the number of female academic staff is not emerging at the same rate when it comes to female academic staff. In relation to scenarios such as these the Education White Paper 3 (1997: 19) states:

> Human resources development for the higher education system is particularly important. Unlike the changing student profile, especially at undergraduate programmes, the composition of staff in higher education fails to reflect demographic realities. Black people and women are severely underrepresented especially in senior academic and management levels.

In this presentation the term black people incorporates Africans, Coloureds

and Indians. The Ministry of Education in particular and the government in general, through policy frameworks and research, advocate that women in academia engage in the merger, transformation and change agenda. These policy frameworks and the transformation agenda pose challenges for women in academia, such as taking the initiative in defining the agenda for retention, promotion, access to postgraduate programmes, research and teaching and learning resources, defining the capacity building activities within the institutions of higher learning and addressing gender inequality.

The current policy frameworks (Education White Paper 1997; White Paper on Science and Technology 1996; National Plan for Higher Education 2001) are extremely friendly and enabling to measures and initiatives that provide opportunities and environments to redress inequalities experienced by female academics. Through these policies the Ministry of Education clearly supports measures that prioritise access of black (designated groups) and women students to doctoral and post doctoral programmes. This initiative and focus on postgraduate admissions should be undertaken with an ongoing critical analysis of the decreasing number of learners going through the Grade 12 level. The causes of this decrease can be attributed to a number of factors, including the high rate of young persons dying and loosing parents at a tender age because of HIV/AIDS related conditions. The Ministry of Education also supports the re-engineering human resource units within higher education to ensure that they are an integral part of transformation and promotion of equality (Education White Paper 1997; White Paper on Science and Technology 1996). In addition to the transformation and empowerment policies there is a merger imperative among and between institutions of higher learning. The mergers that are taking place (2003 - 2006) are challenging mindsets, cultures, established practices and power bases in institutions of higher education, demanding best practices in both academic leadership and overall institutional leadership. Mergers, like all change processes, can result in (a) organized resistance formations attempting to guard fiercely the practices of the past, (b) loss of privileges that came with past practices (c) attempts to maintain the culture of exclusion in all its forms such as the isolation of promising female scholars, and (d) passive mentoring and subtle non-transference of competencies and skills. Weiler (2001) and Jansen (2001) shed some light on the thesis of the 'enduring politics of ambivalence' and the 'putative cost

of reform', i.e. what presents itself as organised resistance to the transformation of higher education in South Africa.

Another context that informs this presentation is that at this time in our history, academics must charge themselves with the mission and responsibility to create a higher education system that first and foremost serves the aspiration and needs of Africa, and participate in creating and engineering an educational tapestry that is rooted to the conditions of Africa (Makgoba & Seepe 2004). In post-colonial Africa higher education cannot be separated from the national development and social welfare agendas of individual African countries. Gendered and cultural inequities are some of the critical and fundamental social challenges that must be confronted by women as a force, if women are to be major players in higher education. Knowledge is a human construction that by definition, has a human purpose, and as such, cannot be sterile or neutral in its conception, formulation and development. The generation of knowledge is thus contextual in its nature (Makgoba 1997).

This paper takes the position that:

- women in academia have a substantive role to play in the change processes, management and decision–making in institutions of higher learning;

- women have potential and ability which can be translated into effective leadership;

- developing and enhancing women in leadership roles in institutions of higher learning requires a systemic plan, strategy and process that is driven by women in the academy;

- women should continue playing representative but more critically assume substantive roles especially when it comes to the fundamental purposes of higher education namely, research, teaching and learning contributing to what Evans (1999) refers to as human endeavour and the moving forward of the boundaries of knowledge. Women who excel in these scholarly activities serve as powerful role models.

- women must understand that when they assume leadership roles they will be confronted by hostility, isolation, lack of peer support, lack of mentorship, learning and interpreting the organizational culture on ones toes, understanding who is who in the organizational structure, power dynamics and alliances and sometimes harsh criticism from all genders, especially from women themselves. These challenges must not be an excuse for developing and living negative self-valuations or retreating from leadership responsibilities; the realities, challenges and expectations of the day in higher education, seem to require organisational hierarchies to be flattened, and less controlling and dominating styles of leadership. In other words, 'leadership should be an outcome of the necessary and reciprocal relationship among leaders and collaborators' (McMahon 2001:12). Women in leadership must be seen to be doing things differently, practicing the culture of inclusion, challenging the power status quo, rather than being co-opted into the dominant power structures, mentoring young up and coming scholars and adapting engaging leadership styles. If cultural patterns of dominance and hierarchy have kept women 'in place' then it is not enough to simply move some women up the hierarchy. Women assuming leadership positions have to challenge established patriarchal and hierarchical styles of leadership, redefine power relations rather than allowing themselves to be co-opted, navigate and take risks of advancing the transformation and reconstruction agendas;

- women are agents of transformation who must adopt a human rights and empowerment models of intervention and detach from the 'victim syndrome'. Part of this approach is initiating communication and dialogues with the male colleagues on communication as peers and equal partners in the leadership and governance structures of the institution, breaking the 'old boys network' rituals, gendered inequalities and the institutional transformation programmes;

- as Kerr (1995:103) asserts 'the modern university is a pluralistic institution – pluralistic in several senses in having several purposes, not one; in having several centres of power, not one; in serving

several clienteles, not one'. The tendency in South African universities is that the centres of power diversify and express themselves through male-male influential groupings, pockets of resistance amongst academics, which take racial or former institutions' (boys club) forms. Centres of power include schools within the institution, faculties, colleges, executive management, senates, and councils. Birnbaum states that governance and management within higher education must contend with multiple sources of control, unclear or competing missions, decentralized structures and constrained resources (Liscinsky, Chambers, & Foley 2001: 169). Gender mainstreaming and feminist approaches in this turbulent and dynamic pluralistic environment become essential. From the perspective of African feminism women have throughout history challenged oppressive gender relations (Mannathoko 1999). They continue to be better positioned to be part of the collective diverse leadership within transforming and merging institutions of higher education. They can no longer have the luxury of being seen as the 'fairer sex' but must define and position themselves as strong, powerful agents of change and development. In addition the policy frameworks protect women from becoming 'token' managers and leaders. Women are viewed as equal active partners in the changing climate and future of higher education.

- Women bring intellectual value to scholarship, research and to pedagogy.

Higher Education Policies and Transformation in South Africa

The Education White Paper 3 (1997) identifies five specific deficiencies in higher education in South Africa. These deficiencies provide imperatives for transformation and pose clear challenges to all, including women academics. This presentation confines itself to three specific deficiencies namely:

- 'There is an inequitable distribution of access and opportunity to students and staff along the lines of race, gender, class and geography. There are gross discrepancies in the participation rates of

students from different population groups, indefensible imbalances in the ratio of black female staff compared to whites and males, and equally untenable disparities between historically black and historically white institutions in terms of facilities and capabilities'.

- The governance of higher education at a system level is characterized by 'fragmentation, inefficiency and ineffectiveness, with too little co-ordination, few common goals and negligible systematic planning, democratic participation and the effective representation of staff and students in governance structures is still contested on many campuses' (p.3).

- On governance and transformation the White Paper 3 (1997) states 'the transformation of the structures, values and culture of governance is a necessity, not an option for South African higher education. The transformation of governance in the national system and its institutions is therefore a fundamental policy commitment of the Ministry of Education' (p.19).

The White Paper acknowledges that despite the negative consequences of the apartheid legacy, some higher education institutions have developed international competitive research and teaching capacities. Currently four South African universities are, according to the Shangai Jiao Tong Institute in China, on the list of the best 500 universities worldwide. These are the universities of Cape Town, Wits, Pretoria and KwaZulu-Natal (*City Press* 2005). One of the principles that undergirds transformation is equity. This principle has to be understood and unbundled in the context of the major deficiencies outlined in the White Paper.

The transformation and higher education policies therefore require or speak to leadership that is informed by interdependence of people, promotion of collective action, and the competencies and motivation of all those involved. In addition, the mindset of the leadership must demonstrate a confident buy-in into the constitution of the country, the change policies, the human rights approach, the national and societal priorities and the vision and missions articulated in the charters of the institutions of higher education. The transformation and changes that are taking place in higher education

require what Faris and Outcult (2001) term inclusive and process-orientated leadership. This type/style of leadership suggests a high level of interaction with a range of situational variables, confronting gender and traditional leadership stereotypes, managing the collective intelligence of the institution, eliminating collective dysfunction, managing conversion and diversion of academic programmes, facilitating academic and administrative components of the institution and intra-disciplinary interaction to achieve harmony and engaging with the various constituencies within the institution and good governance practices. Overall, the authors agree with the view that institutions of higher education require less hierarchical leadership arrangements. This is not advocating for anarchy. This view is informed by the current reality that these institutions require leadership for change, innovation and development. The leadership capacities for a team player and change agent academic will require, amongst other things the capacities outlined by Faris and Outcult (2001). These capacities are collaboration, lifelong learning and diversified perspective.

Theories on Leadership and Behavioural Styles

The priorities of the higher education agenda outlined in the policy documents (White Paper 3, Transformation of Higher Education 1997), outdate the theories of traditional or conventional styles of leadership. The current change imperatives are development, equity and transformation. Transformation includes amongst other things, demographical, curriculum and pedagogical transformation, building new layers of academic and administrative leadership and management, reviewing recruitment and retention, promotion policies and organisational practices. Women in the academy are challenged to jettison the deficit and marginality mode of operation and take initiatives in driving the change and rehabilitative processes within the institutions of higher learning. This includes addressing racism and gendered inequalities.

Leadership in a transforming environment requires certain types of behaviour from the leadership. The leadership must assume active engagement and dialogue with the different constituencies in the university, such as staff and other unions, institutional forums, completing postgraduates, new and younger academics. Conversations with constituents

promote participative leadership. Conventional styles of leadership are immediately compromised by the very nature of the issues at hand. In addition principles such as equity, accountability, explicitness in what Yeatman (1995) refers to as a new form of contractualism, managing and leading by consensus. Teamwork, collective decision making and collective intelligence inform the transformative style of leadership. Theories of the 20th Century such as the military, trait and great man theories are put to test by the challenges of the time (Bass 1981; Faris & Outcult 2001). In the military theory the leader controls people, shapes their behaviour and sometimes their thinking and takes responsibility for their actions. In the traits theory of leadership leaders are perceived to be born rather than produced within social environments. With the great man theory leaders are perceived as those individuals who are endowed with the ability to lead. These styles share common characteristics namely, that leaders are male, people become leaders by ascription and through Darwinist kinds of methods, and that leadership is about control and dominance. A specific observation made by Stogdill (Bass 1990) is the insensitivity and deficiency of the trait theory to situational variables. We take the view that this deficiency is present in all these theories of leadership, varying in degree and intensity.

The Twentieth Century saw the emergence of other theories of leadership such as Behavioural, Contingency and Influence theories. During the last decade of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, we began to see new paradigms and models of leaderships, flattened hierarchy and non-hierarchical models. For example authors such as Komives, Lucas and McMahon, (1998) posit that leadership is relational, a process where people gather attempting to accomplish change or make a difference to benefit the common good. In their view leadership is process-orientated, inclusive, empowering, purposeful and ethical. Bonous-Hammarth (2001:38) suggests a social change model that

> seeks to develop a conscious and congruent person who can collaborate with others, who can become a committed participant in shaping of the group common purpose, who can help to resolve controversy with civility and be a responsible citizen.

This model seems to be informed by the conflicts, diversity and conversion, and sometimes creative tensions brought about by change and shared leadership. This in our view is the type of leadership that allows people to engage with issues of equity, merger and transformation – all very contemporary in higher education.

Challenges Facing Women in Leadership

The challenges facing women in academic leadership and management will be discussed under two headings, endogenous and exogenous factors.

1 Endogenous Change Factors

Endogenous changes are essential for creating the critical mass that is necessary for women to succeed in academia. This suggests an active and proactive involvement of women in their own mobility in the competitive and male dominated executive and management arena. The policies and guidelines on higher education (White Paper 3 1997) outline broadly the deficiencies, and what 'ought to be' in higher education. Some of the challenges facing women in academia are as follows.

Perception of the Changing Scenario in Higher Education

The manner in which women analyse, perceive and engage with the change processes in universities to a great extent, define their location and self-perception as stakeholders in higher education. In instances where we have programmes such as Gender Studies, who drives and defines those programmes, and how visible are they in the merger and equity agendas of the universities? Can women at universities talk about these programmes without stammering and hesitation? Are there specific programmes that talk to women in that particular university? Questions such as these and others will have to be addressed if women were to participate meaningfully in shaping the agenda of higher education.

Self-perception

The self that women, particularly women from South African designated groups present at the institutions of higher learning determine how they are

perceived by others within the system. The following guidelines could improve how women are perceived:

- Believe in yourself as a person and be able to do personal audits of strengths, and areas of personal growth.
- Be alive to the harsh realities of male dominated sub-systems, align yourself with those who are supportive;
- Whatever you do must contradict the negative expectations and stereotypes about women. In some instances the credit for one's accomplishment as a woman may be attributed to some other sources other than one's abilities or capabilities.

The Balance Theory as posited by Heider (1958) comes in handy especially when one looks at the legacy and the present state of gender/race relations in South Africa. According to the balance theory, there is strong inclination for people to maintain consistency, or balance, among elements of their cognitive system. It is therefore not surprising that when Black women display competence, ability, and acquire authority and power the skeptics give other rationales for this which will restore the balance by changing the attitude system. Some possible ways of making sense of these womens' achievements include rationalizations such as (a) they are different and exceptional, (b) they are imitating men or they internalized American habits. The list goes on. What these attitudes do is to restore the cognitive balance (well there are exceptions) and keep intact the stereotype. It is not unusual to hear statements such as the following in the academy when issues of transformation and equity are raised:

> 'we do not have black women who can take over';
> 'it's a pity we had Prof X but she left us – when in actual fact conditions were made deliberately unbearable for her';
> 'we cannot find black Africans'.

The point made here is that out there is a possibility of being confronted by people who refuse or deny the reality and are rigidly bound in their race and gender stereotypes. It is such perceptions that keep women in the margins – in some instances those who hold power are the same persons who hold such

views. Of course we cannot deny that such views or cognitive systems are held to perpetuate the status quo.

The active engagement of women in academic leadership must be a norm in the 21st Century not a result of co-option or leadership by default. Lucy Slowe (1930) once asserted

> black women come to college with several problems (a) inexperience in civic life affairs (b) a conservative background which foster traditional attitudes towards women, and (c) a debilitating psychological approach to life (cited in Reid 1990:158).

These are not helpful for a positive and dynamic self-perception. Given these experiences, one is persuaded by Bonous-Hammarth's (2001:35) social model of leadership which emphasizes a 'conscious and congruent person'.

Mentors

Mentorship is limited for women in leadership. However this should be viewed as an opportunity rather than an adversity. Women in leadership or management positions, should take a deliberate initiative in identifying and engaging our male counterparts and other women 'who have been there' to be our mentors. Given the historical profile of women in leadership there are very few women in South Africa who have assumed positions of leadership such as Vice-Chancellor, Deans or Registrars. This reality limits the critical mass for female mentors. The same can be said about women managers in the corporate sector (Deloitte & Touché 2001; Magau 2005; Naidoo 1997a; Statistics South Africa 1999; Surajnarayan 2002). Male colleagues in positions of leadership and management must not be alienated but be viewed as mentors, in a mutual learning curve. What has to be understood is that male academic mentors may not necessarily be skilled managers at universities in particular, but valuable partners in understanding and socializing women into the politics and culture of the organization, that is, influencing decision making processes and procedures, methods of gaining visibility in the organization or institution, stumbling blocks, norms, values, standards and history of the institution.

Women who presently occupy management positions can play a mentoring role. The female executives can establish a system and create

spaces for conversations with other female academics on management models in merged institutions. Considering the culture of subtle alienation and isolation that has developed over the years in some institutions, senior female executives can, where new and vacant posts exist at different levels of management, take deliberate conscious steps to recruit and headhunt females. The search for women leadership and management in academia remains a challenge essentially for women who are already in leadership and management positions.

Research undertaken in the United States in the 1980s and 1990s proves that mentors are identified, perhaps as the most important factor in the career success of women (Fagenson 1989; Gold & Pringle 1989; Limerick & Haywood 1992; Allen, Epps, Guillory, Suh & Bonous-Hammarth 2000). Findings in studies conducted by Korn and Ferry (1994) and Maloney (1994) on women in executive leadership in universities and the corporate sector, showed that about 47% of women executives in Australia had mentors, 86% of whom were males. These findings show that women are faced with a challenge of making a breakthrough in a domain that is dominated by males. According to Powell (2000) mentors contribute significantly to their proteges' career success and satisfaction.

Networks

Women are aware of the benefits of networking within the institution and outside the institution (endogenous and exogenous networks). However, very limited time and effort are invested in these areas. Up and coming women managers in academia get caught up in the day to day administrative, management and change processes within the institution. Mergers are the current activities that overwhelm both men and women in management positions. There is less integration into research and professional networks, which are important activities for mobility and recognition in institutions of higher learning. Participation in meaningful social networks is an added limitation, given the tendency to be excluded from the 'executive circle', intentionally or unintentionally. The point made here, is that women leaders must be alive to these realities, be more assertive and take the initiative to generate their own brands of networks within and outside the academy. One cannot be prescriptive, but simply highlight this reality and present it as an

area of challenge for women in leadership. Black women in particular have to understand the difficult of establishing networks which will be their support and mentoring subsystems (Reid 1990).

2 Exogenous Change Factors

Institutions of higher education are part of the larger social, historical and economic environment in societies. The gendered inequities, and racially different status positions inherent in higher education in South Africa are consistent with the positions found and being addressed in other sectors. The South African National Census (StatsSA 2001) shows that women constitute 52% of the total population, 41% as percentage of the employed population, 14.7% executive managers and 7% as directors. The corporate sector has developed deliberate interventions to redress the status of women executives (Magau 2005).

The African National Congress government has put in place policies, legislation and guidelines within which public and private institutions, including institutions of higher education, develop their equity and transformation programmes. Some of these are the Employment Equity Act 1995, and The Education Act 1997 amongst numerous other documents. These policies and frameworks are exogenous factors that can be utilized as powerful tools for self-reflection and assessment. They require a mindset that is willing to implement and review progress within specific time frames in the life of an institution. Getting constructive feedback, no matter how brutal it is, is one way of growing in the transforming/change management environment. Policies therefore are exogenous change guidelines that assume that people at the workplaces will take responsibility to develop plans and initiatives to implement the required equity imperatives.

There is evidence that exogenous changes through legislation have been successful. They do not necessarily give preferential treatment to women purely on the gender basis; they put into the consideration qualification and merit (Rindfleish 1995). Exogenous factors are another form of transformation space which can be utilized by women to influence their status in higher education. In South Africa, the exogenous changes are in place and institutions are taking positive steps to implement the policies which clearly require specific outcomes and accountability. At the

University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) for example, faculties and schools develop clear Equity Plans as part of their Business Plans

The national educational imperatives, the regional development agenda and principles outlined in the white papers and national strategies require collective and collaborative strategic plans, institutional frameworks and interventions. This therefore suggests less hierarchical leadership and leadership for transformation. Leaders and managers within academia must take the initiatives to develop a conceptual and theoretical understanding of leadership styles and /models that can work in a transforming and collaborative environment. The danger of not being a reflective leadership is that women and others who come from the designated groups may easily get co-opted into the old dominant culture of leadership and management. The merged institutions face a contradictory advantage – the leadership within must drive the transformation and equity agendas. The advantage is that leadership from within are familiar with the institutional dynamics and organisational culture; the limitation is that the leadership within, may not necessarily be the best drivers for transformation, particularly if they have been primary benefactors from the old institutional regime.

Conclusion

Women in the academy make contributions in teaching, administration, student support, all of which are important functions. However, considerations for tenure, promotion and leadership positions require research productivity and assertiveness to assume leadership that is empowering and transformative. The combination and strategic combination of the endogenous and exogenous factors can make women in the academy successful agents of transformation and empowerment .

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Planning Complexity: Access and Retention at a Merging Institution

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Introduction

Academic management is a highly complex endeavour: increasingly, it must respond at the same time to the imperatives of globalizing higher education, to proliferating educational policy development, to national priorities in terms of human resource development, and finally to the demands of its more localized context, its stakeholder and its customers. This paper unpacks some of this complexity by focusing on the ongoing processes of conceptualizing, organizing and implementing a university-wide access and retention portfolio, within a huge and newly-merged institution. By reflecting on one set of institutional experiences and the processes involved, the paper seeks to contribute to our understanding of comparable challenges facing many of our universities.

The University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) came into being on 1st January 2004, by means of a merger of the former Universities of Durban-Westville, and Natal. Its vision is to become the 'premier university of African scholarship', and its mission:

> a truly South African university that is academically excellent, innovative in research, critically engaged with society and demographically representative, redressing the disadvantages, inequities and imbalances of the past.

To achieve this mission, the University *inter alia* has declared widening access a core strategic initiative, as spelt out in the first of its declared goals:

> Promote access to learning that will expand educational and employment opportunities for the historically disadvantaged, and support social transformation and redress.

As a means of working towards this goal, an executive-level Access portfolio, with responsibilities across the whole university, has been instituted as part of the University's Executive team.

Planning for this portfolio is of necessity planning complexity, in a context in which complexity accrues from a variety of sources. Firstly the context of merger – a context in which systems are being built which may still be tentative and liable to change, as their impact on each other and their consequences for institutional functioning become more clear. The sheer size of the merged institution (43,500 students) requires in itself complex management systems, to ensure efficiency. As Ramsden (1998: 35) has pointed out:

> Quite simply, mass higher education and knowledge growth have fundamentally altered the nature of university management structures. Smaller universities catering for academic elites were less complicated organisations to administer than large diverse ones. Management by unanimity and self-government is evidently incompatible with the efficient operation of huge organisations. It is too slow to respond, too unwieldy to direct, too focused on problems rather than outcomes, and too short on professional expertise to guarantee quality, financial probity, and on-time delivery to multiple customers.

Increased consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, both inside and outside the university, is now required, in terms of equity and procedural transparency. The desirability of conceptualising student learning holistically, in terms of both academic and social aspects of the educative experience, requires the integration of services from a range of campus services: Admissions, Student Management, Student Funding, Residences, Student Counselling. Further complexity accrues through ongoing policy development by the Department of Education, not least through the number and range of policy documents which are contributing to reshaping the

education system as a whole. At the same time, the familiar world of knowledge is also undergoing radical change: scholars now have to come to terms with what Watson has termed 'the changing map of knowledge, with its corrosion of disciplinary boundaries' (2000:3), and indeed, with new understandings of what is even meant by knowledge; this presents enormous new challenges to disciplines and the organisation of study programmes. (This is not being further discussed in this paper.) It is not surprising that the structures emerging at UKZN are themselves complex and require careful negotiation.

Starting-point for any discussion of Higher Education in South Africa has to be the policies of the Department of Education, as the framework to which institutions are seeking to respond[1]. The *National Plan for Higher Education* (2001) spelled out core strategic objectives for higher education: to establish indicative targets for the size and shape of the higher education system; to take steps to ensure the diversity of institutional mission and programme differentiation; to restructure the institutional landscape; to develop a new approach to research funding (CHE 2004: 28-29). Within this broader framework, institutional mergers formed part of the restructuring of the institutional landscape in terms of quality, sustainability and equity. The structures and strategic initiatives proposed by UKZN have sought to respond to these objectives, specifically within the KwaZulu-Natal context. Thus, in terms of the stress laid by DoE policy documents on equity considerations, the UKZN Council instituted two Executive portfolios which address issues of equity: the Equity portfolio, which focuses primarily on staff equity, and the Access portfolio, which focuses on student equity, and is to conclude its work by the end of 2007.

The label 'Access portfolio', however, has turned out to be something of a misnomer. An appropriately broad understanding of 'Access' must derive from the encompassing conceptualisation of student equity spelled out in various policy documents. For instance,

> Equity is about more than just formal access to higher education: it is also about substantive access to a variety of academic fields and disciplines, to postgraduate study, and to opportunities and outcomes in general, in all fields and disciplines, and at all levels of study (CHE 2004: 60).

[1] In the following I have drawn largely on the recent CHE publication: *South African Higher Education in the First Decade of Democracy* (CHE 2004).

The CHE review subsequently spells this out in more detail:

> Three of the strategic objectives of the National Plan directly referenced student equity. First, the goal of producing graduates with skills and competencies to meet South Africa's human resources needs required increasing the participation rate (from 15% to 20% by 2010 – 2015), as well as the number of enrolments. It required increasing graduate outputs in line with specific benchmarks (e.g. 25% for three-year undergraduate programmes, and 33% for master's programmes); changing enrolments by field of study (from a humanities: business/commerce: SET ratio of 49%:26%:25% to 40%:30%:30%) recruiting non-traditional students (e.g. workers, mature learners and the disabled); and increasing student recruitment from the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Second, the strategic goal of achieving equitable student and graduate profiles required a range of planning and funding levers to increase overall access and success. Third, the goal of sustaining and developing research capacity required a range of planning and funding levers to increase postgraduate enrolments and success at master's and doctoral level (CHE 2004: 63-64).

The initial focus of the UKZN Access portfolio was on school-leavers from educationally marginalized contexts; and in the merger context, this was quite possibly justifiable as the most immediate need. However, over the past 18 months the scope of the portfolio has expanded far beyond this to include outreach activities into local schools, access into post-graduate studies, RPL and mature learners, and – crucially – issues of retention and through-put.

The CHE review makes mention of the three levers which will help position institutions to achieve these policy goals: planning, funding and quality assurance. In the following I focus on each of these in turn (while bearing in mind that the three are closely linked), to derive a more precise

understanding of 'access' and 'student equity', and how the portfolio has been shaped by and is seeking to respond to each of these levers.

The Framework: Departmental Policies

Planning: The Need to Plan

While the White Paper had identified the need for planned expansion linked to sustainability (as opposed to uncoordinated massification), the following five years saw a period of rapid (and unplanned) shifts in student enrolments, based not least on entrepreneurial initiatives by some of the former HAIs. As a result, the recent policy document: *Student enrolment planning in public higher education* (2004) states clearly that student enrolment cannot be left to what it terms the 'vagaries of the market, in particular, uncoordinated institutional decisions on student enrolments and programme offerings'. The document seeks to spell out student enrolment plans which the department considers will be affordable and sustainable, on the basis of three key factors:

- The imperative to match enrolment plans with available resources to enable the higher education system to deliver on its teaching and research mandate;
- The need to ensure that enrolment plans are linked to national human resources and research priorities. (Here the document mentions scarce skills fields such as teacher education and science, engineering and technology.)
- The need to enhance quality, in particular, throughput and graduation rates.

The enrolment parameters spelled out in this document have required the Access portfolio to reconsider carefully what had been inherited from the former two institutions. This included several alternative access programmes in Science, Engineering, the Humanities and Management Studies, together with a strong imperative to facilitate access to school-leavers from disadvantaged contexts; for some staff this also included the general awareness that the university must then offer alternative access students an enabling learning context.

The *Student enrolment planning* document presented the need for shifts in enrolments by fields and qualification level (to achieve the desired 40:30:30 spread); the need to focus on access to scarce skills fields, to increase PG access and success, and to enable access to hitherto neglected groups such as mature age students, workers, learners with disabilities – highlighting additional fields of endeavour for the Access portfolio. In addition, it spelled out the requirement of substantial increases in throughput rates, at all levels. In seeking to address this particular point, it would seem necessary for the Access portfolio to expand its focus beyond the needs of alternative access students only. In particular, the following comment from the CHE review is apposite:

> Equity of opportunity and outcomes will crucially depend on high quality provision in teaching and learning, curriculum innovation, and appropriate academic development and mentoring initiatives (CHE 2004: 90).

The *Student enrolment planning* document, however, added another issue to the UKZN debate: the recommended reductions in student registrations, together with the imperative to improve throughput rates, was by many considered to raise the question as to whether alternative access students should still be accommodated at all, if the school system was already producing enough qualified applicants to fill all available study places. By what justification were we to turn away applicants with, perhaps, 36 Matric points, on grounds of lack of capacity, yet at the same time to register applicants with 24 Matric points in a Foundation programme? This debate became of especial relevance to two Faculties, Humanities and Management Studies, in that institutional planning of student enrolments had substantially cut their numbers of entrants.

In this context, where UKZN is required to remain at 2003 levels, the Access portfolio cannot simply propose increasing the numbers of 'disadvantaged' and 'underprepared' students in the system (which had perhaps been an expectation in the early days of the merger.) Rather the focus must be on more limited numbers of alternative access students, but at the same time on ensuring that a higher proportion of these do indeed succeed.

Funding: The Need to Stay Solvent

We now turn to the impact of DoE funding policies (and specifically the new funding framework) on the university as a whole, and as a framework for the Access portfolio.

The intention of the new funding framework is doubtless to fund universities equitably, while enabling institutional and social redress. Yet, given the 'perceptible decline' in government grants in the years after 2000 (CHE 2004: 207), and the very significant additional costs incurred by merging institutions, institutions will of necessity seek to position themselves so as to reap maximum benefit from the framework. The Access portfolio in turn will seek to use the funding framework to prioritise and maximize funding for alternative access initiatives, and for academic development more generally, within the overall straitened university budget and the legitimate demands of other budget-holders. Yet possibilities are limited: UKZN can seek to improve through-put rates (at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels), in terms of the incentives offered by the uncapped teaching output funds; to contribute to increased research output grants through research and higher degrees relating to access and AD; and can apply for the ear-marked funding for foundation programmes. (UKZN does not qualify for a Teaching Improvement grant.)

Rather than expect unlimited numbers of access students to be funded, a responsible approach must first ask the question: how many alternative access students can the institution afford? The impact on resources will include: resources in terms of staffing, supplies and services and infrastructure, Financial Aid packages (NSFAS) and residence places, but also a potential *loss* of resources from the teaching output funds, in that it can be anticipated that alternative access students will be likely to produce lower throughput rates.

It will be evident from this brief overview that parameters of both planning and funding are based, to a considerable extent, on the need for efficiency: and that efficiency and equity, at times, may not be easily juxtaposed.

Quality Assurance: Claims of Excellence

The quality assurance of Higher Education is based on the considered

definition of quality published in the HEQC Founding Document, with the following four components:

> *Fitness of purpose*: quality within the context of national goals for the higher education system, including equity, access, effectiveness and efficiency (responsiveness);
>
> *Fitness for purpose*: quality in relation to a specified institutional mission within a national framework that encompasses differentiation and diversity;
>
> *Value for money*: quality judged in relation to the full range of higher education purposes set out in the White Paper;
>
> *Transformation*: quality higher education that develops the capabilities of individual learners for personal enrichment, as well as the requirements of social development and economic and employment growth (and) educational and social effectiveness (CHE 2004: 147).

Consensus has been reached that

> QA should remain primarily the role of HEIs themselves in a model combining institutional self-evaluation and external validation by the HEQC (CHE 2004: 147).

Hence the HEQC's stated intentions are to 'balance improvement and accountability roles, and to build a culture of self-managed evaluation to support self-accrediting institutions' (CHE 2004: 154). This is to be managed, on the one hand, through accreditation: the development of a new system of accreditation, the accreditation of programmes of public and private providers, specific re-accreditation initiatives, and overall coordination. On the other, a system of institutional audit has been developed, with the following goals:

> encouraging and supporting providers to maintain a culture of

> continuous improvement, by means of institutional quality processes that build on HEQC and institutionally-set requirements; enabling HEIs to develop reliable indicators that will assure institutional stakeholders and the HEQC that policies, systems, strategies and resources for assuring and enhancing quality in teaching and learning, research and community engagement are effective; and providing information and evidence that will enable HEIs and the HEQC to identify areas of strength and excellence, and areas in need of focused attention for planned improvement in the short, medium and long terms (CHE: 2004: 152).

As a merged institution, UKZN is to be audited in 2008, by which time it is hoped that the institution (under the guidance of the UKZN Office of Quality Promotion and Assurance) will have developed the culture and practices of self-evaluation and continuous improvement which will enable it to be granted self-accrediting status. The processes of reflection, self-evaluation and implementation of good practice will be lengthy, and staff are now gradually beginning on the necessary self-reflection, in terms of the various criteria and descriptors of good practice, as laid down in the HEQC programme accreditation and institutional audit documents.

While the 2008 audit will be at institutional level, the various foundation programmes at UKZN will be well advised to work with the *Criteria for programme accreditation*, which are directly applicable (even though they do not need to apply for accreditation). These include encompassing criteria which apply to student recruitment, admission and selection, staffing (both academic and support staff), teaching and learning strategies, student assessment policies and procedures, infrastructure and library resources, and programme administrative services.

In that the merger has necessitated considerable re-visiting of previously existing foundation programmes in the two former universities, it is appropriate that staff become aware of the various criteria and guidelines and seek to reflect on their applications during these developmental processes.

Potential Tensions within these Policies

While the importance of access and student equity is highlighted in all policy

documents, increasingly tensions with other imperatives are being identified. In 1994, NEPI had already focused on what it perceived as the challenge of balancing quality and equity. NEPI

> highlighted two questions ...: how could the demands of equity be made consistent with the need for a higher education system of high quality and how could the development needs of the country be met if priority were to be given to the elimination of inequalities in the system? (CHE 2004: 144).

This remains an issue today, with the new funding formula possibly nudging institutions towards a 'trade-off... between standards and throughput', which may become particularly important for academic development (CHE 2004: 154). The CHE review points to discussions which took place after the appearance of the *National Plan* in 2001, and which debated the

> extent to which an emphasis on system and educational efficiency (through a focus on throughput and equity of outcomes) was in tension with expanding participation rates according to principles of equity of access, and redress (CHE 2004: 29).

Similarly, the targets introduced by the *Student enrolment planning* document in 2004 have also been interpreted as limiting student equity. The CHE review comments that the intended integration of equity, efficiency and effectiveness may be 'slipping in favour of an efficiency focus' (CHE 2004: 29).

The Local Context: The New University

Structuring the New University

From the outset, the proposed merger of the former universities of Durban-Westville and Natal was understood as an opportunity to address the many challenges within higher education in KZN, in terms of the transformation imperative spelled out by the DoE. The merger brought together two universities with vastly different histories and institutional cultures; it created a new structure of 43 500 students and five campuses, spread across

two cities or sites. Within this KZN context, how has UKZN responded to and been shaped by departmental policies and the levers of planning, funding and quality?

In the pre-merger phase, leaders at both universities had decided to adopt the 'single Faculty single School' principle, in order to avoid duplication of academic governance structures and to ensure full integration of the two previous institutions, and the various campuses of the new university. When the merger took effect (January 1st 2004), the Interim Executive was structured with four Executive Deans who were responsible for academic governance in specific faculties, and a number of University-wide portfolios, for instance portfolios for Administration, Planning, Research, Students, Registrar, Access, Equity etc.

This preliminary structure evolved during 2004 and achieved some finality at the start of 2005, with the appointment of the substantive Executive. Midway through 2004, devolution was accepted as a core principle, and College model was implemented as organizational academic structure for UKZN, with four relatively independent Colleges consisting of clustered faculties (eight in all). In terms of this structure, academic and budgetary control was devolved to the four Executive Deans who subsequently took on the positions of DVC and Head of College. Each College consists of two multi-campus 'single' Faculties; Faculties in turn are constituted by multi-campus 'single' Schools consisting of either one discipline or a set of cognate disciplines. Colleges, Faculties and Schools are therefore likely to have staff and students on two, three or even four campuses. Within these structures, lines of management and reporting are vertical; but there is also of necessity ongoing horizontal interaction across sites and campuses. These core vertical structures are, however, now complemented by University-wide Executive portfolios and structures, by means of which other core functions are managed: Finance; Administration and Corporate Governance; Planning; an encompassing Research portfolio (Research, Knowledge Production and Partnerships); a Dean of Students; and more specialized portfolios for Institutional Culture, Equity, Outreach, Access and Public Affairs.

In this way, the merged university has become structured as a matrix, with intersecting vertical and horizontal lines of management and flows of information. These intersections of horizontal and vertical appear

essential to ensure that, on the one hand, Colleges do not become 'silos', self-enclosed units which are no longer available for inter-College activities and dialogue and which evolve independent policies and cultures, but that also, on the other, campuses receive equitable treatment in terms of resources and present an overall and cohesive image of UKZN.

The Access Portfolio: From 2004 to 2005

It is within this matrix that the Access portfolio is located, as a one + three-year portfolio: it is to exist until the end of 2007, by which time Access is to be fully embedded in Colleges and Faculties. By mid-2005, the Access portfolio has evolved into a 'virtual' Office, in that it has a minimal staffing complement. This points to its functions, as being primarily those of advocacy, policy development and monitoring; implementation of Access takes place at Faculty level, by Faculty staff. Relationships with UKZN staff are shaped by the network of horizontal and vertical structures: the Executive director relates horizontally with other members of the Executive, and especially the College Heads; vertically with staff who are involved in access initiatives. Line management functions, however, are limited to the three members of staff in the Access Office (an office administrator, a Coordinator of Testing, and a Researcher.)

It has taken a while for this present functioning of the Access Office to evolve. The year prior to the merger (2003) saw the development of what was to become the UKZN Access Policy. This took place through a series of Access workshops, which brought together colleagues from both former universities and served as one forum for emerging dialogue. Both universities had previously shown considerable commitment to access, but in rather different ways: at the former UN, alternative access had been managed by means of Faculty-specific access programmes (in Science, Engineering, Humanities and Commerce), with extremely limited academic support beyond these programmes. At the former UDW, in addition to a Science and Engineering Foundation Programme, students with lower Matric points were admitted rather widely, in terms of an 'open door' approach signaling 'opportunity'; somewhat limited academic support was made available in the shape of language courses. The need to reconcile these two approaches probably underpinned what became an exclusive focus on disadvantaged

school-leavers in the policy document; at the same time, however, the document did spell out the need for access to lead to success. The following excerpt gives a sense of the principles according to which Access for school-leavers was and is to be managed.

- Access-related activities and the widening of access to the University are fully acknowledged as integral to academic endeavour, and are held to be part of the University's core business.
- In widening access, redress is a core principle, requiring the development of those who have not had advantages in their earlier schooling, as opposed to those who have had every chance at school.
- Access is linked to success.
- Resources for access programmes will be especially directed towards degrees or qualifications that are consistent with current national needs.
- Access is managed and implemented at Faculty level (University of KwaZulu-Natal: Access Policy 2004).

It was this document which guided the work of the Interim Access Office during 2004, the first year of the merger. As a result, little policy work was done during 2004, and instead much time and effort was spent on interactions with teaching staff in Foundation programmes, both in building relationships across campuses, in bringing existing foundational programmes into alignment, and in developing appropriate new structures. This was doubtless a necessary stage in contributing to merger implementation, and was on the whole successfully carried through. At the same time, a rather less hands-on and much more selective start was made on the task of increasing student retention and throughput through curriculum innovation.

In 2005, however, the work of the Access portfolio has diversified, and much less time is being spent on interactions with staff at grassroots level. The Foundation programmes have been handed over to the Faculties, and are being managed from within Faculties. Of course, the strong sense of ownership at grassroots level may be less perceptible at Faculty management level, in that Deputy Deans may lack familiarity with access issues, and certainly have many other duties. This is, however, an essential stage in embedding Access within Faculties, and has freed up Access Office time for

other issues. The Access Office is now able to pay attention to student equity more broadly, as conceptualised by DoE policy: to RPL and access for adult learners; access into post-graduate studies; entrance and placement testing, and related institutional research; schools outreach; building relationships and partnerships with FET Colleges; issues of quality assurance and preparation for the institutional audit. At the same time, student retention and throughput (and, as a result, academic staff development) have been foregrounded, as a long-term ongoing initiative, and a current priority is to develop a model which will ensure that Faculties address this challenge.

Increasingly, however, it must be borne in mind that the Access Office is to close at the end of 2007, by which time all initiatives are to be fully embedded in Faculties. This shapes the trajectory of the existence and functioning of the Access Office: beginning with an initial period of brain-storming, planning, and setting-up of initiatives, with the Access Office creating a broad awareness of needs and requirements in terms of DoE policy and student preparedness; leading to widespread consultation and the development of policy and practices/strategies; followed by implementation at Faculty level, with Access Office support and monitoring; and finally hand-over to Faculties of both initiatives and the monitoring function. At the same time, however, those involved will do well to consider whether the whole business of access, teaching and learning is indeed best managed solely according to this decentralized model; or whether certain core functions should rather remain centralized.

Current Access Office Projects, and Implications for 'Planning Complexity'

Access for Adult Learners, and RPL

UKZN is late in developing an RPL policy: since 1994, RPL has regularly been identified as a means of redress, and the *White Paper* (1995: 15) spoke of RPL as

> open(ing) doors of opportunity for people, whose academic or career paths have been needlessly blocked because their prior knowledge (acquired informally or by work experience) has not been assessed and certified.

The former UDW had indeed developed a draft RPL policy, and at the former UN, the Nursing Programme had developed an implementation model. Some RPL is currently being undertaken, primarily in the Faculty of Education, but also at post-graduate level, for the admission of students who do not technically qualify.

The role of the Access Office in this regard, to date, has been policy development and advocacy. By means of a small expert group, a draft policy has been formulated, was taken to the Executive for initial consideration, and has now been sent through to Faculties for consideration by Faculty Boards. At the same time, however, advocacy will clearly be needed, as there appears to be little understanding of RPL and of the potential role of adult learners in university transformation: the Draft RPL policy is therefore accompanied by a position paper, which seeks to spell out this understanding. What will doubtless be much more challenging will be policy implementation by means of a centralised RPL office and complementary Faculty involvement. This will doubtless require considerable advocacy, individualised planning and direct involvement of the Executive Director.

Entrance and Placement Testing, and Associated Institutional Research

Interest in entrance and placement testing has increased substantially country-wide over the past decade. This interest arose initially from the awareness that Matriculation results are the outcome of vast differences in educational provision at school level, and that the sole reliance on Matriculation results was unfairly excluding many learners who might well succeed at university. In addition, Matriculation results were not proving very reliable in predicting success in HE – and the Department was requiring institutions to improve their throughput rates. And finally, whatever predictive value the Matriculation Exemption did have would disappear in 2008, with the introduction of the as yet untested National Senior Certificate. The first start was made by the Alternative Admissions Research Project at UCT over a decade ago; this was followed by the Tertiary Education Linkages Project's Standardised Achievement Test initiative; by the Admissions and Placement Assessment Programme at the University of Port Elizabeth; and by tests developed by the Health Science Faculties

Consortium. Given the general agreement that it is in academic and quantitative literacy and mathematics that the necessary academic skills are most frequently underdeveloped, these tests generally seek to assess these particular skills, in order either to admit selected learners who have not achieved the requisite levels of performance in the Senior Certificate examination, or to place learners appropriately for supplementary skills development.

Most recent is the SAUVCA/HESA national benchmark tests initiative, which differs from the other test initiatives, in that it proposes setting benchmarks of performance in the domains of academic literacy, quantitative literacy, and mathematics. The purpose of the initiative is

> to provide both sectors (schooling and HE) with important information on the skills and abilities of their exiting (in the case of schools) and entering (in the case of universities) students – information that does not duplicate the essential information delivered by the school-leaving examination, but provides an important extra dimension.

Benchmarks are defined as 'required minimum level(s) of achievement in some criterion referenced task with respect to a specific content domain', and the benchmarking function is seen as follows:

> the sector as a whole will develop, agree on, and hold to, the benchmark levels of performance below which students cannot be admitted directly to degree or diploma study (National Benchmark Tests... Concept Paper: 1).

UKZN is thoroughly involved in the full range of access and placement tests, and, given that many of these processes appear best driven centrally, a Coordinator for Testing (an experienced academic) has been seconded to the Access Office. At present, Faculties are being asked to decide whether they wish to participate in testing (with Faculties like Law and Medical School managing their own testing); it appears still too early for development of university-wide policy. The role of the Access Office at this stage is that of advice (based on an awareness of developments country-

wide) and coordination; liaison takes place, on the one hand, with Deans and Deputy Deans, on the other with Faculty admissions officers.

The entrance and placement testing initiative must, however, be complemented by research into the subsequent performance of students – students admitted both on the basis of Matriculation 'points', and by means of Matriculation 'points' plus an admissions test. (This is part of the validation process of the 'TELP-2' tests, the SATAP tests, which were piloted with the 2005 intake.) These processes, in turn, dovetail with research into student performance more generally, with the monitoring of throughput rates, and with the identification of both 'at risk' students and 'at risk' modules. At present this institutional research initiative is also being driven at a university-wide level by the Access Office, under the leadership of an academic colleague with expertise in academic development research. At the same time, pockets of research have long been undertaken in connection with various access initiatives: the leadership role involves, on the one hand, supporting and institutionalising these existing initiatives, and on the other the initiation of additional research, to ensure that a full picture is being obtained. A contract researcher with expertise in statistics is the fourth appointee to the Access Office, and serves as a university-wide resource in these processes.

Schools Outreach

An inheritance from the former University of Durban-Westville was Upward Bound Enrichment Project – a major schools outreach project with a five-year trajectory, which had been bringing large numbers of Grade 10 – 12 learners from disadvantaged schools to UDW for two-week residential Summer and Winter Schools. The core focus of this project was on Maths and Science upgrading and social and personal enrichment. The Access Office oversaw the final year of this project in 2004, after which funding was exhausted. At the same time, The Access Office provided funding for a small-scale Winter School initiative on Howard College campus. These two initiatives have posed questions, both as to the role of HE in assisting under-capacitated schools to deliver adequately prepared learners – especially in the 'scarce skills' domains of SET –, and also which model(s) are most effective and feasible, in terms of resources, both of personnel and money.

In this domain the role of the Access Office has varied between what became very time-consuming hands-on involvement in closing down Upward Bound (involving repeated meetings with Finance and auditors), and a satisfactory hands-off relationship with Fast Forward, involving an initial brief business plan and budget, and a final report and financial statement. While the demand is certainly enormous, the Upward Bound experience has shown that small-scale initiatives are certainly more feasible; and that serious Faculty ownership and involvement are crucial. Both initiatives, at the same time, raise the issue of the articulation between schools outreach initiatives and what the university can learn through them, and 'mainstream' curricula on campus – are universities simply trying to 'bring learners up to scratch', following which mainstream teaching can continue unperturbed? – or are universities seeking themselves to learn through involvement with the FET schools sector, in order to be able to respond more adequately to a diverse range of needs, competencies and interests, about which academics tend to know far too little?

What is the role of the Access Office in this regard? It has begun with information-seeking: how many schools outreach projects are actually being run at UKZN, and according to what models? But more broadly, what SET developmental projects (generally run by NGOs, but also by the Department – the Dinaledi schools) are currently in place throughout KZN? How might UKZN then best interface with what is currently in place? (A proposal currently under consideration envisages partnerships with a few, carefully selected rural schools, both to provide input for learners and teachers, but also to research means and processes of capacity development in such contexts.) Further Access Office roles will surely include advocacy and awareness-raising, possibly to be followed by a policy on curriculum, teaching and learning. The necessary liaison will involve Deans and Faculties, as well as the central Schools Liaison Unit.

With the introduction of the new National Senior Certificate curriculum from 2006, HE institutions will need to devote considerable energy to familiarising themselves with the new curricula in the various disciplines, in order to be able to articulate their curricula appropriately to the knowledge- and skills-base of incoming students. Within the university, experts from the Faculty of Education will be an essential resource; at the same time, colleagues will do well to remain in touch with what is happening

on the ground in schools.

Partnerships with Other Providers

Any attempt to impact more broadly on education in KZN will require support by means of partnerships with other providers. For instance, a partnership with a provider of pre-degree education for trade unionists in Durban (the Workers College) has been the means of developing a part-time degree programme for learners from trade unions and community-based organizations, most of whom would otherwise not have qualified to enter higher education. In this case, the Access Office has been offering support to a Faculty-driven initiative.

Partnerships with FET Colleges are a further possibility, especially given that the new vision for FET Colleges appears likely to position them predominantly post school, as a band between schools and HE. In an important speech in June 2005, the Minister spoke of the re-imaging of the FET colleges and announced their systemic development, lead by the DoE, with support from the government and private sector.

Strategies mentioned that are of particular interest to the HE sector include:

- Building a coherent framework of qualifications through the development of programmes that will **bridge** those offered by schools and by higher education institutions.
- Increasing the participation and success rates of persons in the **age group 16 to 24** in relevant, high quality FET programmes.
- Improving the **number of FET learners** achieving high levels of language, mathematics and science proficiency.

Possibly the HE sector might consider offering some of its current foundational provision (at Level 4) in partnership with selected FET colleges. As this would entail considerable capacity development, we would envisage exploring this initially through a pilot project. The Access Office might facilitate such partnerships, again in conjunction with Faculty Deans.

Access to Postgraduate Studies

A question frequently posed by members of all Faculties has been that of

access to post-graduate studies, which coincides with the need (in terms of the funding policy) to improve numbers, and success rates, at Masters and PhD levels. An audit carried out earlier this year confirmed what is widely perceived as the core issue: that many entrants (and not only those who are returning to post-graduate studies after years in the workplace) lack the appropriate academic literacy and research skills. At the same time, the application process in many programmes does not attempt to assess such skills, and many curricula do not build in the necessary development.

Most Faculties have appointed Deputy Deans with a research cum postgraduate studies portfolio; these will be appropriate liaison partners. UKZN does already have policy and procedures for the consideration of non-traditional applicants at postgraduate level; monitoring of these procedures is required, together with the implementation of strategies to ensure that all entrants do develop the necessary academic literacy and research skills. An appropriate model may, of course, differ from Faculty to Faculty, and range from a credit-bearing module, for instance in research proposal development, to rethinking the role of the thesis supervisor; but with increasing numbers of students, at least some form of generic approach may be advisable.

The Core Issue: Improving Retention and Through-put

All universities currently face the question of how to maximise the success of their students, at foundational, undergraduate and postgraduate levels; and this issue has been left to the end of this discussion, in that it interfaces with all Access Office projects. As is wide-spread in South Africa, educational innovation has flourished in access and foundation projects at UKZN with, in many cases, students being left to 'sink or swim' once they have entered mainstream. While the sector as a whole faces this same issue, responses must be made on the basis of each specific institution, its envisaged role in the HE sector, the students it typically caters for, the student body it wishes to develop and so forth.

UKZN can look back at a history of educational innovation, but this has seldom been at a systemic level. (One exception has been the development of 'core courses' for incoming students in the Faculty of Humanities at the former UN, which sought to address skills development on

a more generic basis.) Initiatives driven by committed individuals sooner or later tend to run out of energy and/or funding. Institutionalisation (which will require policies and monitoring) is required, but without sacrificing the enthusiasm of committed individuals.

What is the specific situation of UKZN in this regard? UKZN attracts many higher performance entrants, but through-put rates are still not adequate; for the majority of students the three-year degree remains a 'myth' (Ian Scott). Yet at the same time the UKZN mission commits it to redress: to ensuring that black students obtain access not only to Social Sciences, but also to selective and high-stakes programmes, and that overall outputs do not remain skewed. This means acknowledging the diversity of preparedness, and finding ways of addressing the articulation gap between school and HE, which does certainly exist for much of the student intake, even for those who obtain the requisite number of Matriculation points.

The model that is emerging at UKZN is premised on the need for close articulation between foundational provision and mainstream. Core foundational provision will be retained, but will increasingly be in the form of Faculty-based extended curriculum programmes rather than discrete foundation programmes; numbers of entrants to these will be limited, to ensure that quality provision remains a reality. Redress will be addressed, not primarily by taking in larger numbers of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, but by ensuring learning environments and study programmes which will facilitate success. A flexible system of support must extend well into mainstream studies and become a required resource for any students whose performance indicates that they are at risk. At the same time, mainstream teaching staff must, in an iterative process, regularly review their performance and their curricula in terms of articulation with outcomes of school and Foundation study, and in terms of the teaching methodologies used.

For this model to function effectively, numerous conditions will need to be met.

- Student leaders must be involved in its development, to ensure student buy-in for what may initially *appear* to be longer degree times.
- University leadership must maintain continued high-level advocacy.

- A University policy on teaching and learning must motivate and spell out the commitments required of staff in terms of teaching duties and continued professional development. (In terms of this policy, teaching and learning must remain prioritised in promotion criteria.)
- Staff must become familiar both with school curricula, and with the diverse social backgrounds of UKZN students, in order to ensure adequate articulation of mainstream curricula.
- Incoming students must be carefully assessed, to ensure that appropriate skills development is included in their study plan.
- While some small group teaching should remain an integral part of provision, the development of suitable teaching strategies for larger groups, in terms of disciplinary requirements, must be prioritised, and possible roles of technology in ensuring support and peer learning must be explored.
- Personal and social support must remain available to all students, on request.
- Extended curricula and additional support must be integrated into the regular cycle of programme self-evaluation, internal and external audit.
- Adequate and sustainable funding must be secured for quality delivery, with the case for resources from the fund budget being made in terms of current financial wastage.

To institutionalise this new model, the Access Office will need to work on an ongoing basis with the various instances and structures which have now been put in place. The 2008 institutional audit is to prioritise teaching and learning, and the UKZN QPA has already begun to accustom staff to regular self-reflection around teaching and learning, within a five-year cycle of evaluation and accreditation. In addition, each College has in place a Quality Committee, which reports to Senate, and, as funding permits, will be appointing a College Dean for Teaching and Learning. Faculties have set up a variety of committees to address the teaching function: Faculty Quality Committees, Teaching and Learning Committees, Rules and Regulations Committees, and Schools have also been required to accommodate these functions in their committee system. Some Deputy Deans have been

assigned related portfolios. Importantly, Senate is soon to consider a proposal for a University-wide Teaching and Learning Committee, which would report to Senate; the proposed functions of this committee include policy development, policy monitoring (to ensure coherent implementation of policies across Colleges) and advocacy.

Fundraising

As an Executive-level portfolio, the Access Office has the profile to engage in fund-raising, for student scholarships, for access initiatives, and for teaching and learning projects more generally. While the long-term goal must be to ensure that initiatives are sustainable in terms of the fund budget, in the meantime new projects are often more easily initiated on external funding.

The Four-year Developmental Trajectory of the Access Portfolio

The developmental trajectory of the Access portfolio, projected over the four years from 2004 to 2007, can be summarised in tabular form as follows:

Year	Activities
2004: Year 1	Hands-on involvement in merging foundation programmes; gaining university-wide familiarity with procedures, programmes and services; unpacking the term 'access' to include teaching and learning, in terms of DoE policy
2005: Year 2	Reduced hands-on work; expanded understanding of 'access' beyond foundation programmes, to include post-graduate access and RPL; start of policy development phase; pilot phase of procedures and strategies for implementation
2006: Year 3	Completion of policy development phase; full focus on strategies for implementation, and on implementation, in collaboration with Colleges and Faculties; start of evaluation of portfolio achievements through self-evaluation
2007: Year 4	Closing down phase: final evaluation of work of the portfolio; completion of embedding of all aspects of access, teaching and learning in Faculties and Colleges. Possible residual central management: University-wide Teaching and Learning Committee; Entrance and Placement Testing; RPL Office

In Conclusion: Planning and Managing Complexity

The above discussion has identified a complex network of structures and relationships which underpin the wide range of work of the Access Office, as a centralised portfolio focusing on access, learning and teaching across the university, at all levels of study. It has also allowed the identification of a series of questions, which can now be provisionally answered on the basis of 18 months of experience.

1. *What aspects of this work are best managed centrally, what are best managed through Colleges and Faculties?* As spelled out in the UKZN Access policy, policy development and monitoring should be managed centrally, implementation must be managed and owned by Faculties.

2. *What relationships are available to sustain this work?* Regular collaboration with Deans is imperative; but collaboration with colleagues at grass-roots level also builds relationships and appears to offer welcome support. Foundation staff expect the Access Office to give them a voice; but this voice clearly has its limitations. In addition, ongoing relationships with the support sector are important: with Student Funding, Student Counselling, Finance etc.

3. *What tools are available?* It is essential that the Access Office work primarily through the existing committee system of Colleges, Faculties and Schools – and of the support sector. Additional committees and structures should be kept to a minimum.

4. *How best can collaboration with Colleges be managed, given that line management is embedded in Colleges, and the Access Office has no formal authority?* In any emerging system, there will be disruptions; it is important to use formal structures and agreements as much as possible.

5. *In what ways is the merger, with its various stages, shaping the work of the Access portfolio?* On the one hand, the merger provided the freedom and space for the university to institute the experiment of a central Access portfolio; one the other, by limiting this experiment to four years, it has added urgency for the Office to achieve the goal of embedding its functions

within Faculties, during this period.

6. *At which times, and for which purposes, is policy development and monitoring most appropriate, where is direct involvement and intervention required?* In emergent stages of projects direct hands-on involvement can be extremely useful; once projects are up and running, management should be institutionalised, through Faculty structures.

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Analysing Access in the Context of the Merger

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> Then perhaps, when your back is to the wall, you will let loose at last that new violence which is raised up in you by old, oft-repeated crimes. But, as they say, that's another story: the history of mankind. The time is drawing near, I am sure, when we will join the ranks of those who make it (Jean-Paul Sartre 1967:32).
>
> Each generation, shall out of relative obscurity rise to fulfil its destiny or betray it (Fanon 1968).

Introduction

The merger between the University of Durban-Westville and Natal University in 2004 was supposed to build a combined university that would seek to redress the inequities of the past (Department of Education Merger Plan). It was billed as a merger between equal partners; Natal would bring its huge financial resources and Durban-Westville its historical mission of providing an affordable education for the disadvantaged. The Mission Statement of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) was to be 'A truly South African University that is academically excellent, innovative in research, critically engaged with society and demographically representative, redressing the inequities and imbalances of the past'. No one can question such noble goals, especially with the huge socio-economic inequalities that beset South Africa.

In the context of such a noble mission statement, the 2005 drop (2366) in first year student intake at the University of KwaZulu-Natal is a cause for concern. It is worrying that the 2005-intake, which in essence is the first combined intake, should lead to a drop in student numbers. What are the causes behind this trend? Is the decline in student intake an inevitable consequence of the merger? It would be tempting though, comforting if not expedient, to explain away this drop as an isolated phenomenon restricted to a prudent university management committed to the university's financial sustainability and efficiency.

It does not come as a surprise because the Department of Education (DoE) released a document in June 2004 entitled *Student Enrolment and Planning 2005 to 2007*, which clearly states that current student numbers are unsustainable. The document implores management to begin cutting numbers from the beginning of 2005[1]. After the release of this document, discussions in the university's governing structures began to echo these sentiments. It was then that the management decided to increase Matriculation entry-points and registration fees e.g. Faculty of Humanities minimum entry Grade Twelve (matric) points increased from 24 to 32 and Science is now 34 points. The student leadership and some staff unions raised voices of opposition, but the proposed intake criteria seem to have won the day. Furthermore, the new requirements, also advocate cutting student numbers in Access Programmes that have advantaged under-qualified applicants throughout the years. Better-qualified students complete their degrees in record time, thus insures an efficient use of already strained resources, they claimed.

Background

The merger of the University of Durban-Westville and the University of Natal in 2004 was a milestone in the history of university education in South Africa. It was first of the most publicised merger of two, though dissimilar, yet prominent universities that had epitomised the segregated apartheid tertiary education system. They were two universities in one city, on two

[1] An article appeared in *This Day* called 'Opening The Doors For Learning' by F. Khan. It was a response to management's plan to cut student numbers.

prominent hills one might add, that catered for the metropolitan's two racial groups (Indian and White). The University of Natal was conceived as a white English-speaking university, whereas the University of Durban-Westville was a strictly 'Indian' university, staffed by mostly white lecturers and managers.

In the post-apartheid era, racial labelling was no longer entirely applicable. The Durban-Westville became a university that served black (African, Indian and Coloured), in contrast to Natal University that came to serve students who were from better-endowed backgrounds (either financially or academically), both black and white. Therefore, class rather than race became the basis of distinction between the two universities after 1994. Nevertheless, this should not downplay the relation between class and race in our still racially ridden society.

In that post-apartheid context, The University of Durban-Westville has had an illustrious history of providing a liberal policy on providing an education to students from lower incoming earning backgrounds. In other words, it had a deliberate open door policy on students from the previously disadvantaged backgrounds since 1994. It instituted a counselling process that allowed indebted students to register and had lower entry matric qualifications. An aggressive tutorial programme was initiated to overcome any academic inadequacies for under-qualified students. It also had a one-year Foundation programme for students who did not meet even these lowered matric qualifications[2].

Of course, management was forced to implement these progressive policies because of a sustained student and worker struggles since the early 1990s. It was their willingness to think critically, to fight domination, to build non-racialism and to forge worker, academic and student alliances. No fewer than three major class boycotts have occurred. The students shut down University of Durban-Westville at least twice as they protested against tuition orientated exclusions or expulsions. The institution's apartheid struggle history of protest, boycotts, intimidation and the state security apparatus contributed to a politicised culture. It was this inherited political tradition that made it possible for them to link their indigent economic

[2] These are references to the Academic Development Program (since 1991/2) which was then replaced by the Upward Bound Program in 1997.

status, an unequal educational system they came from and their families' inability to pay fees with the legacy inherited from the previous regime. Their lived experience gave them the determination to break the shackles of the backgrounds they came from.

However, students were not always at odds with management concerning access. Saths Cooper the last vice-chancellor of the University of Durban-Westville, a former Black Consciousness Movement cadre, went further than previous managements in providing easier access for poorer students. He suspended the annual fee increases and increased student numbers. Therefore, the University of Durban-Westville, at the eve of the merger, had the most liberal entry criteria for disadvantaged students.

On the other hand, Natal University experienced few student protests to talk about throughout its history. Its then privileged background ensured that it had adequate government and corporate support in the apartheid period. Moreover, its student body being white, then synonymous with a middle class background, meant that issues of affordability were never relevant to the experiences of its students. Thus after 1994, a political tradition of protest was never a part of its culture.

Furthermore, it never quite had an admission policy that made the university accessible to poor students. If Black student numbers increased, it was not a result of a premeditated policy, but merely mirrored the changing economic realities of a growing African and Indian middle class as Jonathan Jansen's study has shown[3]. This new group could now afford private schools and thus their children could obtain better matric results to meet the stringent entry requirements and go on to pay the exorbitant fees. Natal University did have some Black students from indigent backgrounds, but they were those who had overcome the in-built inequities of our legacy, to obtain high matric results and so were able to get scholarships. In other words, factors that were beyond the control of University of Natal's management control were the cause of a marked increase in the number of black students. As a result, at

[3] Actually Jansen's study was shown in a rather unconventional way. It was shown as a wine glass with high income represent the broader parts and the narrow bottom sections representing diminishing income. It shows that income rapidly decreases and there are huge inequalities between the rich and poor.

the eve of the merger, Natal University in stark contrast to Durban-Westville did not have a clearly defined policy that catered for students from lower income earning families.

It would be naïve to explain the merger and its aftermath (student cuts etc.) in exclusively apartheid terms (mostly a white university joining a black university). However, existential conditions in the socio-economic stage i.e. the rise of the Black Middle Class after 1994, by and large, explains the entrenched class, rather than race, distinctions between the two universities. Furthermore, as explained above, the two universities had developed distinct criteria on access, as well as financial and academic exclusions.

It appears as if the new University of KwaZulu-Natal adopted the Natal University policy, albeit with the expected lip service to the disadvantaged, that has led to the drop in the 2005 intake. In the current neo-liberal hegemony, it will be inauthentic to discuss education and the policies that govern it – or health, social services, and welfare amongst others – without grounding them in the geo-political hegemonic context that forms a part of the late 20th and early 21st century. This article therefore limits itself to three main perspectives, namely the World Bank's policy about higher education in Africa, the link with developments in other universities across Africa including South Africa, and lastly, the present toughening of access requirements in the merged University of KwaZulu-Natal in the context of the neo-liberal hegemony.

World Bank's Higher Education Policy in Africa.

It is common knowledge that the World Bank (WB herein after) introduced austerity Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP's) in African countries in the mid 1980's[4]. Slash in funding for social programmes and subsidies that benefit the poor are the hallmarks of SAP's. It also entailed the liberalising of domestic markets, privatisation of education, parastatals and municipal services. One of the conditions of the SAP's required governments to reduce

[4] The reasons behind the implementation of the SAP's are beyond the scope of this paper, however, many African intellectuals like Mahmood Mamdani, Dennis Brutus, and Ashwin Desai have explored this phenomenon.

funding on tertiary education[5].

George Caffentzis in an article in the book A *Thousand Flowers: Social Struggles Against Structural Adjustment In African Universities* argues that the WB calls African universities 'sacred cows' because they are only available to urban elite at the expense of the rural majority[6]. The WB then demands governments, if never to continue receiving aid, that they should instead, support a more 'egalitarian educational system that redirects higher education funds to primary education'. Furthermore it has the advantage that

> [It] would be a golden opportunity to ... keep in check the demands of the urban elite (whose political influence has distorted sound economic reasoning) (Caffentzis 1998:5).

This was to be achieved through drastic reduction in funding for higher education in Africa. He says that

> This reduction is advocated in the name of higher education *efficiency* and a more egalitarian distribution of educational resources (Caffentzis: 1998:3).

Efficiency! Sustainability! One can see the direct relationship in the words that amount to the same thing in practice. They lead to cuts in university funding and a reduction in student subsidies that result in an increase in tuition fees to recover costs. Its amazing that the WB demanded cuts in funding when Africa's higher education enrolment rate was at 1%, seven times below the average for developing countries (Africa included). The amazing development to emerge from all the grandstanding on egalitarianism of educational resources was that primary education funding was cut too.

[5] G. Caffentzis discusses the issue in his article 'The World Bank and Education in Africa' that first appeared in the Committee for Academic Freedom in Africa journal and in the book *A Thousand Flowers*.

[6] It is actually incorrect. In research conducted by the UNPF, 40% of Africans live in rapidly expanding urban areas. 40% hardly constitutes an 'urban elite'.

To offset the fall in funding, the WB advised governments to encourage the private sector and donors to take an active role in the financing of higher education. Of course, the issue of powerful donor funding and academic freedom became a contested terrain. Students were to take loans from banks to pay for tuition. The measure automatically excludes those who do not have the required collateral.

Caffentzis (1998) contends that the WB had an ulterior motive, besides the apparent one of forcing African governments to recover costs; it wanted a pliable, ill-educated populous – a cheap labour resource for menial work that multinationals could readily exploit.

World Bank-inspired Neo-liberal Policies in the South African Context

South Africa was not included in this initial phase, but it was to have its own 'Home-grown Structural Adjustment Programme' with the Orwellian title of Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR). The essence of this programme is not very different from the SAP's that took place in much of the Third World.

Ashwin Desai's book *The Poors of Chatsworth,* explores the effects of GEAR in the townships in Durban, Soweto and Tafelsig in Cape Town. The book shows the effects of the neo-liberal inspired GEAR on the poor people of South Africa. The increases in the cost of basic services such as water and electricity led to cut-offs because this stratum of society could not afford to pay for the increased services. Furthermore, unemployment rose (40% nationally) in these areas because of the relaxation of the tariff regulations which allowed for cheaper imports from the Far East – that flooded the domestic markets – the closing down of factories and the inevitable retrenchments. Privatisation, retrenchments and cost recovery measures in the parastatals increased unemployment whilst at the same time incomes were declining.

Thus, in the context of GEAR, the effect of SAP's on other African universities is comparable to South African universities, especially those experiencing the merger. After its implementation, the South African home-grown SAP, GEAR, higher education institutions experienced similar cost cutting measures as those in other African countries in the early 1990s. The

DoE encouraged universities that

> ... by virtue of academic 'autonomy' [universities] are being asked to play a major role in the generation of their resources through the 'internal efficiencies', rationalisation and synergies with the private sector (Barchiesi1998:167).

This makes for an ideological twist – enhancing academic 'autonomy' through 'synergies' by forming partnerships with a private sector that will not invest in unprofitable ventures. The private sector will virtually decide what is important. Can independent knowledge be pursued in such circumstances? The DoE's advice continued thus

> ... the bulk of [government] funding was [from now] to be shifted from generalised core subsidies ... to 'ad hoc' provisions of training needed to compete Internationally. (Barchiesi 1998:167).

The language used in this case was only different in its sophistication from that used earlier by the WB. Nevertheless, the commitment to a reduction in funding, in real terms, is clear. The logical conclusion would be an increase in tuition for universities to maintain their already existing programmes.

The Merger in the Paradigm of the Neo-liberal Hegemony

Contrary to the ingrained view, mergers are not a recent phenomenon. They actually started in the late 1990's with the mergers of Teacher Training Colleges throughout the country. Moreover, in recent years two Durban teknikons merged into the Durban Institute of Technology. Despite these developments over the last decade or more, it is surprising that there hardly exists an empirical study that focuses on the financial implications of tertiary institution mergers for poor students in South Africa.

Mergers in Higher education: Lessons Learned in Transitional Contexts, a book edited by Jonathan Jansen does try to uncover the impact on 'access' after the merging of teachers' Colleges in South Africa. Actually, it is the only comprehensive study on tertiary institution mergers so far. However, the book only analyses in essence Teacher Training Colleges that

pales in significance in that the student numbers are small, the budgetary ramification negligible as compared to the UKZN merger. Furthermore, it does not give an in-depth perspective on the impact of mergers that focus on students from low income backgrounds. Nevertheless, it still unearths some vital information.

> The number of Colleges was reduced from 120 (80 000 students) [in 1997] to 50 (15 000) by the start of 2000 ... to [another] 25 'contract institutions' holding 10 000 students .... Another 5 000 students were registered in two distance Colleges ... (Jansen 2002).

Thus, up to nearly half the student numbers were cut in a couple of years. The study does not specify the class background of the students most affected by the cuts. What is apparent though is that the cuts effected a huge saving by a government that claims that a basic education is a right for all, but simultaneously cuts the number of qualified primary teachers that need to go into the system.

At the backdrop of such scant knowledge as exists now, we have no choice but to use governments STUDENT ENROLMENT PLANNING 2005 TO 2007 as the primary guiding document on mergers. The document was presented to management in June 2004, and to the UKZN as a framework for future planning. The DoE document alleges that the current enrolment growth rate of 11.4% reduces the funding per head count, which raises questions of quality and resourcing. It says that the 2003 national enrolment in universities of 481 000 was more than the DoE had anticipated.

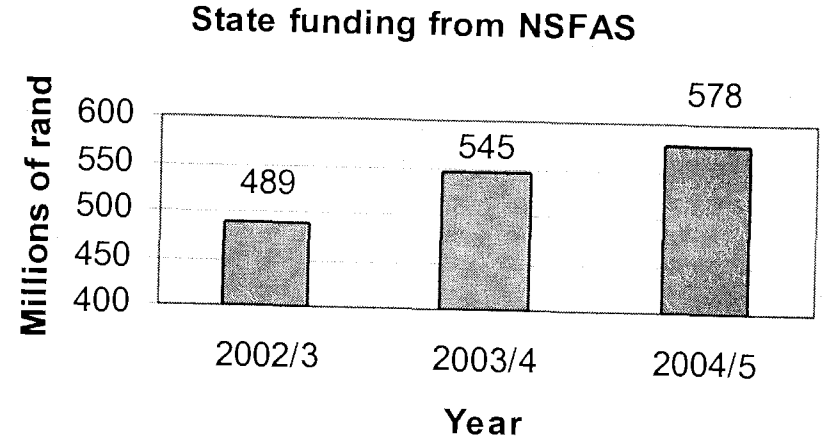
The DoE document, then goes further to advise UKZN management to reduce total student enrolment from 43 000 to 34 000 by 2007. The government claims that the current growth rate of 14.5% at the combined UKZN is 'unsustainable'. The document is quiet on the percentage increase in the number of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. One can only speculate that it is not the numbers that are of concern; but rather the quality (financial) that is at stake here. Perhaps the actual increase of poor students is even greater than the 14.5% - therefore the subsequent concern. Nevertheless, as in times gone by, the DoE used familiar 'World-Bank-speak' of tired old phrases to give horrendous cuts a semblance of sophistication. This means that 9 000 students are to be denied an education

come 2007. Of course, if we were to factor in the projected 14.5% growth rate, the slashing in student numbers that would have enrolled by 2007, verge on treachery.

It is problematic that one of the reasons that DoE gives for cutting student numbers is because of a fall in funding per head count. In other words, if the funding per student ratio falls, the only remedy DoE alleges, is to cut student numbers. There is no mention though, of increasing funding with a corresponding increase in numbers.

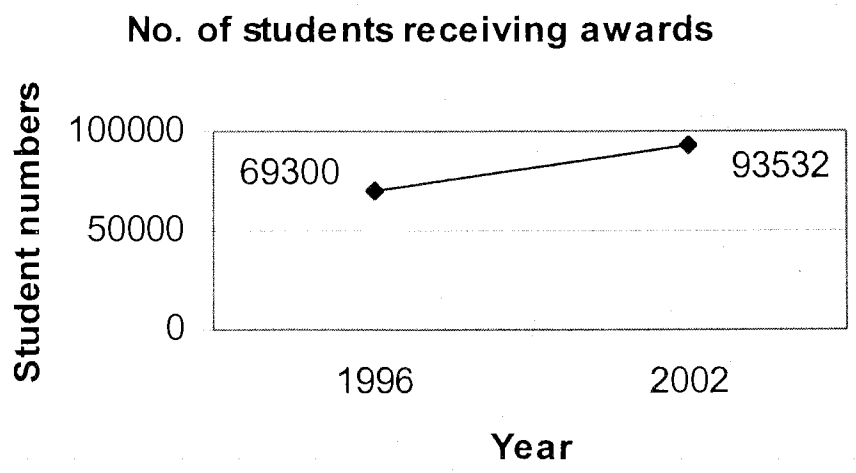
Comparison of the two graphs below clearly illustrates the point that the student numbers that receive funds from the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) shows a growth rate that has outpaced percentage increases in funding by half.

Graph 1



Graph 1 shows state funding for NSFAS in the period indicated below has increased by 18.3%

Graph 2



Graph 2 shows the number of students nationally that receive NSFAS awards. The average rate of increase for the period 1996-2002 is 35%. Indeed, the funding per student has been falling since 1996, the year government implemented GEAR. The trend has been actually a de facto strategy of DoE and it is only now that it actually decides to make it official.

The DoE document pulls no punches; it plans to legislate a law that puts a cap on student numbers.

> ... [And] Institutions taking more students will require permission from the Minister of Education otherwise they will be transgressing the law and will be penalised ....

Now government plans to penalise institutions that enrol more students than are in line with the national cost-recovery policy. That should be a first in recorded history. I do not know of any other country that has been so eager to parrot the WB line, and then fervently carry it out, thus limiting its own people's chance to empower themselves. Before, in other African countries, the WB, on the pain of bankruptcy, forced reductions on them but here, the

DoE effectively whips itself into action – whilst on the other hand funding provided for presidential jets and arms go unchecked.

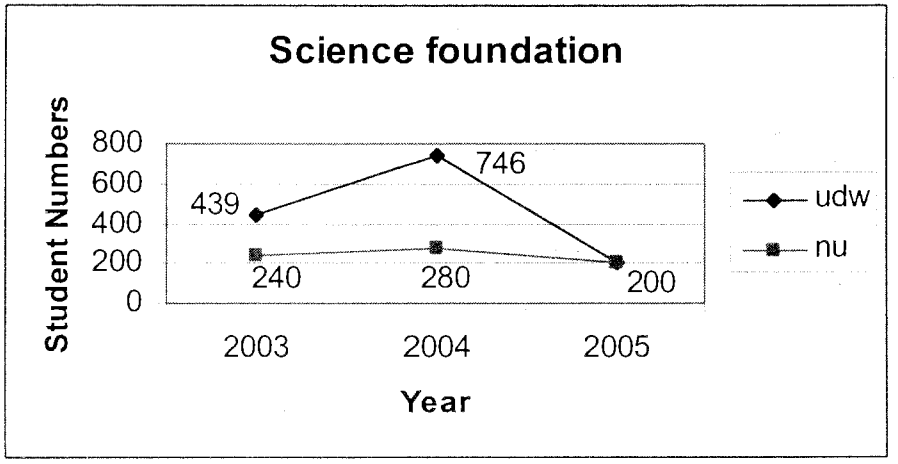
In such circumstances, it is not difficult to believe that the university will ensure that those who can afford to pay for tuition would constitute the greater majority of qualifying students. If subsidies from government are drying up, then the burden will be shifted to poorer students. The burden will come in the form of tuition increases, a reduction in NSFAS payouts in real terms as seen in Graph 2, increasing matric entry points needed to enter university, retrenchment of staff, etc.

The first shots have already been fired and sadly gone unheeded by the wider university community. As stated in the DoE document, first year students at the UKZN are to be limited to 6 500 across all campuses as compared to 7 633 that were enrolled in 2003. This means a cut in real terms of 2 366 if one takes into consideration the projected increase to 8 566 first year students that have had the opportunity to better their lives. That is the first step in cutting more than 9 000 students from the UKZN by 2007.

Already the Science foundation student numbers were slashed by more that half. The Foundation programme was the UDW's attempt to level the material conditions of students who come from poor backgrounds, go to schools that lack libraries[7] and textbooks, thus inevitably obtain lower matric qualification marks. The foundation programme enabled them to enter university with lower qualifications, learn for a year in this programme, and then eventually join the mainstream university courses. It was started at UDW, although the former University of Natal had it too, it was small in proportion to its total student population. However it had become an institution at UDW as many students from this programme went on to study the health sciences and engineering. Also the Humanities Access program Durban had assigned places for 200 students, but just over 100 students only registered in 2005.

[7] This will penalize learners from indigent communities where 83% of schools have no libraries or textbooks. These are the results from DoE's Basic Schools survey of 1999.

Graph 3



Graph 3 shows that there has been a steady increase in students accepted into the Science Foundation Programme since it began in 1999. In fact it actually peaks in the first year of the merger. The significance of this fact is that the student intakes at the two institutions were still managed by the individual universities for this year. Note that NU's figures are more or less unchanged but UDW's figures were increasing until they peaked at the Westville Campus in the 2004 intake. The total in 2004 for all the Science Foundation Programmes in the combined UKZN was 926 students. But this year it has been cut to about 400 students university-wide.

As stated above, this cut in the enrolment will affect poorer students who attend less endowed high schools thus are unable to obtain good qualifications.

Prof Makgoba at the Vice Chancellor's Consultative Forum on 18 February 2005 at T1 Westville campus, announced that 28000 students had been registered at that point. That is about 15000 students less than the previous year. The Division of Management Information had reported that the total students registered by March 2005, was 37997 for UKZN, again the figure at that time is far less than the previous 43000 students.

Conclusion

Perhaps it was inevitable that neo-liberal's soul would emerge from the mist of all this transformation and merger rhetoric. The new global forces or John Pilger's more accurate epithet – 'The new rulers of the world', have consolidated their hold on virtually all facets of social and economic life in the third or 'developing' world. Our leaders have internalised this ideology, unaware that other possibilities exist. Change, transformation, progress is not a bad thing as long as it meets the needs of the most economically vulnerable sectors of society. The other side is the subordination of the state and with it education, welfare and social services to the whims of the market and International Financial Institutions.

The increase in the entry point requirement, the cut in funding for students and the downgrading of the Foundation /Access programmes are in totality a blanket exclusion of poor students. If becoming a 'world class' university, means accelerating the process of commodification of education to the detriment of the poor then the struggle was in vain.

This will penalize learners from indigent communities where 83% of schools have no libraries or textbooks, teachers are often poorly qualified and students walk long distances to school and often arrive hungry. Instead, the already privileged students from private schools with state of the art libraries and computer classes will benefit from such a scenario. Furthermore, these students can afford a university education – much to the delight of those in the DoE who conform to neo-liberalism's foundational principle, cost-recovery, and its cry for sustainability. In such circumstances it requires no stretch of the imagination to believe that the university will ensure that those who can afford to pay for tuition would constitute the greater majority of qualifying students

Academics, students and the wider community should be vigilant in their protection of the advances that were made in the availability of higher education. The dominant neo-liberal agenda with its sycophant calls for 'sustainability', 'rationalisation', and 'efficiency' should be stripped of all its sophistication veneer and laid bare. Perhaps, at last we will see what all these words really are in human costs.

Note: The Current figures of student numbers at UKZN are down 5% from 2004 to 2005 and a further 9,4% from 2005 to 2006. In 2006 students, the

drop to 38 945 from the expected 43 500 equates to a minimum of loss of R45m in student fee income for 2006. This excludes the loss of subsidy which will be felt in 2008.

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Performance Management in Higher Education

Charlotte Mbali

Introduction

There are various ways of advancing quality in Higher Education. The range of proposed procedures exhibit a continuum from, on the one hand, the autonomous reflective judgement of the individual academic to, on the other hand, the tick-list measures that are drawn up to inculcate the desired standard. This article is concerned more with the latter side of the continuum, the search for measures of performance, and the use of these as incentives. However, to acknowledge the historical trajectory (Allan 1988), it is proper to give due weight to the nature of professorial authority first.

Universities are places where brainy individuals choose to work because the activities they engage there can better be done in a collaborative way, with the strength and resources of a large institution, rather than in smaller consultancies. Although some such institutions have lasted more than 700 years, the University should not be seen as the only way of advancing a knowledge career. In ancient Athens, the philosophers, as individuals, attracted their own paying students. In modern neo-liberal societies, some individuals opt out of an academic career finding that selling their knowledge services as consultants is more tax-efficient and lucrative. In these activities, it is only the reputation of the individual and market that give value, and thus quality assures the activities. In contrast, an employed professor has a reciprocal value-bestowing relationship with the University, both as an illustrious individual gaining more honours, and research grants, for the University, and as an employee of that University able to utilize its resources, its qualifications, and its illustrious name. The guarantee of quality was not just in the name but also in the procedures utilized by the professors to validate the qualifications they bestow, and the recruitment and

promotion safeguards employed to ensure continuance of the same standards by the upcoming generation. Such systems basically rely on the peer judgements of those pre-eminent in a field – on selection committees, on examination boards, on grant-making bodies, and publication reviews.

What the quality movement of the last fifteen years has done is to call into question these time-tested ways of ensuring quality. Accountability for public funds requires more transparency about quality procedures. As there is competition, between institutions, disciplines, and individuals, it seems essential to have fair and equal measures to inform planning and decision-making.

Rule by the Professors

Universities have been governed by their professors for many centuries in some countries (Altbach 2002; Allen 1988). In others, especially those in the Latin/Napoleonic traditions, the professors are public servants, but even in the latter, the public servant status did not seem to entail much overt supervision by government bureaucrats. Where society has respect for the professors, the professors are trusted to manage the affairs of the Universities. So why is managerialism now intruding? Apart from the world-wide trend towards managerialism, there are special factors in South Africa that cause the rule by professors to be challenged. The post-apartheid government decided that the governance of Higher Education institutions required more say-so from outside the sector. Thus the Higher Education Act 1997 decrees that University Councils must have a majority of members from outside the sector. The same Act also legislated for the 'Institutional Forum' for each HEI, a new body that is seen as an attempt to bridge the divides between staff and students, and between different constituencies of staff. The underlying policy is transformative: HEIs were seen as being dominated by white professors, and the new governance structures have been a means by which more Black participation has been gained. Although this transformative agenda has had important results, with regard to quality, the old structures of guaranteeing quality remain intact.

Under the rule of the professors, quality was assured collegially. In South African Universities, the Senate, comprising the senior professors and heads of disciplines, is the supreme decision-making body for academic affairs. Faculty Boards, Qualifications boards, examination boards, all these

consist of academics making decisions collegially. Examinations rely on the peer-judgement of the invited external moderators.

The new quality procedures, as enunciated by HEQC, for the M.Ed. review for example, do not propose to sweep away these traditional safe-guards of quality, but to monitor them and ensure they are documented properly. Quality in the heads of professors is not sufficient for account-ability: there must be documents. Admittedly, there is some shrewd sense in this. External examiners might have been doing their reports conscientiously for years, but if the Faculty office has lacked a system for storing them and the departments have fallen out of the habit of utilizing these reports to improve their courses, then this is a threadbare quality procedure.

From the above it can be seen that the 'conservative' view of quality is basically to trust the rule of the professors, although admitting that the systems might need to be tightened up here and there.

Alongside this argument about trusted systems, there is also the argument about trusted individuals, those who are qualified and put in authority. Individuals who succeed in the rigours of academic training (the postgraduate system) can be trusted to impose the same quality checks when they are in positions of authority. Individuals who choose an academic career are highly motivated. When their peers are already getting into salaried jobs or business, these people prolong their student status while working for higher degrees. Although they may get some postgraduate grants, and even some small pay for teaching or demonstrating, they are unable to command the money or credit of their peers who have left University with jobs. Even after qualifying with a higher degree, some may have to hang around academia taking short-term contracts for several years before a suitable post comes up. So by the time they get fully on the academic career track, they have already shown strong commitment. Their postgraduate studies, especially the Ph.D., form a selection process. Less than 1% of registered students achieve a doctorate[1]. The levels of qualifications are distinguished

[1] 32% in year 2000 (Altbach) based on USA figures in *College and University Journal* 80:2. 42% in year 2004 at University of Natal in RSA (my own unpublished research on SPS database). This is the percentage of students who graduated with doctorates in the year 2004 out of a total of those who completed any qualifications across a fifteen year period.

by the autonomy factor which increases with the advance in levels. Surely such high-achieving individuals, who have proved they can work autonomously, have the motivation to sustain the quality of the academy.

Government Steering of Higher Education

The post-apartheid government has enacted various laws to enable it to steer the higher education sector. The Higher Education Act proclaims the functions of higher education in South Africa. It also gives the Minister more powers than hitherto. The South African Qualifications Act set up the South African Qualification Authority which has been the vehicle for over-seeing the change to outcomes-based education, including in Higher Education. Where before individual Universities, from their own academic authority, could inaugurate new programmes, from year 2000 the template for all qualifications had to be lodged with SAQA. There was much argument about fixing the levels of qualifications, as the University and the technikon sector were not in agreement, especially around the level of the B.Tech. After five years of discussions and different proposals, at last the scheme of 10 levels has been decreed.

The 'Size and Shape' discussions which began in 1995 culminated in the mergers which started in 2003. These mergers assume four kinds of Higher Education institutions: research Universities, universities of technology, comprehensive institutions and distance institutions. There is contestation around this. By renaming the technikons 'universities' does this then give them more status? And ... more money to do research? Is there a greater need for staff to get Ph.D.s? Will they lose their distinctive technological mission and converge with the traditional goals of Universities? 'Comprehensive' Universities still lack full definition, and in the hiatus of mergers are still trying to work out their distinctive mission. With regard to distance education, one merged institution (from UNISA and Technikon SA) has been designated for distance students, but many HEIs also run courses at distant locations, and are reluctant to drop these. Institutional demarcation can be steered by funding and the control over the 'programme mix' of each HEI. The requirement that each institution submits 3 year rolling plans to the Dept of Education, with a programme mix that has to be approved, shows how the central government is seizing control over decision-making that used to be within institutional autonomy.

The Higher Education Funding Framework is a powerful tool for steering the sector. As some 85% of the funds for public higher education institutions comes from the government, the different ways of allocating these funds is already having a noticeable effect on the decision-making of HE managers. Whereas before the funding was apportioned per 'full-time equivalent' student registered (with a multiple factor to award more for science students), now there are five levels of subsidy for the various disciplines, and as well as the subsidy per student registered ('the input') there is also some subsidy deferred until graduation ('the output'). There is more money to be gained by registering post-graduates, especially doctoral students. Some departments are already showing signs of wanting to abdicate from over-much undergraduate work, and increase their postgraduate work and thus catch more subsidy money. The through-put criteria may soon have the effect of HEIs selecting only the students with the best prospect of getting through to graduation and minimizing the places awarded to the more disadvantaged students, especially because there is no extra subsidy for the value-added achievement of getting more of the disadvantaged through to graduation.

The Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC), which is part of the Council of Higher Education (set up by the 1997 Act), has the onerous task of assuring the quality of the whole sector. The HEQC has embarked on a programme of institutional audits, starting with institutions that were unscathed by recent mergers. A number of senior staff from across the HE sector have been trained as institutional auditors, but have been sworn to secrecy about the exact criteria and procedures of the audits that are about to commence.

This secrecy seems contrary to the principle of transparency in assessment aims and criteria that is being promoted in, for example, student assessment (see the Assessor Standards at www.saqa.org.za).

In addition the HEQC has started on audits of qualifications, starting with the MBA in 2004, and the M.Ed. in 2005. The MBA audit resulted in some programmes, such as the one at the ex-Natal University, being de-accredited, while others, such as the one at Westville, were to be retained, but given a conditional warning. Some of the criteria for the audit, such as the allocation of permanent staff, appear to have been effective in showing up those programmes where there was slippage of quality. But one argument

from a staffer of the rejected ex-Natal University programme is that the audit was not only about the details of implementation: when the initial framework for the audit was set up, it assumed a 'standard' type of curriculum and did not allow for specialisation. Without going further into the details of this, what can be noted here is the allegation that the quality mechanism suppressed diversity in favour of 'standards'. Was there enough research into the type of students the MBA attracts and their goals? Are there niche needs within the MBA? Or is the generic standard what business requires?

The M.Ed. audit is underway in 2005 at time of writing. Some prior decisions already revealed how steering is going to be effected. The NAP documents which finalized the levels of qualifications abolished the advanced postgraduate diploma in education which used to be awarded to those who have done the course-work of M.Ed. but have not proceeded to the thesis. There seems to be a determination by those at the helm in HEQC that postgraduate education degrees must be mainly to train researchers (Naidoo 2005), a viewpoint that seems at variance with the aspirations of many of the candidates (mostly school teachers) who are more interested in a variety of advanced courses that assist them to advance as professionals, rather than as researchers. If throughput to thesis and completion of M.Ed. are to be criteria for the quality audit, then this may sideline valuable work that is being done via elective courses which individuals opt for as they see their own career needs. This is especially true of electives in the higher education track, with such courses as mentoring or experiential learning, which feed directly into improved practice.

Thus to sum up this somewhat critical section on national steerage of HE, the reported words of Prof Ramashala (2004) are applicable: 'the sector has no clarity about appropriate goals for Higher Education'. The same HEQC colloquium also emphasized points for action:

- Insufficient attention had been given to curricula, a point also made in the recent report on Distance Education which sees the need for a teaching development grant for those who create learning materials
- Teacher education needs more attention
- Creative ways should be sought to produce the next generation of academics, especially Black and female

It is not surprising that there is concern about the above three – none of the steering mechanisms described above produce these desired results. To some extent the NQF enterprise and SAQA have resulted in more attention to curriculum, but the HE funding mechanisms give no particular rewards to those who spend more time in recurriculating.

The same funding mechanism resulted in some education departments shifting away from school-teacher training and towards more lucrative postgraduate work. As for producing the next generation of Higher education teachers, there is still an unbalanced focus on the production of researchers, and a declared intention not to make it compulsory for those taking up teaching posts in HE to take an appropriate teaching qualification, such as the PGDHE. The insistence that former technikons get more of their staff to complete their Ph.Ds has the effect of forcing candidates to aim for a Ph.D. in their discipline rather than the more practical PGDHE courses that would improve their practice as teachers.

The imposition of the same funding framework and the same quality processes on all four proposed types of HEIs may have the effect of abolishing some valuable diversity of mission. For example, the value of the Ph.D. in some disciplines could be questioned.

Why should an effective lecturer whose main job is, as part of a team, to produce about a hundred competent book-keepers per year be forced to do research for a thesis in book-keeping rather than spend a valuable year back in the commercial field to feed back the experience into renovating the curriculum? Some might argue that the experiential year can be reformulated into a Ph.D., but that pre-supposes a lot more creative supervisory resources than are actually available. The Universities and the technikons had different missions, and they employed staff differently. Whereas for most University subjects the Ph.D. is requisite, for the technikons appropriate industry experience is more valuable.

Greater clarity about the goals of Universities and the goals of universities of technology' respectively should result in conceptualizing different types of funding incentives and quality controls for each in some respects.

A similar argument could be made about the different goals of different disciplines within Universities. Rough categorization, according to potential employment sectors, could be drawn up thus:

- Professional disciplines (law, nursing, social work, architecture and building sciences, engineering, psychology, medicine and health professions, accountancy) – in short all those categorized as professions in SA law
- Generic or foundational disciplines (sciences, humanities, economics, social sciences)
- Education (which requires a good grounding in the generic discipline that are taught in schools, not the professional ones)
- Commercial generic
- Sector-specific and commercial (e.g. Hotel schools)
- Sector-specific
- Artistic (Music, Fine Arts, Drama)

Each of these has a different mix of theory and practice and different career trajectory. But what is happening is that measures that arose in the generic and foundational disciplines (such as the Ph.D., and the production of peer-reviewed research articles) have gradually come to be applied to all the others, whether appropriately or not. No wonder the Fine Arts lecturer protests when her Exhibition is disregarded as a suitable 'product' of her discipline because only 'articles' get counted.

It is easier and it seems 'fairer' to use the same quality measures on all types of institutions and for all disciplines, but the resulting output might be disappointingly inappropriate. Greater clarity is needed about the goals of higher education, and the goals of a specific discipline.

Performance Management of Staff in Higher Education

While the last decade in South Africa has seen an increase of State steering of higher education through the mechanisms described above, recently another trend has also become visible, namely to adopt procedures from the corporate world. Performance management can be applied to the institution as a whole or to the individual staff within it. Corporations in the capitalist world are used to being constantly evaluated on their profitability criteria, and annually in their reports to share-holders. When the financial commentators use the word 'performance' of corporates it is applied to precise measurable economic and financial output. There are risks in

uncritical transference of this word to public higher education institutions, where the 'output' is in terms of what – research? number of graduates? – and how measured?

In the corporate world, managers devise ways of optimizing human resources by cunning management of 'performance'. The simplest incentive can be through bonus pay for extra output. There are conceptual problems with imposing this type of performance management in Higher Education. Firstly, as stated above, the 'output' of higher education is less easy to quantify than items of factory production. Secondly, the nature of 'performance' in academic work is far more complex than that of an assembly line supervisor or a sales agent. Thirdly, at a more profound philosophical level, counting performance assumes a behaviourist view of human nature, as if quality is achieved merely by reinforcing desired behaviour rather than by influencing decision-making and commitment.

In South Africa, the HE managers are responding rationally to the signals of the national steering system for HE. If research money is now to be allocated mainly for the production of research articles, then each academic must produce one article per year.

If postgraduate M-level studies are subsidized only with a 50% research thesis component, then any other type of M-curriculum must be abolished. Once the measures of performance have been laid down, whether or not they fit the purposes of higher education, the needs of the different disciplines, the employability of the graduates, or the improvability of the staff, is no longer debated.

The proposals for improved performance management are emanating from consultants who have been appointed, paid for by DOE money, to assist the merging Universities. The language used in their documents shows the corporatist context:

> ... performance management has evolved in a competition orientated environment and become imperative as organizations have learnt that focusing on individual performance eventually can pay dividends on the bottom line.

> ... the Balanced Scorecard categorises performance measurers into four strategic perspectives namely financial, customer, operations, and people.
>
> Outcomes must adhere to the SMART rule (SMART is an acronym for Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, and Time bound)

Whereas some of the above might apply quite well to support staff trying to produce the annual faculty prospectus, it is less easy to apply to teaching or research. The recommended system for UKZN is the latter – the Outcomes one – to be implemented in a phased approach, with 'extensive education of all staff' and 'continuing consultation with all the relevant stakeholders'.

The performance management system as recommended by the consultants will be:

- Aligned to the strategy (appropriate to the vision, mission, goals) of the university
- Uniform across all departments within the University
- Linked to the pay of individuals

Each of these is problematic. It is far easier to align performance in a manufacturing firm to increased output of profitable goods than it is in a University, such as UKZN, where the goal is a buzz-word 'premier African University'. Too many unquantifiables there – **premier** (in salary scales for staff? In numbers of library books or research articles? In research grants? – and if all of these are important what about the relative weight and mix of each?) **African** (Numbers of Africans on permanent staff? Numbers of disadvantaged students admitted? curricula relevant to Africa? Postgraduates flowing in from other African countries? – probably all of these, and the appropriate mix?). So we have huge problems of quantification with the criteria of aligning to strategy.

The desirability of 'uniformity' has already been called into question in the earlier discussion about how national steering mechanisms are ironing out appropriate diversity of mission.

The proposal to link performance to pay of individuals is likely to stir up much contention. The problem is that it is based on competitive,

materialistic, and largely a male, view of human nature. The competitive individuals will grab the most lucrative work leaving the chores to the more altruistic, often the females, or the newest members of the department. How will a department balance fairly the workloads between the ongoing year-by-year teaching of large first year classes and the glamorous new research project that will gain bonus pay? Will it depend on the management skill of the Head of School, or will there be constant fighting between colleagues, vitiated even more than now because real money is involved?

In an attempt to bring 'rational decision-making' into management of human resources, UKZN has developed a School Planning tool for academic workloads. A default ratio is assumed ('an average across the School') of 40% research, 45% teaching, 10% administration and 5% for community engagement. A questionnaire sent out via the staff Union, NTESU, revealed that most respondents (n=70) do not work to that ratio. There was huge perplexity as to what counted under each category. Is preparing a new curriculum part of 'teaching'? Is training tutors part of 'administration' or 'teaching'? Under 'community engagement' a huge variety of activities were listed. (More detailed analysis of responses is to be found in Mbali (2005) for SAARDHE2005.) Here it is enough that such workload planning is another manifestation of performance management. Interestingly most of the respondents acknowledged that management has the right to try to measure workload, but many also found the actual measures used did not fit their work. Appendix 1 summarizes responses to the NTESU survey. It substantiates two of the problems pointed to above in the comment on applying corporatist measurement systems to higher education, firstly that academic work is complex with many different tasks within it, and secondly it is difficult to quantify in that how can measures be devised that are fair across such different tasks? It is simply not just a matter of counting student contact hours, or counting research articles. Even the concept 'student' is slippery: do only registered students count? What about prospective students and past students? The notion that all research articles in any discipline could be regarded as equal is questionable: the nature of research and even the nature of publishing outlets in each discipline each is so different. It is not so surprising that so many of the sample disagreed that SAPSE measures their research fairly.

Compliance, Consultation and Autonomy

The third problem with performance measures is the behaviourist assumptions that underpin it. In the quest for measurable improvements, the quality advisors and managers seem determined to define outputs and behaviours that should be rewarded. This seems like a retro-step into Fordism or Taylorism that minutely specifies the tasks to be performed in the productive work-place. In the corporate world this type of behaviourist management fell out of favour when Argyris and others in the West, and Japanese with their Kaizen circles of improvement in the East, realized that workers work better when they feel some 'ownership' over their sector of work – that they themselves can contribute ideas for improvement.

Admittedly, there are some aspects of the quality discourse in South Africa that appears to recognize 'stake-holder' input. The Mission of each University is self-defined, presumably by appropriate consultation within the institution. The precise terms of this mission become important when it is these terms that are used as criteria in the forthcoming HEQC peer-audits. In the proposed performance development procedures, each employee will decide, in consultation with a supervisor, the priorities for work, within the mission of that sector.

The 21st Century report emphasizes that the performance management must be accepted by 'stakeholders' and employees first, and be implemented BEFORE it begins to be used for differential pay based on performance. The problem is that within a managerialist system, consultation may become perfunctory or patchy, with blind spots. An example of a blind-spot was revealed in the CHE AGM 2004 in the report by de Lange on a survey of Vice-Chancellor's views on mergers. Not one of them had even thought to mention that staff unions could be significant in a time of mergers.

Performance management arises from a neo-liberal view of human nature. It assumes that human beings are best motivated by individual incentives, preferably monetary. It assumes that competition is inevitable and that it drives progress. It assumes that differential awards will achieve improvement rather than disabling dissension. It assumes that performance can be quantified and priced. It assumes that it is fair to use the same indicators for everyone in the 'same' type of work. What may happen is that some individuals will romp ahead in such a system, as the incentives suit

them and their type of work. But many others will be left doing the chores that these alpha males (with a few alpha females) disdain. Some will gain the requisite performance pips by complying on paper, while in fact having different goals and activities.

There is another view of human nature which respects the capacity of individuals to freely choose their own courses of action, and to collaborate with others. The type of individuals attracted to academic careers is achievement orientated, but not necessarily for large monetary rewards (although many would say it is nice to get the money as well.) It is far more important for them to have the freedom to pursue their knowledge quests. And for some teaching is also hugely satisfying. Judging by the responses to the NTESU questionnaire about incentives ('if I wanted to work in the corporate world, I would have done so'), the consultants and the UKZN workshop over-estimate the effectiveness of pay differentials. Much cheaper incentives would also work, for instance, a Vice-Chancellor's Day where people could present or exhibit their work.

Academics are proud of their work, and stay in the academic environment precisely because of the value of association – the reciprocal value-giving noted earlier. They know the value of peer-recognition. A large part of academic authority is derived from the exercise of judgement (13 such peer-review activities are listed in Finch 1996). Surely such individuals can be trusted with judgements about quality.

What is apparent in the quality discourse in South Africa is an uneasy wobbling between the managerialist tendencies towards reductionist performance management and the more traditional respect for academic autonomy – that the institutions must devise and implement their OWN quality systems, and the employees must define their own work priorities. Reductionism tends to gloss over diversity, but too much respect for autonomy can lead to inequality.

Conclusions

The above analyses show that underlying the debates about quality in South African Higher Education are some polarities that can be put in two columns, as below:

National steering	academic self-governance
Regulation	stakeholder consultation
Performativity	reflexivity
Standardization	diversity
Performance management	self-motivated individuals
Bonus pay	achievement motivation

South Africa seems to have swung towards the left side of the list. But before we go too far, irrevocably, to that side, it might be prudent to look at what is being lost on the other side of the list.

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Appendix 1
Summary of Responses to the NTESU-UKZN Survey on the Planning Tool

(Q2) 32 (nearly 50%) say the suggested 40:40:10:10 ratio does NOT fit their work
13 of these do more administration.
8 do more teaching
9 said it fits their work

(Q4) Work they do includes
9 – Student Counselling
8 – Personnel Administration (tutors etc)
and 14 other types of work with fewer responses (see the 16 nodes in this category)

(Q5) On formula counting only student numbers and contact hours:
11 agreed
57 object to it

(Q6) They responded with 10 other factors to measure with regard to teaching:
Preparation (not coded as researcher has always assumed that is part of teaching)
New curriculum, courses, or materials
Level of students (1st Level, post-graduate etc.)
Mode of Delivery
Praxis (if there is experiential placement e.g. School practice)
Personnel administration
Type of Assessment
Student Counselling
Disadvantaged students including disabled
Course Administration

(Q7) Research measured by SAPSE:
23 agreed
57 disagreed

(Q8) They came up with at least 14 other factors to measure research by
Graduation rates of post-graduates
Research funds raised
NRF
Editing and Reviewing
Books
Discipline status
Networking with other Universities
Creative work
Conference organization
Civic or Development
Research for the University (intra-University – like this report)
Commercial applications and patents
Time – 8 mentioned various problems with the one paper per year e.g. Ph.D,
Typical research cycles in the discipline e.g. with plants
Appraisal problems were acknowledged by 8

(Q9) There were 16 factors listed by those whose administrative tasks exceeded 10%, the largest being:
Administration connected with being in charge of courses or programmes – 19
Office mal-functioning, or systems failures – 15
Merger – 10

(Q10 and Q11) A large and varied list of appropriate community engagement was noted. Only 13 could not list any appropriate activity. Some of these mentioned large teaching loads as preventing any extra engagement.

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Labour Pains and University Mergers: The Case of UKZN

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1 Introduction

> The history of Unions is a long series of defeats of the working-men, interrupted by few isolated victories. All these efforts naturally cannot alter the economic law according to which wages are determined by the relation between supply and demand in the labour market. Hence the Unions remain powerless against all great forces which influence this relation. In a commercial crisis the Union itself must reduce wages or dissolve wholly; and in a time of considerable increase in the demand for labour, it cannot fix the rate of wages higher than would be reached spontaneously by the competition of the capitalists among themselves. But in dealing with minor, single influences they are powerful (Engels 1892).

This article deals with the sharp intellectual and ideological contestation over the impact of commercialization of education at UKZN (the so called 'merger') on the labour formations at the new university. M. Castells sharply observed only a few years ago that a new society emerges when and if structural transformation can be observed in the relationship of production, in the relationships of power, and in the relationships of experience. These transformations lead to an equally substantial modification of social forms of space and time, and to the emergence of new culture (Castells 1998:360). The merger of Natal and Westville University after ten years of democracy

in South Africa is in part a world-historical experiment of significant proportions. It is not unique in itself as many universities throughout the world and in South Africa have merged through mostly a painful process. With the modifications of social forms of space and time, along emerges sweetheart unionism, and this paper hopes to interrogate some of the theoretical issues in the ever complex debate on higher education commercialization and the role of labour formations in these processes.

It is well-known and an accepted reality that role players and stakeholders in education have accepted the necessity and inevitability of transformation. It is also widely accepted that higher education especially has been in a perpetual state of transformation since the previous Minister of Education (Professor Kader Asmal) assumed his portfolio. The ideals of this transformation are quite appealing but the manner in which transformation is taking place has been one of the strangest undertakings of this cherished democratic government (Karumbidza & Sithole 2005).

At the new University of KwaZulu-Natal there is a great number of role-players who show no interest in management and union politics – they 'mind their own business', 'they say nothing', 'they endorse the present situation', 'they carry on their assigned duties'. In the grand process of transformation of higher education at UKZN two of the most important role players (unions and management) face themselves in a number of different ways, on five different campuses and under a new merger regime. This is indeed a mind boggling process of small and big battles associated with individual and collective grievances, bitter-sweet ironies, personal and professional feuds that leads to a class-based adversarial relationship that has direct and indirect effects on the success of the merger, a corporatist NEDLAC like situation or covert or overt conflict between management and unions. Inevitably these relationships are political in their root.

Venter (2003) argues that conflict is primarily the result of the tensions that arise between the parties in the employment relationship as a consequence of the different roles they play.

Scholarly debate on higher education transformation has been silent on the fate of University and Technikon workers and employees who are at the wrong end of the process. The retrenchments of large numbers of staff at the Universities of Cape Town, Witwatersrand and the Durban Institute of Technology (DIT) have been all but forgotten. This article hopes to become

an appeal to existing and future courageous voices with independent critical minds to begin contributing to a national debate on this phenomenon. Such an appeal would be of tremendous importance since it would disperse the hypocrites, expose and unmask the merger frauds, and give a great impetus to the increasing unionization of workers at UKZN across all five campuses especially those who have remained loyal to their struggle for survival and excellence. From the events that unfolded in the past one year and four months, it is evident that the new style of management which pretends to be consultative, democratic and transparent, is instead one of bullying, intimidation with an expectation that unions must tow their line. It is painful, in these days of liberty, to read the passages of UKZN Indaba which have been distorted, cramped, compressed in an iron vice on account of the Public Affairs Executive Director that the merger has benefits in place for the workers.

2 The State of Unionism at UKZN

In this era of the commercialization of education, one cannot be silent on the fact that at present no real labour movement, in the real meaning of the word exists at UKZN. Since there is no universal accepted definition of the term 'trade union', the problem of defining a trade union at UKN is associated with questions such as 'How independent is the union?'; 'Is the union subject to the determining influence of management pressure?'; 'Is the union autonomous and, if so, how autonomous?'[1]. Such questions are informed by the fact that institutions of higher learning and unions are becoming steeped into a business oriented mould, thus creating doubts among the employees whether unions are now subordinate to management. In this day and age, a union's power does not hover in mid-air; to argue that unions at UKZN are completely free organizations is as sociologically unenlightening and as historically inaccurate as the argument that the unions are consciously manipulated instruments of the ruling management.

One of the biggest challenges facing the post 1994 democratic South Africa is that many in the new trade union leadership with highly dubious credentials aspire to higher positions and privileges, thus ending up

[1] See the Combined Staff Association newsletter on the UKZN website.

compromising the workers in the process. Bond and Mayekiso (1996) argued that the movement leadership drawn from the petty bourgeoisie is notoriously and eternally unreliable. This argument was advanced many decades ago by Michels (1911) amongst others. His thesis was based on the reality that when the union leaders are not persons of means and have no other source of income, they hold firmly to their positions for economic reasons, coming to regard the functions they exercise as theirs by inalienable right.

Especially this is true of trade union leaders at the 5 campuses of the University of KwaZulu-Natal who, since becoming leaders, have not excelled in their jobs because of time spent attending Joint Bargaining Forum (JBF) meetings. For them, the loss of shop stewardship would be detrimental to their jobs, and in most cases it would be altogether impossible to perform on their jobs with merit[2].

Leadership is an extremely important variable in the efficient and effective unionization. Senge (cited in Amuwo 2004) argues that leaders are those people who walk ahead, and people who are genuinely committed to deep change in themselves and their organizations. Leadership is not the work by which a man ought to expect to earn his living and look after his future (Nyerere in Legum & Marri 1995) and this should be the case at UKZN. Lack of synergy between the mandate given to the trade union leadership by the membership on the other hand, and demands put forward by union leadership at the bargaining chambers is a serious problem at UKZN. Whether such behaviour is through ignorance or not is another issue that needs to be debated. Amuwo (2004) argues that the situation is further exacerbated by the oft-cited issue of poor administration and bad governance in the country's institutions of higher learning.

At the University of KwaZulu-Natal, there are four registered unions with the Department of Labour, (COMSA, UNSU, NTESU and NEHAWU[3])

[2] When shop stewards are graded in their posts, their results are always positive.

[3] COMSA = Combined Staff Association
UNSU = University of Natal Staff Union
NTESU = National Tertiary Education Staff Union
NERHAWU = National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union

which were accorded recognition rights by management to represent different sectors of staff across all five campuses. This arrangement is typical to the one outlined by Bendix (1996) whereby unions are typically classified according to the interests of the members they represent, their objectives, and structure. Her argument can be traced to Gramsci's thesis on unionism where he argues that unionism unites workers according to the tools of their trade or the nature of their product, that is according to contours imposed on them by the capitalist system (Gramsci 1955). The organizational arrangements are as follows: NTESU represents mostly academics; UNSU represents middle class workers mainly administrative; NEHAWU lower grade workers; and COMSA all grades including academics. These trade unions are nothing but a reflection of the stratification patterns of a particular capitalist society and a higher institution of learning. In the post merger period their recognition rights coupled together with their disjointed history were extended to the new institution. Three of these unions (UNSU, NTESU, NEHAWU) are from the ex UN and COMSA has its base in the former UDW. Three of them are 'in-house', 'un-affiliated' Unions, while NEHAWU is affiliated to the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the largest worker federation in the country. When the new merger dispensation unfolded, workers expected these unions to bargain as a united front on issues of mutual interest in the Joint Bargaining Forum.

However, the opposite happened as division among these unions swept from the very beginning when the unified terms and conditions of service and salary negotiations took place at the JBF in January 2004. This division was fuelled by a serious optimism among the four unions who hoped to recruit more members for themselves. This gave management an edge over the labour formations. Engels (1892:218f) advanced the thesis that the supremacy of the bourgeoisie is based wholly upon the competition of the workers among themselves; i.e. upon their want of cohesion.

In the concrete merger of 'two equals scenario', the JBF is supposed to be 'the most' important bargaining forum but yet it operates without a constitution. Sporadically unions have demanded such developments, to no avail. As a result the grassroots employees have nicknamed it, 'the Jokers Bargaining Forum'. Meetings of the forum are convened by the Human Resources Department and chaired by Management. The Industrial Relations

role in this forum is to advise both parties to negotiations. However this seems not to be forthcoming, as the Industrial Relations Department has obviously taken the management's side. Since the Industrial Relations Division role in the JBF has been reduced to a one party advisor, their relevance is obsolete, to put it mildly.

3 Challenges Facing Labour Formations

Having dealt briefly with problems associated with union leadership at UKZN, it is necessary to consider the ideologies and structures of interests characterising the leadership strata of the trade unions and shop steward leadership-led rank and file work groups and how their relationship to the university management have changed in the period under consideration. According to Amuwo (2004), the National Working Group assured stakeholders that the merger proposal is not the same as rationalization or downsizing, although it is difficult not to envisage the inevitability of the latter. Such investigation can thoroughly be engaged through unpacking the day-to-day challenges encountered by labour formations as a result of the deep commercialization and managerialism of higher education at UKZN.

The voices at the shop floor in the new university are loud and clear – that the introduction and perpetration of flexible forms of employment, cannot compensate them with the fact that the merger had freed them from apartheid-based universities. As argued by Engels (1844) and Marx (1865) respectively, Unions' achievements are limited by long-run economic laws tending towards the increasing immiseration of the worker. This is evident today with the world shifting to a process of flexible labour that has become a norm; what is fading away, not only in advanced economies but throughout the world, is the traditional form of stable employment in a standardized labour market, heavily institutionalized with a predictable career pattern (Castells 1998). A simple strategy being used by management at the University of KwaZulu-Natal is the extinction of permanent workers and their replacement with contract workers and student assistants. There are approximately 400 affected employees who work on 3 months contracts given to them by the top management at their discretion. There is nothing new in this move, as it has its roots as early as 1997 at the former UDW with the so called restructuring process. A number of departments were closed

down, severance packages were offered and a number of employees were retrenched. By not filling the vacant positions, it clearly showed that management of the university intended to keep its privileges (Amuwo 2004). The consequences of indecision by management and deafening silence on the union's side have severely strained departments with depleted human resources.

One of the problems facing unions is that their leadership are afraid to oppose the rank and file directly. Their opposition has taken the form of attempting to channel the broad range of rank and file grievances into bargaining demands which centre, in the main, on wages and benefits, while the backlog of grievances on issues having to do with working conditions remains unsolved (Aronowitz 1973). The ex-COSATU President and at present Member of Parliament John Gomomo in his address to the World Economic Forum stressed the fact that as we continue searching for solutions, we cannot ignore the background and roots of our problems (23 May 1996). The first task faced by unions was the finalization of the uniform terms and conditions of service for the new institution. Most contentious issues pertaining to benefits were resolved to the workers satisfaction with the exception of new employees who were used as a bargaining chip.

New employees employed after the signing of the collective agreement regard the signing of the document as a serious compromise on the part of the unions. Clause 1.3. stipulates that there will be no post retirement funding of medical aid for employees employed after the signing of the collective agreement and leave accumulation for new employees will be 132 working days as opposed to 264 days enjoyed by other employees

Although this document was not cast in stone, its signing by the three unions (NTESU, NEHAWU and UNSU) indicated a defeatist position from their side. The analysis of the negotiations of terms and conditions of service clearly indicated that unions did not succeed in operationalising the Pareto optimality theorem in negotiating these terms and conditions namely, making the majority better off without necessarily making the minority worse off (see Amuwo 2004). The COMSA's principled position not to accept the clause 1.3 designed specifically for new staff members created a serious turmoil within university management and the other unions. COMSA's leadership consulted its members widely on the issue, pinpointing the unprincipled position adopted in these clauses, which were not in the

original 'Conditions of Service', but were adopted by the Council, the highest decision-making body of the University. The clause was considered a 'masterstroke' revenue saving mechanism, as there was a belief that the conditions of service were in fact very 'employee-friendly' and could ultimately lead to wide expenditure patterns that the university could not afford. COMSA's clear position that it would not sign the existing conditions of service forced the management to open 'one-on-one' negotiations with the union, much to the open hostility of all three other unions who had already signed the conditions, including the disputed clause. The bickering of the three unions on the matter were stopped abruptly following a long reply from the leadership of COMSA on the merits and demerits of the conditions of service and the disputed clauses (COMSA 2004).

The negotiations with management were long, acrimonious and protracted, and created a divisive feeling amongst the other unions, who together with management and the Council breathed a sigh of relief when COMSA signed the Conditions of Service that included a seriously revised Clause 1.3 that did not compromise the rights of new staff members at the institution. This instance and the principled resistance of one of the unions need to be seen in its proper context. COMSA is perhaps the only union with regular mass meetings and feed-back to members on all key issues affecting them. The support of all COMSA members to the leadership regarding the disputed clauses was instrumental in the subsequent victory – this, despite the fact that many of them were coerced to accept the 'Conditions of Service' in writing when asking for routine services such as a staff loan and the like.

Normalisation and equalization of salaries between the employees of the two institutions has not been achieved yet, and the same is true of grading. There were several clauses, however, in the 'Conditions of Service' that purported to address wage inequalities at the new University. Thus all employees who have not reached the top of their maximum salary were awarded a notch not exceeding 3.5%. With the extension of the process to the former UDW staff members in 2004, all staff were granted 'amnesty', even those who had reached the top of their maximum salary. This is contrary to the Rector's approach of placing more emphasis on rewarding committed and productive academics rather than administrators and support

staff (*Weekend Witness* February 19, 2005). This was only a partial victory not worth a celebration if one really understands the employment dynamics of the past two institutions. In fact the bomb was defused and reset to explode in 2005 when 176 former UDW employees went home empty handed simply because they have not been graded for the past seven years, and thus they are on top of their maximum range. This is directly linked to the fact that the former UDW was using the market-related salary which is attached to a grade and the latter was not a determining pay indicator. The former UDW Human Resources grievance statistics clearly highlight the nature of the problem which in this case is the inconsistent application of the market-related salary among employees. Older workers and employees with more experience were mostly affected by the notch due to annual salary increases accrued over the years (March 2004 Payroll).

3.1 Employment Equity: A Derailed Train

The biggest challenge facing the South African workplace in its reformist mould is one of reconciling the global with the local, greater competitiveness with employment equity, greater efficiency with the demand for more and better jobs (Webster 1999:37). In education the thinking has been that only a revamped higher education system is capable of fulfilling the triple purpose of promoting equity, ensuring sustainability, enhancing productivity (Amuwo 2004). At the same time the general transformation of the country that calls for equity along social and gender lines has not happened at the University without complications as the conditions of employment of specific candidates become 'strange' depending on who is involved in the process. Even though redress seems to be taking place, the insecurity of survivalist contracts that are justified through cost-cutting transformation affect 'some' more than 'others' (Karumbidza & Sithole 2005). Balintulo (2004) argues that, if the newly merged Universities are to be transformed, the imperatives of equity, redress and development require a *significant expansion* of higher education over the next decade and beyond. Jansen (2002) poses several penetrating questions about equity: 'Was there more black staff after the merger?' 'More women?' 'More black or women staff in senior positions?' He went on to argue that while equity might not have been a goal of the merger, it was nevertheless important in the broader context of

the national plan on higher education as stipulated in the national legislation and its planned implementation.

According to the National Commission on Higher Education findings of 1990, the higher education sector in South Africa is highly stratified in terms of race and gender. The trend is that the greater the prestige, status and influence, the greater the extent to which they are dominated by whites and men. Positions which on the other hand have lower status and prestige, and which wield little influence, tend to be filled primarily by blacks and women. Most African staff are concentrated at the bottom of the employment ladder. Most are employed as service staff, whereas most whites are employed as academic staff or in senior administrative posts. These disparities in the overall employment structure of universities and technikons increase with rank (NCHE 1996:38). This is evident at UKZN too as most support staff and junior positions are held by Africans.

Throughout South Africa's turbulent past, the state protected the interests of the minority group, while simultaneously promoting employment inequity. The attempt to mislead the public by the Director of Equity at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Miss R. Budree, who claimed that equity was accelerated at the University as a guest speaker at a public platform ('Varsity moves fast on equity and gender' the *Mercury*, February 1), did not go unchallenged. In the *Mercury* of February 15 2005, a disappointed Umlazi reader argues that her attempt to paint a rosy picture of equity is false, because, of the deputy vice-chancellors, four of them are white males, one is African and one Deputy Vice-Chancellor of planning is over 60 years of age. From the academic staff compliment of 2 192, 47% are White, 28% Indian, 23% African and 2% Coloured. 57% of academic staff members are male. Among 3 467 support staff, 36% are African, 34% Indian, 26% White and 4% Coloured. 55% of support staff members are female (*UKZN Indaba* 2004). The above statistics bear testimony of a racially fragmented University, where Africans continue to languish at the bottom of the occupational ladder.

The lack of gender representation in the proposed Finance Division Management Structure has sparked serious controversy as individuals and unions are calling for the structure to be theoretically and empirically examined. Such a problem is also highlighted by Otunga and Ojwang (2004)

in a study conducted on women and leadership positions in higher education in Kenya. Their findings reveal that women's limited presence in senior positions at universities is due to their lack of appropriate educational, as well as various socio-cultural, economic and political factors. How grounded is their argument, when one considers that at UKZN there is a limited presence of qualified females who can excel in senior positions if given a chance. Lack of equity in the proposed Management Structure of Finance at UKZN was also seriously questioned in a COMSA newsletter dated March 3 2005 which was censured by the leadership of the Public Affairs office for being too critical of management. They refused to circulate it in the University's internal website. The questions raised were: 'Where are the Black women and African well qualified staff in top management positions, especially at Deputy Director's level?' 'Where is the succession plan? Soon?'

The staff demographic profiles of the former UN and UDW are a testimony of the harsh and inequitable realities of the past. At the former UN, the whites were given higher positions of power and at the former UDW, Indians were mostly privileged. This could be justified given the social and historical particularities of the past. In the new dispensation, however, the well educated majority of African staff who have been relegated to lower positions question the UKZN redress policy, although not very overtly or as openly as they should. The existing divisions along racial lines are at present a serious challenge facing the new university. Such skewed power distribution is further exacerbated by the superannuation policy of extending the appointments of mainly White Senior staff, by the former University of Natal. This was done for up to five years beyond retirement age and this policy is in open contradiction to the goals of equity. With such realities at play, workers are pointing fingers at the Organizational Culture office for being dysfunctional.

3.2 One University, Same College, Different Salaries

The move to have the 25th of each month as a uniform pay day across all five campuses while still having salary discrepancies among staff members has been met with strong reservations from the former UDW staff members

who were paid on the 15th of each month since the inception of the institution. It is well-known that wage inequality among both women and men has increased significantly in the past two decades (Campbell 1999) and this is also the case at UKZN. Furthermore, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, wage inequality is also racially oriented due to the legacy of the apartheid setting. Suspiciously unstandardised remuneration formulas at the University of KwaZulu-Natal perpetuate wage inequality which resembles the situation best described by George Orwell in his famous book the *Animal Farm* ('All animals are equal, but some are more equals than others'). With regard to remuneration inequality at UKZN, Sithole and Karumbidza (2005) argue that fairness must be sought through aggressive looking at human resources rewards.

What UKZN inherited is a scenario whereby workers with same job tittles, same job description, same grade and same educational qualification are earning different salaries. Such discrepancy is ripe among Senior Managers and was highlighted in the Minutes of the Council Meeting of the then University of Durban-Westville of 5th December 2003 item 117: Merger, paragraph 3 which reads as follows:

> Council expressed concern about the lack of disclosure by Natal University on the salaries and terms of appointment of senior Management for the current year. The Chair was urged by Council to urgently pursue this matter with her counterpart in order to enable parity of salaries between both Universities' Senior Management, which would then be retrospectively adjusted for all current incumbents from the level of Dean to Vice Chancellor ....

From this analysis, the workers of the institution that has championed the struggle against apartheid, inequity, injustice and which was at the forefront of the transformatory agenda, pre- and post-freedom and as a result suffered serious disadvantages, has become further disadvantaged.

Statistics South Africa added another variable (race) in the wage inequality hypothesis by arguing that black African workers comprise the largest group of those earning low salaries (Labour Force Survey March 2003). The phenomenon of relatively junior academics getting higher salaries than professors is not uncommon – not to mention the largely

unsustainable huge salaries of senior management. At the former University of the North, salaries of top management should have been ideally reduced, declared and dealt with by the University Finance Officer rather than an outside agency, but it never happened (Amuwo 2004). At UKZN academics are disgruntled on how little they get remunerated when work of excellence standard is expected from them. It will be naïve if one is to discuss issues of remuneration in isolation from the level of skills possessed by workers.

As higher education systems and institutions worldwide reconfigure their new roles, so too should the workers at all levels of the occupational ladder. Venter (2003) argues that possibly the other biggest challenge facing South Africa in the post-apartheid years is the upliftment and improvement of its skills-base through education and training. At UKZN, such an approach should be informed by attitude change from the management in realising that the worker is a resource and not a cost. The mission statement of the university strongly emphasises the creation of a University which is globally competitive. This means that skills development should be the number one priority, especially amongst the disadvantaged. The Green Paper on Skills Development Strategy (1997), ties up the country's re-entry to the world arena, which means that demands increase in both the quality of goods and services and innovative capacities. All these cannot be achieved without an increasingly competent workforce. While the UKZN Training Unit reached 550 staff last year in 2004 through 30 different courses, it hopes to reach up to 1 000 staff members in 2005 (*UKZN Indaba* February 2004). Various questions as to the relevance of training offered in relation to the job situation have been posed to the Training Office.

3.3 The 21st Century and the Harmonisation of Benefits

Parallel to all the processes unfolding, an attempt to harmonize benefits in the new institutions by the Department of Education is hoped to be achieved through the 21st Century Consultancy Company. The 21st century consultancy terms of reference are: joint evaluation systems, reward strategy, remuneration policy and procedures, unified pay and benefit structure. In spite of having representatives from the 4 unions as part of task teams which are now operational, workers still have strong reservations on the objectivity

of the forthcoming findings. Their fear confirms both Buhlungu's (1997) and Barchiesi's (1997) analyses that workers are generally suspicious of management-initiated participation schemes. The general feeling among the workers at UKZN is that the recommendations of the 21st Century might not be objective since universities' managers are fencing in resources and fencing out people.

As per the 21st Century recommendation, the UKZN remuneration strategy should be aimed at attracting and retaining sufficient employees of the right calibre, and that it will motivate them to perform in alignment with the 'business goals' set by the institution. At the same time, outstanding achievement in the process should be rewarded, thereby recognizing those who perform 'premier work', and to ensure that there are consequences for non delivery (UKZN Remuneration Strategy 2005). Recently the Vice Chancellor of UKZN lashed out at the so called 'lazy academics'. He argued, 'if academics were publishing work, we would be number one university in the country and our subsidy would increase' (*Weekend Witness*, Saturday, February 19, 2005). In essence, this translates to academics raising funds to pay for their own salaries. However a number of questions can be raised in relation to such generalities, i.e. 'What criteria will be used to measure the performance of an administrative worker in grade 11?', 'Will the same criteria be utilised for an administrative worker in Grade 8?' 'Who is a more productive academic? He/she who supervises two PhD graduates contributing R500 000 to the university subsidy coffers or he/she who produces 3 SAPSE recognised journal articles bringing R22 000 in subsidy?' 21st Century Consultants have a hard task ahead, indeed.

This noble reward strategy adopted at UKZN is based on performance, market related pay and a total package approach to remuneration. Barker (2003) pinpoints that performance-related pay relates to the extent to which wages are linked to the productive effort of the individual worker or a group of workers, and to the productivity and profitability record of the sector or the enterprise. Academics are generally measured by SAPSE accredited journal publications and student pass rate successes, but support staff will be unfairly disadvantaged since there are serious obstacles in measuring excellence among them. While unions who represent mostly support staff are trying to address performance related pay,

two new merger problems have been added to their long list of issues. These problems are a direct result of the process of structures finalization and interim deployment policy.

With the finalization of the appointments in all Executive positions, Deanships and Headships, the final phase in the 'final re-structuring' is the finalization of university-wide hierarchical structures. Such decisions are made mainly behind boardroom closed doors, and it is at this juncture that the fear for the unknown is manifesting among the vast majority of staff members on all five campuses. The proposed management structure of Finance Division which incorporates the Stores Section confirms the workers' fear (see Appendix 1). At the Finance Department of the former two institutions, there were 6 Assistant Directors (UDW), and 11 Assistant Directors (Natal). These figures exclude the Stores Division. The new Finance Division structure caters for only 5 Assistant Directors. This number includes an additional person demoted from a Director's position at Stores to Assistant Director. Simple statistics indicate that from 17 Assistant Directors, only 4 were appointed. The other 12 were demoted to Managers. Can a world-class university be built by reducing the number of designated and well-defined jobs with pre-determined inputs, outputs and outcomes? As a result objections to the new structures are coming in thick and fast from all corners of the five campuses.

Such realities were further fuelled by the new interim deployment policy agreed to by unions and management. Actually this policy is aimed at giving management free rein of deploying staff the way they deem fit. The argument in favour of the policy raised by Management is that during the period that the University is putting staffing structures in place, it needs to be fully operational until the final completion and operationalisation of these tasks. Therefore, it may be necessary during this period, for the University to deploy staff on an interim basis, to ensure that it meets its operational requirements and maintains proper functionality. Workers perceive this as a redeployment policy for the purposes contemplated in section 189 and 189A of the Labour Relations Act 1995, where permanent redeployment is used as an alternative to dismissal for operational reasons. According to management, deployment of a member of staff shall be internal and of interim nature after proper consultation with the staff member who is spare capacity (UKZN deployment policy 19/11/04). The senior Industrial

Relations manager is quoted, however, as saying, *'the deployment policy was placed before unions for consultation, not negotiation'*. Since there is no room created for union representatives to negotiate the terms of movement, line managers are now abusing the policy to demote the workers. The following case serves as an example.

A staff member was told that her position is redundant in the Department from the 1st of January 2005 after her functions were transferred to a much junior staff member. She was instructed to relocate to another Department. When she realized that the position she was being transferred to was a junior position, she reported the issue to her union representative. The line manager concerned refused to talk to the union on the matter unless a formal indemnity was granted to him that the University will not be held liable to any claim arising from the issue in contention. Subsequently the line manager ordered the concerned employee to vacate the office and hand over all files in her possession. When the manager was questioned by the union representing the aggrieved party, the manager confirmed that this was a demotion but the staff member demoted should be happy that she still has a job. The matter was handed over to the Industrial Relations Department for investigation. The letter written by the IR Department to the line manager revealed that the line manager acted un-procedurally in handling the matter. As a result the decision to move the staff member was reversed (COMSA Files, 2005).

The above case study bears testimony to the harsh realities of the merger as far as workers are concerned.

3.4 Annual Salary Negotiations

The appointment of a new finance chief officer had serious implications on the approval of the budget for the 2005 financial year. Even after the budget has been approved, the management was still adamant that they did not have any mandate to negotiate with unions as the remuneration committee of the Council has not debated the issue. They stipulated that negotiations could only start in April. Such delays have now become a norm at UKZN; this was evident last year when workers were granted an annual increase in April backdated to January. Simple accounting analysis clearly indicates that by the time the workers received their back-pay it had lost its buying power

whereas for management it would have accrued interest. Annual salary negotiation is one of the major priorities of every union and by dragging the process deliberately on the part of management leads to more pressure that is exerted from the union membership on its leadership. This is because the latter is expected to negotiate and force management to deliver what is considered a fair annual salary increase. It needs to be stated that the University's provisional budget was approved in November 2004 and such budget caters for staff compensation. Furthermore such delays cannot be justified when one considers that salaries of academics themselves are generated from publications in SAPSE accredited journals, postgraduate supervision rewards and the like. This payment arrangement alone shows injustice and lack of fairness on the part of the University. The unions' request for 2005 was a 9.5% increase across the board, excluding the notch granted to employees at the beginning of the year.

4 Unions' Response to the Challenges

As pressure from the membership surmounted on the four unions to deliver on their unfulfilled promises, embarking on a Unions Imbizo was the last resort. The meeting was convened at a neutral place with a well-known labour lawyer as a facilitator. The following concerns were identified and submitted as a memorandum to the university management:

* There is a lack of transparency and proper information given to Unions.

* Management and Council appear to be taking decisions based on short-term financial need as opposed to long term development.

* There is lack of Unions' representation in formal decision-making.

* There is a lack of meaningful negotiations with trade unions on issues affecting staff.

* Decisions taken at the JBF are undermined by Management and Council.

* The current restructuring has created fears and a real threat of probable retrenchments.

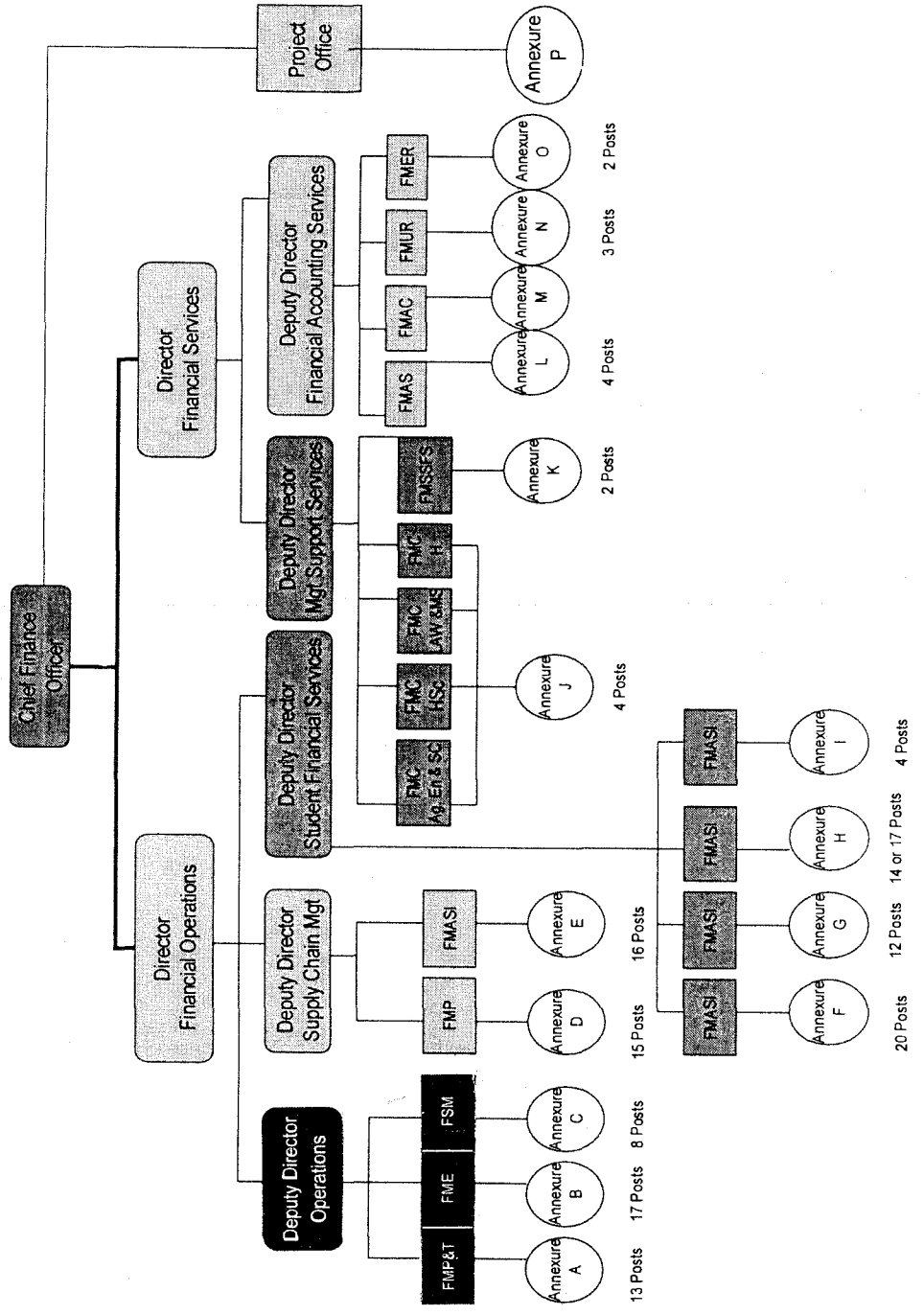
* There is increasing exploitation levels of contract staff by the University.

* There is a divide-and-rule tactic by Management when dealing with staff from the two former Universities.

Noting the unacceptable delays from the management side to begin the salary negotiations for 2005, the unions resolved that the university be placed on notice that they are in dispute in this matter. With the threats of the strike looming, an urgent extraordinary meeting was convened with the entire Executive Management to discuss salary negotiations and most of the issues raised in this article. The above analysis of problems identified by the labour formations are an indication that the rosy picture painted daily in newspapers is part of the propaganda machine spearheaded by the Public Affairs Division is not the whole truth.

5 Conclusion

The site of struggle at UKZN is in need of a paradigm shift. Union power-blocs attempt to consolidate their hegemonies over each other instead of channelling their efforts towards securing benefits for their members in the long and short term. It is evident that the winner in the process is university management, top professors and opportunistic union officials who portray themselves as Messiahs of the working class while speaking the language of the bosses. In spite of all difficulties, setbacks, mistakes, delusions and interruptions, with the reconfiguration of higher education beyond debate, this work is a friendly reminder to concerned workers and organic intellectuals that writings on the mergers in higher education tend to under-describe and under-theorise the severity of restructuring emanating from such initiatives. The unity of theory and practice need to be based on a solid and clear understanding of historical realities, the necessity of access, the opening of the doors of learning, teaching, research and outreach. Otherwise the future is very far away.



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Service Learning in South Africa Held Terminally Captive by Legacies of the Past

Sechaba Mahlomaholo and Thabang Matobako

Introduction

In accepting one of Community Service Learning's (CSL) distinguished accolades from the University of the Free State, in October, 2004, Robert, G. Bringle (2004:9) predicated his presentation by quoting the following words from Boyer's definition of civic engagement:

> The scholarship of engagement means connecting the rich resources of the university to our most pressing social, civic, and ethical problems, to our children, to schools to our teachers and to our cities ....

Following Boyer, he continued to say that,

> what is needed is not just more programmes, but a larger purpose, a larger sense of mission, a larger clarity of direction. Ultimately, the scholarship of engagement also means creating a special climate in which the academic and civic cultures communicate more continuously and more creatively with each other (Bringle 2004:10).

Then, to concretize the above, Bringle (2004:12) stated that, if higher education institutions develop 'community/academy partnerships', they will be the 'best places to live, work and learn' (in this, he referred to a similar statement by Dean Platers' vision for Indiana University – Purdue University

Indianapolis (IUPUI)).

In our view, the above insights resonate very closely with those of Steve Biko who is quoted as having said that,

> we have set out on a quest for true humanity, and somewhere on the distant horizon we can see the glittering prize. Let us march forth with courage and determination, drawing strength from our common plight and brotherhood. In time we shall be in a position to bestow upon South Africa the greatest gift possible – a more human face (SB: http://www.sbf.org.za/foundation, 2005/01/07).

Confronted by Bringle and Biko's understanding of civic engagement, community service learning or community engagement, we were alerted to the fact that these do not refer to the same things among their practitioners. This article therefore attempts to show that there are at least three levels at which community engagement, community service learning or civic engagement can be theorized and practiced.

The first level is referred to as being *in the* community where CSL is understood and practiced along the lines of *charity*. The second level is that of CSL understood along the lines of a *project* (see Morton 1995 and Keene & Colligan 2004) and the third level deals with CSL as being *of the* community, which is;

> genuinely collaborative and driven by community rather than campus interests; that democratizes the creation and dissemination of knowledge; and that seeks to achieve positive social change (Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoeker & Donohue 2003).

The most important question for us is to determine the level at which CSL is theorized and practiced in South Africa. In response to this question we noted that prior to the current wave of CSL practices there were attempts at CSL practice in the recent past exemplified in Steve Biko and the Black People's Conventions' efforts (see for example Burke://www.infed.org/thinkers/biko.htm 2005/03/14). To us this version of CSL, while not sponsored by and through the university, was a genuinely committed engagement which was totally emancipatory, symbiotic to/with the

beneficiary community to which the practitioner(s) belonged. It was overtly geared towards social transformation which was about holistic emancipation in all its forms. This CSL represented greater affinity to the community. This kind of theorization and practice (praxis) was truncated through political actions of the apartheid state[1] until Perold (1998) through the Joint Education Trust reported new efforts to 'find' and re-establish CSL formally in South African Higher Education institutions. In our view, this second wave of CSL was grossly academic and removed and had agendas foreign to the community embedded within itself. The conclusions we come to is that it is hard for this 'sanitized' CSL to be in sync with the heart-beat of the community. It is either 'in the community' (charity metaphor) or between the former and 'of the community' (project metaphor) and never genuinely engaged.

In this paper we put most of the blame on the inability to deliver, of the current wave of CSL theory and practice, squarely on the shoulders of historical legacies that continue to stranglehold growth and development of CSL towards a totally emancipatory, symbiotic relationship with the beneficiary community to which the practitioners belong. This stranglehold, we argue, is terminal in spite of the good intentions, or otherwise of practitioners, and stakeholders.

The Problem in a Nutshell

The problem as we see it is that CSL theory and practice has not as yet decided to genuinely

> connect the rich resources of the University to our most pressing social, civic and ethical problems, to our children, to our schools, to our teachers and to our cities.

[1] Biko; http://wwwnathanielturner.com/bikospeaksonafrica.html; 2005/03/14; Burke; http://www.infed.org/thinkers/biko.html;Husbands;http://www stanford.edu/~jbough/saw/Ajani_Biko.html;2005/03/14;Mokgatle;http://ww w.nathanielturner.com/autobiographyunknownsouthafrican.html;2005/03/14.

The problem as we furthermore see it is that higher Education is still focused on just more and more programmes and not genuinely 'on a larger purpose, a larger sense of mission, a larger clarity of direction'. And ultimately, 'the creation of a special climate in which the academic and civic cultures communicate more continuously and more creatively with each other seems far removed if not impossible to even begin to conceptualise.

As CSL practitioners we still have to seriously realize that our future and that of the so-called communities is one, and that for us all to survive we need to genuinely step out of our ivory towers (or down from our high horses) and get into the quagmire and squalid conditions of poverty, marginalization and deprivation alleviation. In short, the problem as we see it, is that as CSL practitioners we still have not come to realize that an injury to one member/aspect of the community is an injury to all of us, including the higher education community as well.

Put differently, in this article we attempt to demonstrate that perhaps because of our history as a nation we as institutions of higher learning are not able to move to the stage of genuine commitment to civic engagement, hence our being bogged down to only practice 'CSL as charity' and at best 'CSL as a project' but we are never genuinely committed to civic engagement.

In order to systematize our discussion with regard to the above aim we firstly describe the lens (theoretical framework) we have used so as to identify, unpack and respond to the problem. Secondly, we define the three levels at which CSL can be conceptualized and operationalized, using four basic tenets of CSL, namely, preparation, action, reflection and evaluation in an attempt to meet our stated aim. Fourthly, we highlight instances from the thirteen reports identified as outstanding CSL projects in 2004 by the Joint Education Trust to substantiate the point. Finally we draw conclusions and round off the discussions.

The Lens

Jürgen Habermas and the Frankfurt School established in 1924 (Wuthnow Hunter, Bergesen & Kurzweil 1985) seem to provide the most appropriate theoretical framework to enable us to address the issues we have outlined above. In constituting communities and societies, Habermas identified three

basic cognitive interests that stand at the heart of the process, namely, work, language and power. Firstly, people come together in aggregates of communities and/ or societies in order to be able to work meaningfully and effectively together for the continued existence of the human species. Secondly, another reason for constituting communities and/ or societies is for human beings to be able to talk to one another (language or interpretation) so as to facilitate their collective pursuits, like work, procreation, and so on. Finally when these humans come together there is a need to organize themselves into meaningful and effective units as in community and/or society. For such organisation, the exercise of power plays a central role (Wuthnow et al. 1985).

Developing his argument further, Habermas identifies three forms of knowledge corresponding to these three basic cognitive interests. The first is that of technicist and positive knowledge which is mainly descriptive, quantitative in nature and seeking universal laws, large patterns, causality and prediction. This kind of knowledge is necessary in order to enhance *work* and is therefore reliant on controlling variables, the environment including other human beings. It is the form of knowledge mainly inhabiting the natural sciences where *objects* are the focus of analysis and study. However, this typically *object*-oriented knowledge form has been transplanted into the dynamic human sphere where some people believe that because of its achievements in the natural sciences (see for example the industrial revolution) it is also the best form of knowledge for understanding humans as well (Wuthnow et al. 1985).

Arising from language as basic cognitive interest category, the second form of knowledge emphasises typically human knowledge. As such it is critical of technicist and positive knowledge, and advocates human dynamics, the fluidity of human interaction and relations, seeing the human being as a speaking and interpreting being who has to be approached differently from objects in some natural science laboratory (Wuthnow et al. 1985).

Finally beyond the interpretive/hermeneutic knowledge form described above, Habermas and the Frankfurt school argue for the knowledge form that critiques excess power and the unequal distribution thereof that lead to oppression, exclusion, and marginalization. This knowledge form Habermas et. al. define as critical and emancipatory as it

questions how things are and posits the possibility of an alternative. This knowledge form sees reality as multiple and non-essentialist depending on the perspective of the beholder (Wuthnow et al. 1985).

This form of knowledge prescribes humility on the part of the knowledge seeker (researcher) in that he/she has to recognize that his/her respondents are as equally human as he/she is and as such needs to be treated with the same human respect. In this kind of knowledge form the knowledge seeker does not shy away from his/her biases – he/she affirms them as his/her starting point. The researcher in this mode is the most important 'research instrument' as he/she has to interpret and analyse all information on the basis of his/her declared subjectivity (Douglas 1970; Fischer 1977; Plummer 1983; and Burgess 1988).

This theoretical framework is the most appropriate for us because we are on the one hand dealing with the *words* of people in written form as our information. On the other hand, we are inspired to look at alternatives to that which is overtly presented, i.e. we need a framework that would advance the emancipatory agenda as described by Habermas. A theoretical framework that critiques power relations in CSL is the most suited for the development of CSL, because, as entry point, it would lay bare power relations. It is further appropriate because it allows CSL practitioners to listen to the voices of the marginalized and 'little' people. Such a framework and practice would be the most appropriate in the context of challenges related to social transformation, social empowerment, social usefulness and meaningfulness. Viewed from the three different perspectives on CSL – CSL as charity, CSL as project and CSL as genuine commitment – this theoretical framework seems most appropriate because in each case, it allows for the theorizing and analysis of power relations from each individual perspective. It also provides a background against which critical emancipatory theory can be developed to study reciprocity (issues of power relations), intimacy, and locus of control, which are all necessary when one embarks on the basic process of CSL, namely, preparation, action, reflection and evaluation as they manifest themselves or are practiced at the three identified levels.

The Three Levels

Already we have alluded to the three levels at which CSL can be theorized and practiced, namely, CSL as charity, CSL as project and CSL as genuinely

committed engagement. At this stage it is necessary to take each level in turn and analyse the four basic tenets of CSL, namely, preparation, action, reflection and evaluation, as these form part of each level and as they are practiced by higher education institutions.

1 CSL as Charity

The CSL as charity level is the least engaged level where the power of the institution of higher education is at its maximum. There is very little recognition of the community and its value. Looking at the community or communities is technicist, there exists a big chasm between the knowledgeable university and the uninformed (poor, ignorant, etc.) community.

Keene and Golligan (2004) argue that a university by its very nature operates in an elevated position, materially, knowledge and know-how wise. Thus, to assume otherwise, is an impossibility or at worst a pretence, a fake and a kind of dishonesty. Because the university staff and its students constitute a different class, are possessors of material wealth and have exposure and are immersed in 'higher' forms of knowledge, going down to the community and pretending to be on the same wavelength and from the same socio-economic status, is a lie.

Assuming that the above is true, then CSL as charity is piecemeal, irregular and dependent on the rise and fall of the tides of community need and the dispensing of abundance or redundant goods and services. Students inadvertently become the go-betweens between the higher education institution and the community, keeping the community outside the institution, and the institution 'uncontaminated' by the community. The rift between community and higher education institution therefore remains. This perspective also derives from the inherent assumption that it is only through its surplus services and goods that the institution serves the community. The planning or 'preparation' of the exercise does not go further than the safety of staff and students, and, in the actual implementation of such services, it is the interests of the institution, staff and students involved which are served and not that of the community. Tinkering with the lives of people without effecting any change at all is the hallmark of theorizing and practice at this level. The shortest possible periods of time are spent in the communities.

Sometimes money or material goods are handed out to cultivate and maintain the patterns of dependency. Even the activities are of limited duration, focused on some isolated issue that may not change the situation of the members of the community for the better in the long run. Reflection after action is equally superfluous. It is not about analysis and understanding at the social structural level with the accompanying co-ordinated and well-planned intervention with the collaboration of the community. Rather CSL as charity only serves as a form of window-dressing with no long term and lasting effects and no significant impact on transformation. The larger social issues remain outside the scope of such an approach, the communities are not involved in the process, they cannot 'set the agenda' for CSL – or contribute to it – do not have control over the process, and are not 'meaningful partners'. Often, this approach is exemplified in 'short-term class projects which work against the kind of sincere relationship building that would allow us to be more of than in the community doing our work' (Keene & Colligan 2004:7).

2 CSL as Project

This level represents a halfway movement between 'CSL as charity' and 'CSL as genuine engagement'.

Planning and 'preparation' at this level will be deeper than at 'CSL as charity' level. The lecturer(s) and students may really and honestly want to become one with the less fortunate communities, operate on the same wavelength with them, be sincere in their intentions and genuinely look forward to bettering the lives of communities. They would develop scholarly projects and then put them in operation. However, 'lofty' ideals and even well-planned projects may remain on paper only, or in the heart, as materially and otherwise the lecturer and the students do not meaningfully engage the communities. They still function as an outside agency doing something *for* the community and not *with* the community. They remain different from the disadvantaged communities they intend to help, and keep in place the existing gap between the institution and the community. The intention and theorization may be good, what is still outstanding is the nature of the practice involved. The reflection on the exercise after and the evaluation of the event could in this case be sincere, but not being able to

involve the community meaningfully would still mean that there would be no lasting effects of the CSL exercise.

3 CSL as Genuine Engagement

As genuine engagement, CSL dictates that preparation should be of an exceptionally high quality starting with a very intensive critical introspection covering such issues as the real, genuine and apparent motive for wanting to be engaged with the community. How can one ensure that the community is empowered or at least not harmed by one's CSL participation? Preparation would handle such issues as how to meaningfully involve the community, how to listen to the community with regard to its needs and aspirations, and how to develop meaningful and lasting interventions with the community which would empower it in the process. Preparation is a very intense experience in anticipation of negotiating of boundaries as we move into other people's spaces. Preparation is about humility, about learning 'to question one's own privilege, priorities, and colonial baggage and hence, [being] able to engage in a truly shared endeavour' (Keene & Colligan 2004).

Preparation could then be followed by yet another empowering activity for both the community and the students. Most actions centre around issues of 'social justice' requiring expansions of focus from the poor to 'structural conditions, mechanisms of structural violence, and the global forces that create poverty' (Keene & Colligan 2004). CSL is made up of a reflection on achievements or lack of it in 'terms of sharing power with community partners and overtly challenging the dynamics of power, including those of the ivory tower'. CSL should bridge the gap between 'the scholars and the people with whom they work' (Keene & Colligan 2004:5 - 11). This level calls for activism, advocacy and bravery.

Action at this level is concrete, informed, and is about the transformation of society for the good of all. Action is selfless and involves a lot of sacrifice most of the time and even calls for *the supreme sacrifice* in defense and pursuance of the common good. Action does not involve merely useless tinkering with peripheral issues in the lives of the communities but it involves engaging with real issues that may totally change the quality of the life of whole communities. Action is about social transformation in

pursuance of social justice. Action is not purely altruistic but it is partially self-interested as the CSL practitioner is totally *with* the community she/he is engaged with. The CSL practitioner does not do anything for the 'other' or for the detached community because the community she is engaged with is hers even if it is not by birth or physical location but because he shares in all the aspirations, histories, losses and achievements of that community. Action is thus about self-development.

> Self-development is the kind of development that has not been imposed from above by so-called experts. It emanates from the community itself after the community has been equipped with the tools of critically analyzing the society, engaging in dialogue about their needs, and then adopting resolutions – on what route to take to solve problems. Only after this process, is technical expertise from outside necessary. The reliance on the community's mental and material resources – self-reliance, that is – engenders a sense of ownership of the development in question .... This does not in any way imply the rejection of external resources, but these generally are used to supplement, enhance and enrich local resources. It does mean, however, the rejection of those external resources that are offered at the cost of the community's loss of self-respect and that impinge on the community's autonomy of choice of action (http://www.sbf.org.za/foundation_index.php?article=11,January 07, 2005).

Our definition and discussion of the ideal CSL theory and practice has tilted in favour of the communities at the expense of the university, deliberately so, because of the immensity of the power of the university vis a vis the poor and the marginalised communities amongst whom the university practices its CSL. The ideal is that CSL would grow to the extent that it goes back to where it comes from, that is, the community. It should be designed and controlled by the community for the community, 'without the university', i.e. the university will not remain a distinct and separate entity from the community, but will see itself as part or at least as an aspect of the community.

The Impossibility of a Dream

Having expressed the ideal of an organic university above, we are however consciously aware of the reactionary and counter productive influences of our historical legacies that still have a hold on our society and its organs. We are birthed out of a construction that separates. Affluent members of the community or society were separated from the poor. Light complexioned members of our communities were separated from the dark skinned ones. Universities as custodians of knowledge and its production were separated from the frustrations of poverty, marginalization and exclusion.

In fact it is unthinkable of the university to practice 'CSL as genuine commitment' because of the corporatisation of the manner in which they are perceived and run. No longer are universities managed along academic departmental lines but as cost centres that produce and accrue certain levels of profit (see Jansen 2004). It is difficult to see genuinely committed CSL engagement surviving these circumstances.

Problems that we experience and see in our communities are generated by our history of apartheid capitalism to a very large extent. Apartheid capitalism is replaced by the growth, equity and redistribution strategy (GEAR) which says that the rich will become richer first and when they are satiated, then they can think of equity and redistribution of excess wealth to the poor. Inherent to this paradigm is institutionalized poverty which has to exist in order to support some becoming rich at the expense of others. This discussion might seem like a digression, but it is important to indicate that our society is structured such that poverty of certain sectors thereof is perpetuated so as to support that enrichment of the other sectors. It is under these circumstances that CSL as charity comes into the picture to enable the university and the rich in general to clear their consciences through superficial shedding of their little excess wealth and in the process tinkering a little with the material conditions of the poor and then going back to their rich environment, wash their hands and talk about their escapades into the dirty and murky streets of the disadvantaged community where they had to do this project for the university module.

Empirical Data

In order to substantiate many of the value statements and assertions made in this article we looked at the 'Service Learning Case Studies' compiled as

reports to the Joint Education Trust in 2004. These were defined as constituting current good practice in CSL at Higher Education Institutions in South Africa.

In order to analyse and make sense of these reports in the context of our research question we subjected them to a Textually Oriented Discourse Analysis (Fairclough 1993). This technique involves looking at either the spoken or written word as text to be analyzed and as evidence for meanings to be gleaned there-from. While dissecting these reports, one is at the same time aiming to analyse discursive practices informing the production and dissemination of that text. Then the final meaning and understanding is arrived at by locating the text and discursive practices within social structural issues to lift out patterns of meaning. The two of us took turns to read at least each report once and to have an understanding of where to locate it in terms of CSL as charity or CSL as project and CSL as genuine commitment to civic engagement. We discussed and compared our notes at the end of this exercise to check if there were any diverse understandings or significant differences between our interpretations.

Findings

Invariably we found that almost all these case studies could be located within the CSL as project category. A few (about 4) of these 17 case studies could be located within the 'CSL as charity' category. We assumed that this was so mainly because of developmental processes. CSL is still relatively new at universities in South Africa and in many instances its establishment had to grapple with many odds and powerful resistances. Given this scenario it is not surprising that some CSL practices still experience developmental problems making them to be classified within the CSL as charity category.

The majority of all these case studies were in the 'CSL as project' category and none of them were in the 'CSL as genuine commitment to the civic engagement' category. We looked first at the *level of funding* allocated to the particular case study and noted that in the majority of instances not enough was allocated and spent. Actually the money allocated constituted a very insignificant proportion of the average budget of a Higher Education Institution in South Africa. This to us indicated the level of seriousness and commitment to CSL praxis. None of the case studies had overwhelmingly

generous budgets that could significantly tackle the identified community problem and learning of the students effectively. If this was the case with one or other of these CSL case studies, that would have been a pointer towards the fact of CSL as genuine commitment to the civic engagement category.

The time spent out in the community also did not give anybody any time to build meaningful relationships. There was no significant time for bonding as the average time spent was in the region of 50 hours per six months. Sometimes even the sustainability plan was non-existent meaning that once the mandatory time was up there was no longer any commitment any more to the community per se.

The preparations were lukewarm in our view. Sometimes one report would show some bright idea or appropriate level of preparation, but these would not stand the test of scrutiny as other practices immediately before or after would cancel out the effect of that one or isolated moment of brilliance. We mean that on the whole there was no one CSL case study that showed a coherent and consistent adherence to the 'CSL as genuine commitment' level/category. None of these studies presented a clear cut programme of action aiming at significant social transformation practices. In all instances the status quo was taken as a given that could not be systematically tackled. Focus was always on some one isolated community issue(s) which would not make any significant change even if it was successfully tackled.

The actions reported are in keeping with the tone set by the preparation(s) as they were also not really engaging fundamental problems standing in the way of positive social transformation. Some case studies more than others were firmly located within 'CSL as a project' category. The reflections in our view were also not consistently intensive around introspection that could spur an even heightened attack of social justice issues. Always reflection of lecturers, students and sometimes community members was a complaint or an appreciation of how one or other issue was tackled by CSL intervention. The same goes for evaluation. The conclusion that we draw is that perhaps historical legacies are so powerful that they do not allow for a substantial opening up of CSL possibilities. CSL as genuine commitment to civic engagement remains a largely unaddressed issue. If CSL means a 'scholarship of engagement' in terms of what Bringle (2004) above said, then the main challenge of universities is to address the ways and

means through which they can connect their resources 'to our most pressing social, civic, and ethical problems, to our children, to schools to our teachers and to our cities'. To effect real social transformation and the improvement of the quality of life of many communities in South Africa, higher education institutions have to play a leading role. To involve the communities themselves in the CSL processes, have them own them and also manage them, remains the challenge.

Conclusion

We have barely scratched the surface in terms of categories, perspectives or practices informing different kinds of CSL in our country's Higher Education Institutions. However, we hope that our reading of the situation will motivate higher education institutions to become more involved in CSL as genuine commitment to civic and community engagement. At present, CSL as sincere engagement with communities remains marginalised in higher education institutional practice, and in some cases may even be seen as antithetical to the 'nature' of the university.

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The Demise of Student Movement in Higher Education Institutions in South Africa: A Case Study of UKZN

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1 Introduction

In South Africa there is a need to establish a common understanding on the contextualization of the role and purpose of higher education and its impact on society in general. More importantly there is a need to more clearly define and articulate the role and nature of student activism in the broader transformation processes taking place in South Africa. The central issue of this article, therefore, is to examine the role and purpose of education as one that should be accessed in terms of its relation to the political economy and ideological hegemony of the ruling elite, development, teaching, learning and research. Though the role and purpose cannot only be restricted nor influenced by the above facts alone, the relationship between political economy and education remains of primary importance. The University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (UKZN) will be the case study upon which this paper is based.

The authors acknowledge that the noble intentions of the transformation process are to enhance and equalize resources, and avoid duplication of structures thus eroding the power relations dominated by the entrenched power holders, thus dictating the pace, content and institutional form of the new democracy (in this regard the post merger era). The theoretical framework of this research will be based on Ginsburgh's,

Transition theory on broad issues and Paulo Freire's Transition Articulation Theory. The main aim of this paper is to highlight the lack of radical critic and dialectical inclination of the student movement in South Africa.

Intellectuals associated with the student movement argue that apathy and mass demobilization depoliticizes student leadership. The key question in this regard is whether the current student leadership has been critical of the merger process and its moral and, political implications for UKZN. Based on the above statement and line of questioning, the following hypothesis is advanced:

Student leadership and UKZN as a centre of knowledge production have become breeding grounds for mere functionaries of the ruling party. This is a reality that is in a direct dialectical contradiction to the process of the liberation role of education and greater transformation in South Africa.

The judgmental sampling technique was used for the collection of data. In this case, the principal criterion that determined the selection of the interviewees was that they were in leadership positions in the major student political organizations. The principal techniques that were used to gather data were semi-structured interviews. The reason for employing this technique is that it allows interviewees to offer opinions and draw attention to issues that may not have been considered by the interviewer. The sample population was drawn from a number of former student leaders available in UKZN campuses. Ten student leaders were interviewed. The study population consisted of eight people from various clubs and societies and two ordinary students who were regarded as 'neutral'. The eight student leaders were selected as representatives of the four main student political organizations, namely the (South African Student Congress (SASCO) , which is aligned to the ruling African National Congress (ANC), the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL), the youth wing of the ANC), the South African Democratic Student Movement (SADESMO), which is aligned to the Inkatha Freedom Party(IFP), the Student United Christian Action(SUCA), a Christian student movement and the Socialist Student Movement, loosely based International student movement. Two interviewees were chosen from each organisation.

The questionnaires used through the study were open-ended. This was specifically for the purposes of gathering the additional information from the interviews. Most of the interviews had to be conducted in the individual respondent's residence. The interviews were conducted at times that were appropriate to the individual's schedules. This was to assist those with literary problems and to allow for flexibility. Each of the respondents was given a copy of the questionnaires which was filled accordingly. The open-ended questions were answered verbally and copious notes were kept by the researchers.

The main limitation of this study is that it comprised of a small sample of interviewees at the Westville and Howard College campuses. This may not be regarded as a wholly accurate representation of the UKZN student population, which is to be found in five campuses (Howard College, Westville, Medical School, Edgewood and Pietermaritzburg). The Howard College campus was chosen because of accessibility and reducing costs of conducting the research, considering that the study was self-sponsored. Another limitation of the study is that the use of questionnaires did not allow for probing and in-depth description of participants' opinions about student leadership and their services.

2 Background to Education Transformation in South Africa

The current mergers of educational institutions in South Africa are the brainchild of the first democratically elected government of our country. The proposed mergers 'sparked a racial rumpus, with Black Vice Chancellors saying the government is leading their historically under funded institutions to a final collapse' (Sunday Independent 2000). Drawing from the transitional theory it can be argued that the Vice Chancellor's of HBI's did not voluntarily surrender their power or did not willingly renounced control (Gingsburg, 1996). Apartheid robbed historically black institutions of solid financial backing and turned them into 'bush colleges'. A report compiled by the National Working Group suggested that 'most of historically black institutions and technikons be closed or merged while the majority of white institutions based on their financial and academic strength, be retained' (*Sunday Independent* 2002). This is an indisputable truth.

The merger process had similar bearings at Durban Westville and the University of Natal., which were the two institutions that merged to form UKZN. In such situations dominance in power relations is inevitable. Thus the then University of Natal in the process sought to prove their organizational capacity and seek popular support in the pre-merger phase. It is in this context that the Natal University power elite ignored its own legal advice and pressed ahead to appoint a new Vice Chancellor before its merger with the University of Durban Westville (UDW), thus alienating momentarily even the then Minister of Education. Senior academics at the university were dismayed that council persisted with the selection process and expressed concern at the damage this could cause to the merger (Mail & Guardian, 2002). UDW's last Vice Chancellor, Dr. Saths Cooper did not take this lightly. The 'cold war' that followed the appointment of Prof Malegapuru Makgoba and Dr Sath Cooper led to a near stalemate situation, which could be easily resolved through negotiations. This concurs with Gingsburg (1996) when he argued that in similar situations a resolution is devised from a series of pacts negotiated by elites representing the various protagonists. Academics, council and student leadership were integral components of the 'elite' who took part in the merger negotiations at various levels. The underlying reason behind this is, that negotiations cannot be conducted by the masses themselves, at the venues other than the bargaining table, but must be entered into on their behalf by a leadership (elite) that ostensibly speaks for them (Gingsburg, 1996: 4).

Series of talks between management and student leadership of both Universities took place dealing with a wide variety of student systems, functions and services (Student governance, Financial Aid, Administration and Student Support) which culminated in the signing of a 'Record of Understanding' at Umhlanga now known as the 'Umhlanga Resolutions' in September 2003. At student leadership level the merger can be seen as an endeavour to create a homogenous student society considering the crucial role of both external and internal factors. Freire (1996:4) argued that times of transition involve a rapid movement in search of new themes. This was evident at Umhlanga as student leadership grappled with issues that affected them and tried to put interim guidelines to help them through the merger process.

However, the student body at Westville campus was evidently divided. An endeavour to create a homogenous open student body at UDW was a huge challenge for its leadership in order to advance the transformation agenda towards the merger. There were forces, however, that sought at all costs to obstruct the advance towards the merger (Interview with SASCO leader in 2004).

The division of the student body became evident in the process and the transition process faced a number of serious challenges. As Freire has commented aptly, the deepening of the clash between the old or the other, and the emotional climate of the time encouraged the tendency towards radicalism .... Radicalisation involves increased commitment to the chosen position. However, the person who has chosen the radical option should not deny another person's right to choose, or attempt to impose his /her choice (Freire 1996:10). The Socialist Student Movement felt the obligation to warn that the merger process would bring with it the commercialization of higher education (Interview with SSM). A similar position was adopted by the dominant trade union at UDW, the Combined Staff Association (COMSA) (COMSA 2003).

At the Westville campus, both elite and masses (student body) alike, were unprepared to evaluate the transition critically and so tossed by the force of contending contradictions, they began to fall into sectarian positions instead of opting for radical solutions. This was accompanied by management inertia, shoddy planning and internal fighting amongst senior managers. Sectarianism is emotional, uncritical anti-dialogical and thus anti-communicative. Sectarians disrespect the choices of others and try to impose their own choices. In our case imposed choices on the student body had serious negative repercussions for the struggles ahead. There was action without the vigilance of reflection; sloganeering at the level of myth and half lies disguised as the 'absolute truth'.

3 Demobilisation of Student Movement

Whilst the radicals do not consider themselves as the proprietors of history, and while they recognize that it is impossible to stop or anticipate history without penalty, they are no mere spectators of the historical process. Freire (1996) argued that in Education the Practice for freedom must be reflected

by radicals who must participate constructively in that process by discerning transformation in order to aid and accelerate it. However this was not the situation in the pre merged institution. The student leadership remained uncritical, and this reality stalled its preparations for the transformation process. Responsibility cannot be acquired intellectually but through experience. This led the radical potential of the student movement to be driven towards a reformist approach seeking accommodation with a moderate and indecisive management as Gingsburg (1996) has commented. A thoroughgoing participatory alternative became elusive.

As Mannheim (1968:23) has aptly commented:

> In a society in which main changes are to be brought about through collective deliberation, and in which revaluations should be based upon intellectual insight and consent, a completely new system of education would be necessary, one of which would focus its main energies on the development of our intellectual powers and bring about the frame of mind which can bear the burden of scepticism and which does not panic when many of the thought habits are doomed to vanish.

Student leadership entered into the transition phase where the main changes [were] made by collective deliberations only as minors. Their situation demanded that they be armed with courage, education, and knowledge in order to discuss their issues in their own context, be able to warn others of the dangers of times that lies ahead and offer them the confidence and the strength to confront those dangers instead of surrendering their sense of self through submission to the decisions of others (Freire, 1973). It is important to note that Freire distinguishes, though with varying degrees of clarity, between the power of 'the elite' and the potential power or agency of 'the masses'. The elite are the creators of myths and the primary forces behind epochal shifts. The elite are responsible for massification and the importation of solutions to problems. The elite dominate, destroy, crush, and place fear in the minds of the people. In contrast the people or the masses are consistently dehumanized by such practices during epochal transitions and engender varying degrees of transitive consciousness delineated by Freire as naive transitivity, critical transitivity, and fanaticized consciousness.

He further argued that the emergence of critical transitive consciousness is a central component for generating a notion of collective agency among the masses to circumvent the top down power of the elite. Transitive consciousness emerges as the people begin to perceive and respond to the themes and myths which characterize their world. Naive transitivity is the initial stage of transitive consciousness and is marked by gross simplifications and generalizations of problems; frail arguments and lack of interest in critical investigation; polemics rather than dialogue; and magical, emotional explanations for problems (Freire 1973). This paper contents that student leadership was characterized by the above mentioned characteristics of naïve transitivity.

4 Transitional Theory and Transition Articulation

Transitions are social transformation processes in which society or a complex subsystem of society gradually changes in a fundamental way over a period of time. Transitions are the result of technological, economic, ecological, social-cultural and institutional developments at different scale levels that influence and reinforce each other (Rotmans et al, 2000)[1]. Transition theory is based on three underlying concepts, multi-stage, multi-level and multi-change (Rotmans *et al*, 2001). Multi-stage at the conceptual level has four different transition phases that can be distinguished as follows:

(a) A *pre-development phase* of dynamic equilibrium where the status quo does not visibly change. In our case, the government proposed the reduction of Higher Education institutions from 36 to 21 in an effort to prevent the duplication of structures, systems and services inherited from the past. This process should involve all relevant stakeholders.

[1] Rotmans, J, R Kemp, MBA van Asselt, F Geels, G Verbong, G, KGP Molendijk, & P van Notten 2001. *Transitions and Transition Management: The Case for a Low Emission Energy Supply.* ICIS BV, Maastricht, Netherlands. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.icis.unimaas.nl/projects/transitions/general.htm (Accessed: 04 April 2005).

(b) A *take-off phase* where the process of change starts to get under way because the state of the system begins to shift. In our case this was epitomised by the discontentment of Black Vice Chancellors nationally. At UKZN this was characterised by pre-merger phase confrontations amongst the elites.

(c) An *acceleration phase* where visible structural changes take place through an accumulation of socio-cultural, economic, ecological and institutional changes, which all mutually influenced. In the acceleration phase, there are collective learning processes, diffusion and imbedding processes. In this sense the 1st of January 2004 was the cut off date as the old institutions as in UDW and UND ceased to exist and merged into UKZN officially as according to government requirements. According to the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No. 101 OF 1997) Standard institutional Statute applies to every public higher education that has not made an institutional Statute until such time as the council of such higher education institution makes its own institutional Statute under section 32 of Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No. 101 of 1997), as amended. This was followed by an appointment of Professor M.W. Makgoba as Acting Vice Chancellor of the new institution. A new coat of arms was unveiled and a new institutional motto was also introduced: '*to become a premier university of African scholarship*'. Further a new mission as: '*a truly South African University that is academically excellent, innovative in research, critically engage with society and demographically representative, redressing the disadvantages, inequalities and the imbalances of the past*' was adopted.

(d) A *stabilisation phase* where the speed of social change is reduced and a new dynamic balance is reached from the experiences gained i.e. a series of pacts negotiated by elites representing the various protagonists academics, council and student leadership was part of the 'elite' who took part in the negotiations at various levels. On student systems (Financial Aid, Administration and Student Support) there was consensus on every issue. There were also series of talks with regard to student governance policies. The transition phases can be illustrated as follows:

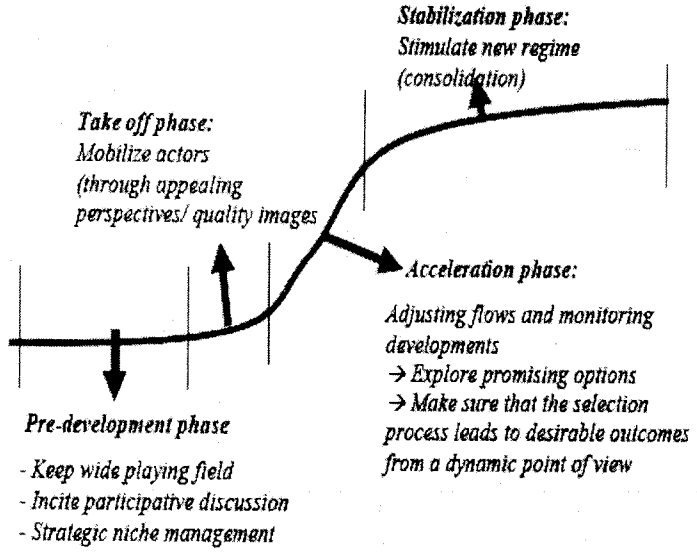

Figure 1: Showing different Phases of Transition. Source: adapted from Rotmans *et al* (2001).

Education for freedom implies constantly and permanently the exercise of consciousness turning in itself in order to discover itself in the relationships with the world, attempting to explain the reasons that can viably clarify the concrete situation people find themselves into. However, this is not enough – one needs to transform reality, through the unity between action and reflection. Knowledge exists because of consciousness, in the context of its reflective power.

In this continuous process, instead of transferring the existing knowledge it is necessary to invite consciousness to assume the active attitude without which it is impossible to create radical knowledge. What is witnessed at present is a serious demise in consciousness as evidently the student movement has aligned itself with party politics which shift power and dominance. This has led the student movement into conscious neutrality.

For example the ANC-aligned South African Student Congress and the ANC Youth League cannot bite the hand that feed them (the ANC led government). They have become neutral as the ANC government privatizes education. Freire (1973) argues that neutrality always conceals a choice. As education seeks to unveil its own political options, to define itself in relation to the productive forces, the political power structure, and the dominant ideology of the South African society, the student movement of the present day has retreated considerably.

Not only in the universities, but also in secondary and primary schools, education is always a political reality steeped deeply into power relations. Power is inseparable from education. Those who hold power define what education will be, its methods, programme and curriculum (Freire 1973).

5 Challenges Facing Student Movement at UKZN

The corporatisation of management (the adoption of business models of organization and administration of universities), especially when strategic decision making positions are still occupied by white conservative bureaucrats, makes one wonder whether the much talked about transformation will ever take place. This despite the much talked about 'massification' propagated by the then Minister of Education Kader Asmal when the mergers were forced upon Historically Black Universities (HBUs). UKZN can no longer persist on providing superannuation to a whole cadre of White retirees. This is not transformation but retrogression. Having an African Vice-Chancellor and few Africans in management positions does not mean that transformation has taken place (Mantzaris and Cebekhulu 2005, Inauguration paper pg 32-34).

STUDENTS AT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING ARE FACING SERIOUS THREATS WITH THE RECENTLY UNVEILED PLAN BY THE GOVERNMENT TO CURB WHAT THEY REFERRED TO AS 'UNSUSTAINABLE' GROWTH IN STUDENT NUMBERS (STEPHEN 2004). AHMED ESSOP, THE CHIEF DIRECTOR OF HIGHER EDUCATION PLANNING IN HIS PARLIAMENTARY STATEMENT LASHED OUT AT INSTITUTIONS WHICH ENROL STUDENTS IN

AREAS SUCH AS HUMANITIES RATHER THAN SCIENCE OR BUSINESS BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT CONSIDER THEM AS A PRIORITY. SUCH A STATEMENT SHOULD HAVE SPARKED DEBATE AMONG STUDENT LEADERSHIP, BUT THE SILENCE IS DEAFENING. THE POSSIBILITY OF A ROBUST DEBATE ON THIS ISSUE WAS NULLIFIED BY THE FACT THAT THE DAYS OF STUDENT ACTIVISM HAVE DIED A SLOW AND PAINFUL DEATH AT A VERY CRITICAL JUNCTURE OF THE COUNTRY'S INTELLECTUAL AND KNOWLEDGE SEARCH.

5.1 Lack of Conscientisation

The 'Progressive Youth Alliance' (PYA) structures (alliances of the ANC Youth League, SASCO and 'independents') are allies of the ruling party and to a greater extent they are sponsored by it. The question arises then, who will reflect on their plight? The greatest mistake for the student movement was to fail to assert itself post 1994.They failed to re-conscientise themselves and their constituencies. Conscientisation does not occur automatically or overtime. It is the dialectical outcome of a critical educational effort based on favourable historical conditions, and it is related to a process in which the student movement leadership and constituency are not merely recipients but knowing subjects, striving to achieve a deepening awareness of both of the socio-cultural reality which shapes their lives, and their capacity to transform it.

Conscientisation seeks the awakening of critical consciousness as Freire asserts, and results in the identification and naming of social ills which constitute oppressive circumstances such as fee increase for first entrant students, limited access to higher education, as well as financial and academic exclusions. The fragmented consciousness suffered by student movement denies them access to each other in their collaborative search for a picture of their total situation. The present day student movement, even sister structures do not unite on common issues. Maintaining fragmentation of consciousness is always on the side of the power holder (management of transition). Conscientisation is essentially geared to the radical transformation of social reality.

Freire is correct when he asserts that objective social reality neither exists no can be transformed by mere chance, because both are the results of

human action. Social reality is produced by student and conditions then; transforming their condition is an historical task which also must be performed by them. One of the main obstacles Freire discovered in the quest for the achievement of liberation is that oppressive reality absorbs those that are within it and thus stifles the emergence of critical consciousness. In this regard student activities are failing to articulate their position partly because they are looking for jobs in either the university or the government (BAZINGEL' BEPHETH' USAWOTI), they become pawns in the games perpetrated by the political and university elites. They fail to unmask the oppressor (especially neo-liberal policies in education) and thus continue working for their liberation through organized struggles and action.

The silence of the reflective voices of student activist is deafening. This on its own raises questions of the content of the existing educational curriculum as to whether it is responsive to the needs or ails of our society. Given the heroic past history of previous Black institutions steeped in courageous resistance, the questions on this silence abound. The silence that has been adopted in the post merged institution and post 1994 is broadly due to the failures of the student movement to engage in the discourse of oppression with the goal of exploring and deconstructing the dominant ideologies of subjection, betraying the scrutinizing role of a liberating education. Higher education institutions, especially universities, have a long history of struggle against apartheid and the generally accepted demand for transformation. These struggles have scored many victories over the years. However, their impact has been unequal, with more visible progress in universities – especially black institutions. .

The merger has managed to deal with signifiers (Name, Emblem, Process, Vision and Statute), but there are a number of hurdles and impediments in the process itself. There have been fee increments and increases in 2005, academic and financial exclusions, raising of the entry levels in each faculty. As Balibar declared several years ago: 'Dimly (the student movement) and steadily (students) are loosing the love, respect, sacrifices of (their struggle) because of circumstance' (Balibar 2002). In fact the student movement is no longer taken serious by its own allies.

The cardinal premise is that the analysis of political and ideological structures must be grounded in their material conditions of existence and their historical premise (Morrison 2002). The merged institution was to be

the premier university of African scholarship serving as a facilitator in engineering the highest level of quality teaching, excellence in research and community service and outreach. In this context it aimed to create and innovate advancement in technological and human development in the African continent and world wide. Its mission is to be

> a truly South African university that is academically excellent, innovative in research, critically engage with society and demographically representative, redressing the disadvantages, inequalities and imbalances of the past.

However, its management has already contradicted its own mission. UKZN does not consider the material conditions and realities of the majority of South Africans, yet it claims to be a truly South African University. As one of its documents states:

> For the purpose of this report, student fee income in 2005 has been based on inflation linked increase of 3,7% in tuition and miscellaneous fee ... an important assumption underlying the 2005 fee budget is that a net reduction of 2000 in student numbers within the university as a whole.

This calls for the student movement to revisit its struggle which is fundamentally shaped by the fact that higher education occupies a special place in the struggle for ideological hegemony in the society in this case, production of bourgeoisie characterized by social and economic inequalities. Institutions of higher education are usually the base from which intellectual ideas and the shaping of public opinion are produced. To this end, universities are sites for production of new ideas; occupy a special place in the struggle for hegemony (Gramsci 1971 Vol 1 *Letters from Prison*).

Karl Marx writes in his selected works that the bourgeois want all the advantages of modern social without struggles and dangers necessarily resulting there from. They desire the existing state of the society minus its revolutionary and disintegrating elements. Such is the movement today, they wish for a bourgeoisie without a proletariat. The bourgeoisie naturally conceives the world in which it is supreme to be the best. This is not the case

in at UKZN. The reality is that not enough attention has been paid to the transformation of the institution, particularly on curriculum transformation. It is highly impossible to begin to think about shaping the type of an intellectual that will be produced by an institution of higher learning, without firstly, and foremost, dealing with or even changing the curriculum content that will give rise to them. The issue of transforming the curriculum at UKZN is particularly a tricky one, since such demands are always projected by academics as interference of academic autonomy and lowering of standards. Kaarim (2004) argues that the main aim of education is not to acquire knowledge alone, but action. As graduates, it is your responsibility to pursue without fear, the change that you regard as necessary and just. We need to apply their knowledge wisely and use it for the betterment of broader society.

6. Students' Responses on the Merger

The empirical parameters of the study were described above. The following responses were obtained during the interviews.

In *relation* to the question 'What do you think is the underlying problem that makes people think that the merger is "fragile"', the following responses were obtained.

Respondent A: 'The merger is a top down process imposed on us, and students did not have much of any other choice but to jump onto the band wagon. However, they (we) have ourselves to blame because of not supporting those that said that this process was happening too fast and this will be a take over. We labelled them reactionaries who are resistant to change. In my thinking the merger is fragile because, nothing was put in place as a shock absorber to ensure that this transition does not damage us a lot, but looks at what is happening'.

Respondent B: 'The main problem is that we do not have leaders to start with. We have power mongers who enjoy the privileges of been in power. When last did we have a student body meeting this year? We are told that things will be fine and students will register whist we still get excluded. Yes

the merger is fragile this year because even Indians are excluded and possibly the students of UKZN will come as one to fight these exclusions'.

Respondent C: 'The last time I checked SRC's they were student representative councils, but now they have become managers themselves. As a student leader myself I have never heard of a vacation executive that never even met for a meeting. They only are acting now because there are exclusions which make you think of what has become of the SRC's. They account only to their girlfriends and management. They do not inform us about the developments, the SGO's who by their very nature of their work should account to the SRC's account to management. It's all a joke. I fear that students at Westville campus might do something but this is only going to last for a day or two and everything is going to go back to normal. Having said that, I do not rule out any possibilities that in a long run especially Westville students can engage into serious action. My other concern is that all these other campuses are quiet but with the merger I think they might also join the Westville campus should they co-ordinate their action well. The merger is not necessarily fragile but could be if students are not taken seriously'.

Respondent D: 'The problem is not 'our merger' but the whole neo-liberal system. These problems are not only in our campus but in the whole country. This is evident because of this years strikes across campuses and strongly so at DIT our neighbours. Our Vice Chancellors only deliver what has been put down on the national agenda that is the politics of GEAR and restructuring. What happens in the labour movement will happen in the student movement. GEAR is the problem and so are these mergers. They exclude students and in the country there has been increasing levels of unemployment within the youth constituency which makes matters worse'.

Respondent E: 'I really do not see much of a problem with the merger. The only thing is that there are no more vibrant student politics. There is nothing to fear everything shall be put in place and merger shall continue as planned by the managers and the Department of Education. This is because there are no strong links between student leadership nationally which was evident at the document of the Standard Institutional Statute of 2002 (Higher Education

Act, 1997 (Act No. 101 of 1997) which informed these mergers. It is a quiet document for a quiet student population. Things have changed'.

Respondent F: 'I just do not know much, I only got into these politics last year November and I am still trying to grapple with these issues. I know that there has been a tremendous progress made by our predecessors with regard to the merger and we only can work to defend their hard work. Furthermore, it is important to equalize resources in both campuses and to merge the Health Science faculty. To me it makes no sense to have the medical school functioning independently from the other health sciences. I wonder what informs that but I have a feeling that academics are very much intransigent to this merger whilst we are taught of the multi-disciplinary holistic approach to health care and yet we are taught at distant campuses. It would be ideal also to have a bridge for those who are doing B.Med to have an automatic entrance to medical school should they wish to do so. The inconsistency of failing to harmonize the curriculum frustrates students who are of the view that we are one institution. Possibly on that note the merger is fragile because it really frustrates students who really had high hopes to achieve their dreams but refused entry to medical school even at post graduate level; this shows that the issue of standards is still a problem where the former University of Natal looks down upon graduates from the former UDW. Until this problem is resolved, we have not merged'.

Respondent G: 'There was failure in student leadership, particularly the SRC's as they did not coalesce the merger process with the transformation agenda so as to impact on the curricula review and to bring on board the entire student body. There is no revolution that starts from top. It is exactly like Mugabe's land grab project and expecting a buy in from the people. This whole process is fragile and it needs examination from time to time. It is an elite transition to benefit a few in the long run. We cannot only blame the students but also the technocrats of these mergers, the principals who bowed down to the government pressure and accepted this. For them, their jobs were guaranteed, their children had free Higher Education but for us there are only financial and academic exclusions. There has been a lack of understanding about the policies of these mergers from the onset. Even when we expressed discontent and disillusionment with our participation in the

policy and institutional governance issues, we were not taken seriously. What happened to the Umhlanga Resolutions? Did any member of management bother to read them? If they did I assure you we would not be having such problems. This to me says this process is very fragile'.

Respondent H: 'This has just been a take over not a merger. Everything is set according to former Natal University standards from FAB to academic matters. There has never been a consideration of what was good at the former Westville campus. Everything has changed and we are saying nothing. I am only concerned about those that used to benefit from HBI's for instance there were no high matric points entry requirement. Secondly, the numbers of those that used to get into the Upward Bound program and other foundation programs has since decreased. I am a mentor and a senior student and a former student leader. In former Westville, the intake of Humanities Foundation Program would be +- 2000 students but this year (2005) the intake is less than 600 students across five campuses of UKZN. What does that say to you? This merger is bad for Africans because it does not benefit us at all'.

Respondent I: 'The merger is good, it has not affected us that much nonetheless it needs to be well managed to prevent the problems that we had at the beginning of the year. The lack of funding is a national question NSFAS and the Minister should come up with solutions before this becomes a national insurrection. As a member of SASCO, I still maintain that 'THERE SHOULD BE FREE EDUCATION FOR ALL', the ruling party knows that and I still stand by that. Yes, this also has some serious bearing onto us because we seem to be quite about this yet our comrades fought so hard for this. Whether we like it or not there is an emergence of the new social movements who seem to be singing this song and who are against the commodification of education which comes along with these mergers. Our merger has been so far smooth but it is not immune to national questions. The student leadership has tried to bring us together for a common good and it is up to us to make it work. It has to work but this does not mean that we won't have problems. I do no see the merger being fragile but a policy that informs it is not student friendly, which is the problem'.

Respondent J: 'Universities are State institutions and they should be seen contributing towards nation building, consolidating democracy and promoting student welfare. These mergers are the result of serious consideration by government and academics who studied their implications. Students are just recipients of the product of what have been long decided by the powers that be. Nonetheless they have the power to agree to or not to agree with these decisions. The question is on what basis? Since 1994 the student movement has no ideological inclination. This does not at all assume that students are homogenous and in unison in their issues. This is the problem that they had no theoretical critic of this transition which in their mind believed that all shall be well. These mergers present the current student leadership with an enormous challenge .It is an ideological challenge that forces us to further define ourselves as student leadership and a student movement. So far student leaders are just playing according to the rules of the masters and hence there is such a pleasant relationship with their principals. These mergers and this one in particular should be careful of the managerialism as a dominant style of leadership. This reinforces the top down leadership approach. This is in relation to the role of SGO's who seem to manage or contain the student leadership because of their penetration to influential university officials and camouflage with comradeship'.

In relation to the question 'In your view, what do you think were the challenges that are facing student leadership post 1994?' the following responses were recorded:

Respondent A: Our organization stands for the principles of God and Good governance. We are confident that God is going to lead us onto understanding the challenges that are facing students today as they face society. We got our democracy in 1994 and we should make it work on campus, society and the world.

Respondent B: Since 1991 SASCO has been in the forefront of the struggle for advancement of student interests in the Higher Education sector. Over the years we have participated in shaping the landscape of the South African Higher education system. SASCO is the only organization that submitted a comprehensive policy input to the National Commission on Higher

Education (NCHE) policy process that eventually led to the adoption of Higher Education and Further Education and Training Act. We were involved in policy debates around the report on the size and shape of the Higher Education sector led by the Council on Higher education (CHE). We also compiled responses to these report, thus ensuring that our slogan: 'from ivory towers to people's institutions' remains a total summation of our strategic objective in transforming the higher education system. We are up to today's challenges.

Respondent C: We were formed and launched around 2001 but our house has never been in order. A year ago, Sadesmo, called on the party (IFP) to have a clear succession policy but these have felt on deaf year in our mother body. Honestly, until we get support from our mother body and until we get our house in order, it is only then that I think we will be ready to face student's challenges of the post 1994 era.

Respondent D: We are an issue based organization that is why we have an alliance with SASCO here on campus. Nationally we believe that SASCO is still an organization that has the potential of representing students on fundamental educational issues.

Respondent E: We are strategically located within the Progressive Youth Alliance on campuses and in government as led by the ANC. We are committed on the following issues: Education and Training Expand and improve the quality of basic education.

Respondent F: things have changed since 1994. We need to clearly organise ourselves because of the following reasons:
The difficulty of sustaining struggles based on very localised issues,
The lack of political, ideological, and organizational flexibility in being able to provide direction to a range of student's initiative.
And the limited understanding of the functioning of the neo-liberal state.
Therefore, the challenge is far bigger than we think, and the decline of student activism in the past decade leaves much to be desired. The erosion of a collective student identity is a serious crisis whilst we have a space to can congregate and organize ourselves.

The question 'What remedies do you suggest to be put in place to correct this?' elicited the following responses:

Respondent A: Let God's people lead.

Respondent B: We are open to change, dialogue and robust debates as an organization. If there is a need for new remedies let the people talk and issues shall be debated.

Respondent C: Let the bread and butter issues come first and be addressed (meaning issues that affect us locally) and all the rest shall follow. Issues such as affordable accommodation, disability issues, gender and the basic student services are of great importance and need to be debated urgently...

Respondent D: Put students first and maybe party politics later. This has got a bearing in all students' formations not only our own organization.

Respondent E: We are clearly guided by our party's mandate as the (ANC) Youth League, and further we are delivering within our alliance (the PYA) on all student, and campus based issues.

Respondent F: An ideology that will help us understand the functioning of a neo-liberal state and that which is going to help us challenge the ruling classes.

The answers to the question 'Why do you think SASCO is not broadly representing students and in your thing do you suggest a formation that will be representative of all?' were as follows:

Respondent A: They have turned Student Governance into a rapist haven, brothel and spaza shop. Whatever you think of as rubbish belongs to SASCO.

Respondent B: SASCO does represent students at all level, both locally and nationally. Nonetheless, it is true that we need to audit ourselves as an organization and check if we are still relevant within the current political

climate. That can only be done in our Annual General Congress and then changes shall be seen unfolding.

Respondent C: SASCO is the only relevant organization on student matters. As I said it is our ally and we maintain that it articulates student issues nationally.

Respondent D: Avoid party politics and put students first. You cannot bite the hand that feeds you. If SASCO should lead, it should move away from the politics of the ANC and SACP.

Respondent E: We will continue to lead as the PYA and represent students.

Respondent F: A new revolutionary student organization.

In relation to the question 'In your view, what kind of relations exist between the student leadership and management?' the responses were as follows:

Respondent A: It is a good relationship because we get a lot of assistance from management.

Respondent B: It is quite a working relationship because sometimes we agree to differ but we do get the job done. The merger came with its problems but we managed under difficult circumstances to come to terms with it. We still do have problems with members of the management but also we need to recognize them as managers and let them manage.

Respondent C: I still have problems with management; I think they dominate our leadership. We are still faced with the same problems that we face every year. They (management) do not keep their word. If you remember during negotiations, they said that the merger will not affect pipeline students, but look at what is happening now. Students are moved from pillar to post and are met by hostile professors who do not consider our backgrounds. If I should say this: The Management of UKZN needs to CHANGE and TRANSFORM. Furthermore, they are corrupting the student leaders and make them sell out on their mandate.

Respondent D: Management has always been management. As for us from Westville campus, we feel like our leadership that we have been betrayed by management of UKZN. In all that we agreed upon, the management has since somersaulted. We cannot trust them but we should make them understand that we shall retaliate if needs be to their unfriendly policies.

Respondent E: Honestly, we have been betrayed by this management. Our organization from Westville feel that indeed this has been a take over of our vibrant campus and been swallowed up into a white super culture of the former Natal. This management just copied and pasted all the rules and regulations from the former Natal and implemented them here. The relationship with our deployed comrades in the SRC and management is to seek the best for the student but it still remains to be seen, what will happen.

Respondent F: How can you bite the hand that feeds you?

7 Leaders cannot Lead when they are Ill Informed

It needs to be said that the responses in all questions leave us with no alternative, but to conclude that despite the majority disillusionment evident in these interviews, the lack of understanding of concrete realities facing the merger process and its outcomes is indeed frightening. There is an undoubted lack of a holistic understanding of the dynamics of the merger itself. It is indeed instrumental that not one respondent pinpointed the complete lack of proper planning in the institution that is the root and foundation of the continuous erosion of student rights at the institution. The historical knowledge of at least some rudimentary dynamics of the merger process as well as their resultant repercussions is completely absent. The lack of comprehension of the functions of key university organs that make the important decisions on the curriculum and student access, exclusions and similar aspects is more than evident.

It is thus vital that the present student leadership have no comprehension, with one exception, of the dialectical power relations between the state, economic policy and higher education. Thus they continue playing the stupid games of the Sleeping Beauty as Fanon (2001:81) asserted. The shackles of disillusionment, apathy and de-politicisation do not allow them to become agents of change through alliances with their

communities and the progressive workers forces. These realities need to be de-constructed and simplified in a language and syntax that the students and communities understand and sympathise with.

'Proper behaviour' within 'cooperative governance' in the UKZN merger process is indeed a stupid game of Sleeping Beauty given the heroic history of the student movement and its significant impact on higher education institutions and landscape. However, the current circumstances of 'corporatised' student leaders and movement in the education system, calls for a thorough examination of concrete issues of relativism as it relates to the questioning of current state of affairs in student leadership.

It was Mannheim who many years ago asserted that:

> Human beings have the potential for self-examination and contextual awareness. And only when these are understood can one have a comprehension of the formal object under study (Mannheim 1968:46f).

The question remains whether student leaders can lead when they are inadequately informed. The old maxim: 'Knowledge is power' pinpoints to the transformation of student leaders into public intellectual's re- attached to their delicate and challenging social environment.

Lessons that could be learnt in the process of transformation are always rooted in questions that arise as to the nature and the character of a holistic process. To be a protagonist one needs to critically engage relentlessly in the battle of ideas and the challenges of both History and the Present. Arrogant and ignorant leadership blinds people into comfort zones of party allegiances which on its own defeat the purpose of academic, political and intellectual independence. Throughout the world student movements have turned into tokens of the ruling party, rubberstamping every decision without interrogation or critique.

The challenges of merger and transformation provide student leadership with an opportunity for exploration in the terrain of ideas in search of the objective truth. The terrain of ideas is the one of the points of struggle for social transformation and, it is incumbent upon student leadership to confront dominant knowledge regimes, tracing their linkages and structures of domination.

8. Conclusion: The Future Beckons

The major challenges for the student leadership at UKZ are no different from those nationally or internationally. They are tangible, obvious, but crucial. These are:

Equal Opportunity and Equal Access to Higher Education

The struggle against poverty, education for all, and the awareness of needs and the increase in demand for equal opportunity and access to higher education in South Africa is the crucial demand of youth and its leadership.

Knowledge Attained should be Transferred to Society

The struggle for knowledge should not be seen as an adventure, but a process demanding selfishness and sacrifice. These will give the knowledge attained a unique value to both student leaders and society at large.

There should be Independent Critical Thinking from Student Leadership

Student leadership should guard and be vigilant not to fall into the neo liberal adaptation to all forms of domination, becoming acquiescent, if involuntary, participants in their own subjugation. They must critically engage the merger and its consequences for the entire student population. Theirs is to really show how education, supposedly the par the foundation of social mobility has instead reproduced social inequality.

It has been said that

> Central to this process is the way in which inequalities of wealth and incomes appear in society to be not so much the products of economic injustice, as the natural consequence disparities of ability, judgments or lifestyle.

They should help in deconstructing the theories of the existing realities that confront them and act.

Student Leadership must Become the 'Voice of the Voiceless'

Student leadership's mission should be to speak for those who have no voice and whose voice has been silenced by the draconian university policy e.g.

the student who was nearly expelled at Howard College. The leadership's ultimate goal should be to form the mind and the character of new generations which is essential in the present conjuncture of youth and student de-politicisation. These are challenges that need to be faced head on and without procrastination.

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Introducing Afrocentric Studies in the Newly Merged University of KwaZulu-Natal: Systematic and Thematic Principles for an African University

Itumeleng Mekoa

Introduction

The University of Kwazulu-Natal came into existence in January 2004 as a result of the merger of the former University of Natal and the University of Durban-Westville. This new university declared in its mission statement that it will be a premier university of African scholarship which means that its entire educational system will be African in orientation. However, there has been very little attempt to really Africanise the curriculum so that it can reflect Africanism. The curriculum of the university is still western in orientation. There has not been any debate within the various faculties, schools and programmes or units about the idea of a premier university of African scholarship and its implications for the curriculum. This article is intended to challenge that silence, and bring about the debate particularly on the nature of an Afrocentric education, if the University of Kwazulu-Natal was to introduce such an education. Like a student in the student body meeting, this paper is intended to suggest a way forward. The paper will focus in particular on development of Afrocentric studies at the University of Kwazulu-Natal. It will look into various themes and principles of the Afrocentric notion and how this can be applied at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

The Role of Universities in the Process of Africanisation

One of the challenges facing African universities in the last three decades in

postcolonial Africa has been the transformation of these institutions from being western elitist institutions to being African institutions with seminal and beneficial attachments to their African societies. Ajayi, Goma and Johnson in their book titled *The African Experience with Higher Education* (1966) state that Kenneth Kaunda the former president of Zambia gave an address at the inauguration of the University of Zambia which captured the pride and identity, which everywhere initially greeted the coming of the university to Africa. In his address he stressed that the people of Zambia have every reason to be proud of their university. He claimed that the University of Zambia is 'our own University in a real sense'. Ajayi et al. (1996:1) also wonders about 'the real sense' in which the African people can now claim African universities to be 'really their own'. They write:

> Again and again the people dance to welcome the university and bring their fishes and best wishes on the day of the inauguration but, if they venture to show up at that gates on the day after inauguration, they find that no-one there knows their name or understand their language (Ajayi et al: 1996:1).

Ajayi, Goma, and Johnson (1996) present the debate about what really constitutes an African university and how to make a university a 'very own University of African peoples' (Ajayi et al. 1996:1). What is really missing in most universities particularly those located within the African continent is the link between academia and the ordinary African people. Universities in Africa are not only distanced in terms of their elitist social status, but are also culturally alien. The only relationship that African universities have in Africa with the ordinary people is that of the researchers to their objects of study – a system that does not see the ordinary people as fellow knowledge producers. Production of new knowledge is seen as the preserve of the few academics using western standards of knowledge production and validation. Only that which comes from the West constitutes true knowledge and academic standards are measured through that. African indigenous knowledge systems are seen as local or even rural, and therefore of no international value. As a result, the education system in Africa has remained not only alien, but also un-African. Most of the education systems worldwide, whether British, German or American always reflect the cultures and values of their communities. Education in these countries is used to

preserve their culture and values. Universities in Africa therefore including the University of Kwazulu-Natal, which has positioned itself as the 'premier University of African scholarship' have to reflect on their curriculum, teaching, research, management and community relations, African culture and values. Gone are the days when universities in Africa used to alienate themselves from their societies and context. They have a great role to play and that is to preserve and develop the cultural heritage of their societies, and that in terms of modern demands and challenges.

Makgoba (1997:179) explains:

> The universities of Africa should recognize their responsibility. It is their prime responsibility to enhance Africa, its people, its rich and diverse values, traditions and heritage. This remains the greatest challenge for educationists in Africa today.

Therefore, even the so-called English liberal universities and the Afrikaner conservative universities will have to shed their clothes and put on African clothes. Because they are located on the African continent, they will have to be reflective of African values. By so doing, they will not only contribute to Africa's development, but also become more culturally friendly to the people of our continent. They will then be true national assets and not serving foreign values. Makgoba (1997: 179) writes:

> It is important to recognize immediately that the imparting of inappropriate or irrelevant education, even of the highest calibre, would equally lead to a poor and ineffective product. Thus university education has to be relevant not only to the people, but also to the culture and environment in which it is being imparted. It is essential to recognize that true development occurs only when scientific thought and technological practice become part and parcel of a people's culture ... All great and successful nations of the world have their education moulded into their respective cultures, so that the educated English or American person remains distinctly American or English, but not African.

The last three decades have also witnessed a fundamental rethinking and change in perception regarding the place and role universities play in the

development of their societies particularly in Africa. African scholars engaged in the debate are Nyerere, Zeleza, Makgoba, Ajayi, Fafumwa, Mazrui, Yesufu, Seepe, Vilakazi, Nkondo, Mosala and many others. In more general terms Nyerere has referred to a university

> as an institution of higher learning; a place where people's minds are trained for clear thinking, for independent thinking, for analysis, and for problem solving at the highest level (cf. Hinzen & Hundsdörfer 1979: 38ff).

It is therefore an institution for free and critical inquiry. Nyerere ascribes to a university a number of functions of which the most importantly are to transmit knowledge and to be a centre which attempts to advance the frontiers of knowledge (cf. Hinzen & Hundsdörfer 1979: 38ff).

He considers knowledge which remains isolated from the people or which is used by a few to exploit others, a betrayal:

> It is a particularly vicious kind of theft by false pretences. Students eat the bread and butter of the peasants because they have been promised a service in the future. If they are unable or unwilling to provide that service when the time comes, then the students have stolen from the peasants as surely as if they had carried off their sacks of wheat in the night (cf. Hinzen & Hundsdörfer 1979: 38ff).

Nyerere's views confirm an accepted universal view of the role of a university to search for knowledge and to pass it on for the benefit of others. Habermas is more explicit when he says that a university has the following tasks to fulfil:

a) The transmission and development of technically exploitable knowledge;
b) The professional socialization of students;
c) The transmission, development and interpretation of the cultural tradition of the society; and
d) The formation of the political awareness of its students.

In the 1960's the role of a truly African university was defined within the

context of modernization theory (cf. Yesufu 1973: 42ff) as:

1. Pursuit, promoting and dissemination of knowledge;
2. Research;
3. Provision of intellectual leadership;
4. Manpower development;
5. Promoting social and economic modernization; and
6. Promoting intercontinental unity and international understanding.

In the 1970's six new principles were devised by African educationists for the development and existence of African universities (cf. Goldschmidt 1977) as:

7. National relevance;
8. Africanisation;
9. Social identification;
10. State hegemony;
11. Academic freedom; and
12. International communication.

Mpati a leading African educationist discussing the role of universities in Africa, reject the

> classified models of Western Universities whose approach and patterns of learning are relics of a by-gone era and whose attitudes cannot always be reconciled with progress and reconstruction (Mpati 1980: 43).

The role of a university in an African society is to help liberate African people from the shackles of the past in order to discover an own authentic identity and to establish an own creativity. The university is therefore called upon to play a strategic role in mental decolonisation and liberation.

Moulder also pleads that universities should try to provide people with the ideas, methods and habits of mind which they need to evaluate their societies, to appreciate everything which makes their lives and the lives of others worth living, and to reject everything which dehumanizes them and the other people with whom they live and work. Moulder sees such an

understanding of one's society as a pre-condition for an intelligent involvement in societal development (Moulder 1980: 18).

Chabani Manganyi also advocates the type of education 'which will rescue the black community from the fool's hell' (Mangany 1980: 184). It is an education, which cannot be dictated by foreign institutions, ideologies, or idiosyncrasies. It is within this context in Africa that a university must find a role. This 'new' university must according to the African educationist Fafumwa open its doors wide,

> to receive new ideas and new knowledge from the populace as a whole – lettered and unlettered, farmers, artists, poets, historians, medicine men, musicians, as well as students, graduates, industrialists, government officials, and private citizens. The doors of the university are wide open not only to hand out knowledge but also to receive as much if not much more than it gives .... African universities cannot continue indefinitely as an oasis of privilege in a sea of poverty; nor can they afford to ignore the pressing needs and aspirations of their people. They can only do so at their own price. These institutions were creations of their respective governments in response to the needs of their people. The university teachers and administrators in Africa, if they are to survive the present century, must move ahead of government in planning the social and economic order. They must strive relentlessly to help solve social and economic problems ... totally liberating the common man from all that obstructs his physical, material, and intellectual well-being (Fafumwa 1980: 275).

According to Fafumwa the main problem with African universities is that they have taken too much pride in maintaining themselves as copies of foreign institutions and systems, that they show little or no regard for their own social milieu. 'African universities', he says, 'are caught between the old and the emerging new social and economic systems in Africa' (cf. Yesufu 1973: 3). It is essential that they cease to be the poor seconds of metropolitan institutions that they have been up to now, and evolve a system that is unique to the African context, if they are to respond to the needs of the African society. Mazrui identifies this process as a rebellion against Western domination (Mazrui 1978:313). Attachment to the context means

therefore the universities are involved in the preservation and deepening of a culture of a people, nation and continent in general. It means to revive the historical heritage within the process of social and national identification. According to Yesufu the truly African university must be one

> that draws its inspirations from its environment, not a transported tree, but growing from a seed that is planted and nurtured in the African soil (Yesufu 1973: 40).

In Africa unfortunately, independence did not help African people and intellectuals to be independent from Western domination and influence. Mazrui urges African universities to move away from excessive Eurocentrism and to move towards Africanisation, alternative to internationalization or globalization. The fear that African universities remain part of the foreign culture and are constantly exposed to cultural imperialism with no roots in the people's culture has been expressed by Mutiso when he said: 'For too long have we accepted knowledge manufactured elsewhere as being the only knowledge' (cf. Yesufu 1973: 155).

Ki-Zerbo also shares the same sentiments when he says that the African university must not be a mere reflection of a foreign and strange light; 'it must be a flame which, lit from the inner recess of the mind is basically nurtured by the domestic hearth' (cf. Yesufu 1973: 26).

Nyerere also concurs when he states that:

> Our universities have aimed at understanding Western society and being understood by Western society, apparently assuming that by this means they were preparing their students to be – and themselves being – of service to African society. This fault has been recognized, and the attitude it involved has been in the course of correction in East Africa for some time (cf. Hinzen & Hundsdörfer 1979: 40).

Ajayi pleads for the indigenisation of universities to satisfy the need of continuity and identity with their own cultural environment:

> The universities must do this if they are to become not only rooted in the culture of the people but also understood and accepted, and not merely tolerated (cf. Yesufu 1973: 12ff).

Ajayi would like to see people identifying with the university, but not only when it starts to improve lives of poor African communities, but also when it

> provides answers to the questions that bother [people about] improved agricultural methods, questions of historical origin and the purpose and meaning of human life, moral guidance and sense of value, the cure for political instability, and intergroup frictions, etc. (cf. Yesufu 1973: 13ff).

The university is therefore according to Yesufu called upon

> to be fully committed to active participation in social transformation, economic modernization and the training and upgrading of the total human resources of the nation. It should emphasize that which is immediately relevant and useful. The university should be the source of intellectual leadership. In manpower development it should increasingly involve itself in the more critical areas of middle-level manpower, and should actively participate in the planning, organization, curriculum development and superintendence of institutions training such manpower (Yesufu 1973: 82).

From Yesufu's views one can deduct that a university is in a position to heal the economic, social and political ills of a society. Indigenization of universities can be very helpful only if teaching programmes are relevant to the needs of the African people. Universities must be central to their own societies, as higher education worldwide has become a means of social mobility particularly in societies with economic problems. Universities are intensely linked to larger political, social and economic factors in society. It is therefore expected that they should be development orientated and produce students whose task will be to develop their societies. They can however, not execute their task and mission if these universities are not deeply rooted in their societies. They are therefore called to relate themselves to their context. Kriel observed that universities do not exist in a vacuum – they exist in a socio-political, economic and cultural context (Kriel 1982: 10). A truly African university therefore according to Yesufu is:

> One which, while acknowledging the need to transform Africa into

> the twentieth century must yet realize that it can best achieve this result by completely identifying itself with the realities of a predominantly rural sixteenth century setting and the aspirations of an unsophisticated, but highly expectant people. It follows that the ... African university must, henceforth, be much more than an institution for teaching, research and dissemination of higher learning. It must be accountable to, and serve the vast majority of the people who live in rural areas. The African university must be committed to active participation in social transformation, economic modernization, and the training and upgrading of the total human resources of the nation, not just a small elite (Yesufu 1973: 41).

The problem with South African universities and universities in Africa in general is that they have not shown any desire to meet the needs of the African people. They have not been flexible in their institutional structures, in their management structures, and their teaching programmes to accommodate African needs and values. There have been constant criticisms levelled against universities as institutions reserved for 'pure scholarship' and 'high intellectual training' rather than 'societal emancipation'. So, an African university should be, according to Makgoba:

i. One whose cultural and philosophical foundations are located within the African paradigm in its values and ethos. Like all traditional roles of a university (created by and for society) it should pursue knowledge with social responsibility. It should strive for excellence and a high standard of teaching, research and community service. Its formula and culture should reflect the culture of Africa in its fullest sense i.e. diverse, vibrant, dynamic, accommodating and tolerant;

ii. The African university should be the champion and ambassador of Africanness and African scholarship to the wider world comparable to Oxford or Harvard. In educating and training future critical, analytical and adaptable scholars and citizens, the focus should be Africa; be it political, economic, health, educational, or science. These problems, which affect the continent in a major way, can only be fully understood and resolved by dedicated high level scholarship

> that focuses primarily on them as primary issues within their environmental and cultural context. The motive that foreign models are transplantable in a pseudo-colonial fashion to Africa is the biggest challenge for African scholars in transforming society. The present institutions do not fulfil these criteria. In this sense universities should be Africanised during the transformation process. As education is one of the cornerstones of every successful society and tertiary education in particular represents the highest form, the Africanisation of South African tertiary institutions become very essential (Makgoba 1998: 48).

The challenges therefore that face Africa are two-fold: High-level human resources development and the incorporation of the indigenous culture into the education system to end the alienation that has occurred through colonialism and apartheid education (Makgoba 1998: 48). The University of Kwazulu-Natal is now in its third year after the merger, yet there has not been in this university any significant debate about the establishment of a Centre for Afrocentric Studies as a vehicle for the promotion of African culture and values. There has not been an attempt to fashion the university curriculum in such a way that it reflects African values and culture. There has not even been any debate about what constitutes African scholarship. The university is parading this so-called African scholarship in its mission statement, yet there is no concrete evidence of this not only its curricula, but also in its entire academic culture which is still liberal, white and arrogant. Developing Afrocentric Studies as a discipline therefore poses a serious challenge to the university if it is really or wants to become a premier African university for African scholarship.

What is Africanisation?

Afro-centricity is the study of concepts, issues and behaviour with particular bases in the African world, Africans in the Diaspora and Africans on the continent. Black studies, African studies, and African-American studies are essentially Afro-centric studies (Asante 1988: 58). Other names for Afro-centric studies are Africalogy, Afrology, and Pan-African studies. In this article all these terms will be understood to have the same meaning. The

main objective of this article is that African ideals and values should be at the centre of any analysis involving African culture and behaviour (Asante 1990: 6). Afrocentric studies developed out of the desire to reconstruct the African consciousness particularly in America. The advocates of Afrocentric studies argued that African-Americans had to be empowered consciously through the American education system (Asante 1998: 9). The same argument can be extended to any dominated group of the world. The basic assumption of Afrocentric studies is that all Africans share elements of a common culture.

As Asante (1998: 9) writes:

> We have one African cultural system manifested in diversities ... we respond to the same rhythms of the universe, the same cosmological sensibilities, the same general historical reality.

Part of this common cultural heritage is rooted in the African Diaspora scattered throughout North and South America as the result of slavery and colonialism. Though the African Diaspora's culture has been reshaped by these historical encounters and experiences, their original roots still remain in Africa. Hence one of the goals of the Afrocentric movement is to reconstruct the cultures of the African Diaspora and build it into a world African culture (Spring 1994: 104). The goal is not necessarily about recreation of the African past but to create and reconstruct African values and genius in the context of a past colonial world. Afrocentricity also does not use pigmentology as its defining element. As a discipline it operates from a unique perspective on a coherence notion of culture (Asante 1990: 174). By culture is meant 'shared perceptions, attitudes, and predispositions that allow people to organize experiences in certain ways' (Asante 1990: 9). It is not 'simply the study of black people but the study of African people from an Afrocentric perspective' (Asante 1987: 163). Asante (1990: 6) explains:

> ... the Afrocentrist seeks to uncover and use codes, paradigms, symbols, motifs, myths, and circles of discussions that reinforce the centrality of African ideals and values as a valid frame of reference for acquiring and examining data.

Even though this is the case, Afrocentricity does not exclude relevant ideas from other human experiences; it goes 'beyond Western history in order to re-valorise the African place in the interpretation of Africans, continentally and [Africans in the] Diaspora' (Asante 1990: 6). Afrocentricity also seeks to foster collective consciousness in the African world through an emphasis on its collective history.

According to Asante; 'Afrocentricity does not appeal to hatred, or greed, or violence; it converts by the force of its truth' (Asante 1988: 5). Afrocentricity does not intend to be absolutist; hence Asante, the main advocate of Afrocentricity, points out that Afrocentrists cannot dispute the centrality of African ideals and values (Asante 1990: 6). Such contestation is inevitable, for there cannot be a unanimous view of African ideals and values because of the dynamism and diversity of the African cultural systems. The emphasis is on the ideals and values as reflected in culture. Karenga (1993: 36) explains:

> To be rooted in the cultural image of African people is to be anchored in the views and values of African people as well as in the practice which emanates from and gives rise to these views and values.

The emphasis on ideals and values of African people as rooted in African culture has raised a question of whether African people possess distinct values and ideals from that of other cultures. Ohaegbulam in his book titled, *Towards an Understanding of the African Experience: From Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (1990:22) provides an answer:

> [Africans] also share some common values, aspirations, hopes, pain, suffering, death and thoughts of life after death with other human inhabitants of the planet earth. However, their experience – the totality of the events and facts that make up their life and conscious past – is in many respects unique and clearly distinguishable from those of the other segments of humanity.

Hence Karenga (1993: 36) points out that 'even as these are lessons for humanity in African particularity, these are lessons for Africans in human

commonality'. Afrocentricity hence stresses the equality of thought and practice as anchored in common cultural visions. Any worldview is based on the existence of an 'underlying cultural unity or identity of the various individual thinkers' (Karenga 1993: 49). Ohaegbulam explains that the unique experience, which is the result of environmental factors, accounts for the emphasis on the African cultural and historical space in the global scheme of things (Ohaegbulam 1990: 22). A worldview or cosmology, therefore, stands for that particular manner in which people make sense of their surroundings, their lives, and the universe. It grows out of shared cultural experiences (Richards 1980: 4). Hence African philosophy or cosmology hinges on the assumption of the actuality of a set of shared values of the African world. These are

> 1) the centrality of community; 2) respect for tradition; 3) a high level of spirituality and ethical concern; 4) harmony with nature; 5) the society of selfhood; 6) veneration of ancestors; and 7) the unity of being (Karenga 1993: 49).

Put another way, African cosmology is distinguished by unity, harmony, spirituality, and organic relationship (Richards, 1980: 9). Richards, another advocate of Afrocentricity cites African spirituality as one of the enduring features of the African Diaspora and one that helped enslaved Africans to survive the brutality of slavery (Richards 1980: 23).

He writes:

> Faced with the realities of slave existence, we had to find ways of expressing, emerging and revitalizing the spiritual being we had salvaged from the wreckage of the holocaust ... out of the chaos and trauma of slavery, the spirit of Africa was reborn in the form of the African-American ethos (Richards 1980: 23f).

He goes further:

> They took from us everything they could, but there was something left inside that slavery couldn't touch. That something was the fragment pieces of a shattered world-view, so different from that of

> the Europeans, that in time it repudiated the materialism that they assumed. The African world-view stresses the strength of the human spirit. It places paramount value on human vitality as the ground of spiritual immortality (Richards 1980: 14).

Afrocentricity is also not an alternative to Eurocentrism nor a reactionary idea or anti-Europeanism. Eurocentricity is not a point of departure for Afrocentricity.

Asante (1993: 62) explains:

> The idea of examining African phenomena from the standpoint of Africans as human agents is not a reactionary idea, but rather the only correct and normal way to engage the information. This is so whether precious attempts to understand these phenomena have been Eurocentric or Asiocentric or Americocentric; it is not Eurocentrism that gives rise to the Afrocentric perspective but rather the idea of Africans speaking for themselves. While it is true that the dominant interpretations of Africa have been Eurocentric, the Afrocentric response would have been necessary regardless of the previous centricities.

Afrocentricity can also cohabit or live side by side with other perspectives or views. It is not hegemonic; it does not claim African superiority over other cultures (Housessou-Adin 1995: 188). It also does not have a problem with Eurocentricism as a proper way of life for people of European descent or origin as long as it does not universalizes itself. Such universalism tends to ignore cultural pluralism or multiplicity. Afrocentricity acknowledges the pluralism of world cultures and civilizations and the contributions of all cultures to the development of the world. Afrocentricity also emphasizes the equality of and not the superiority of African civilization to all world civilizations (Houessou-Adin 1995: 189).

In Afrocentricity, Africans become subjects and not objects of history. Africans are capable to think and to speak for themselves. They are not mere copies of Europeans or anything Western. As Keto (1994: 12) puts it:

> African people become subjects and makers of their own history when we employ the Afrocentric paradigm as our primary foundation for creating theoretical tools of analysis. Africans are not and cannot be peripheral dwellers in somebody else's unfolding historical panorama.

Autonomy of Afrocentric Studies

The advocates and founding fathers of Afrocentric studies have always expressed autonomy as an indispensable prerequisite for the success of Afrocentric studies within academia. One such advocate, Karenga (1988) argues that for Afrocentricity to maintain its autonomy as a valid and valuable discipline, it must not be placed under any traditional discipline. For Okafor, the placement of Afrocentric studies under any discipline should be viewed as a 'stopgap measure' which does not allow sufficient curricular and intellectual flexibility and freedom. Rather it may be placed in a multidisciplinary department in which no one discipline holds a commanding leverage. The autonomy of the discipline is essential as Karenga (1988) contends because the basic concern of the academically trained Afrocentric scholars differs from those of other academics. As Okafor (1996: 698) explains:

> For instance, whereas the political scientists and economists deal with political behavior and economic behavior respectively, the African-American focuses on Black thought and behavior in their multidimensionality. Nonetheless, an African Americanist can participate with other specialists in a multidisciplinary project. Indeed, Black studies, perhaps more than any other center of knowledge, have given validity and respectability to the notion of interdisciplinary studies in terms of the manner in which it has evolved. Too often, however, some scholars and administrators tend to overlook a new reality, namely that in its most advanced form. Black studies has given 'interdisciplinary' a new meaning – that is, inbuilt forms of 'interdisciplinary'.

Autonomy of Afrocentric studies is also about academic freedom. One of the

biggest obstacles to revolutionary change in Africa is mental colonialism, conservative, reactionary and dependant thinking of the African intellectuals. Trained by colonial masters, African intellectuals are mere students ready to carry out orders of their former masters. Their intellectual training has bred a dependency syndrome among them, and left them with the pride of Cambridge, Oxford, London universities where they have been trained to be better colonial agents. Their intellectual dependence has betrayed the African revolution for political emancipation. Their intellectual training has not only tamed them but also made them better civil servants of the colonial system. It has not made them to be better leaders, radical policy makers, project initiators and developers, nor critical thinkers and developing personalities but mere puppets ready to be manipulated by the West and thanked with crumbs from the tables of their masters to keep them happy. This is the kind of education that Walter Rodney describes as 'education for subordination, exploitation, with creation of mental confusion and the development of underdevelopment' (Rodney 1976: 264). Only autonomous Afrocentric studies can change the dependency syndrome in Africa. Only Afrocentric studies can challenge structures that undermine African scholarship, theoretical paradigms, African experiences and contributions. In short, only Afrocentric studies, which are autonomous, can challenge the Eurocentrism that dominates academic culture and discourses on Africa. Autonomous Afrocentric studies can promote and support African tradition and respect for African intellectual production. Autonomy is an integral part of democracy and academic freedom. It is about the spirit of free and open discussion, respect for cultural diversity and tolerance of diverse opinions. These values are threatened when academic freedom and autonomy are restricted.

Afrocentric Centredness

The concept of centrism lies at the core of Afrocentric studies. It means situating observation and behaviour in one's own historical experience. Centrism moulds the concepts, paradigms, theories, and methods of Afrocentric studies (Okafor 1996: 706). 'In this way Africalogy secures its place alongside other centric pluralisms without hierarchy and without seeking hegemony' (Asante 1990: 12). Even though Afrocentric scholarship

always criticizes the negative aspects of Western epistemology, it does not seek hegemony. Afrocentricity does not represent the black version of Eurocentricism (Asante 1992: 22). In fact, Afrocentric scholarship makes a distinction between a hegemonic and non-hegemonic Europe-centered perspective of history. In Afrocentric studies, epistemology is operationalized through the use of classical African civilizations as the geographical and cultural starting base of knowledge (Asante 1994: 14). This is essential because an Afrocentric perspective or centrism facilitates a true understanding of African thought and behaviour. As Keto puts it, centrism 'makes it easier to trace and understand the social patterns' of the lives of Africans, 'the institutional patterns of their actions, and the intellectual patterns of their thoughts within the changing context of time' (Keto 1989: 1). Centrism therefore allows African students to reason in a way that focuses their self-image on their own historical roots so as to protect them from viewing 'themselves solely through the perspective of others' (Keto 1989: 13).

Afrocentric Tools of Social Analysis

An indispensable theoretical tool for analysis of Afrocentric studies is the knowledge of the cultural and historical bases of the subject of criticism. Hence Afrocentric research calls for cultural or social immersion instead of 'scientific distance' as the most effective means of studying African phenomena (Okafor 1996: 708ff). This means that the researcher has to be familiar with the history, language, philosophy and mythology of the people being studied (Okafor 1996: 709). As Asante said:

> Without cultural immersion the researcher loses all sense of ethical value and becomes a researcher 'for the sake of research', the ... kind of value in the Afrocentric approach which sees research as assisting in the humanizing of the world (Asante 1990: 27).

For this reason, Afrocentric method of proof depends on the principles of fairness and openness, that is 'the idea of doing something that can be shown to be fair in procedure and open in its application' (Asante 1990: 25). According to Asante, the 'research that is ultimately verifiable in the

experiences of human beings is the final empirical authority' (Asante 1990: 25). Afrocentric studies therefore according to Asante, has made possible the conceptualization of black perspectives and attitudes thereby suggesting a new methodology. Afrocentric studies are not merely a study of African people, but an approach, a methodological and functional perspective (Asante 1988: 59ff). It is an African perspective that informs the historians, sociologists, or even anthropologists. Anyone who studies African people from any disciplinary code whether history or psychology without an Afrocentric perspective, according to Asante will be doing useless unanalytic work and he cites three qualities possessed by the Afrocentric scholar:

1. Competence;
2. Clarity of perspective; and
3. Understanding of the object.

> *Competence* includes the analytic skills with which the scholar investigates his subject. It is the ability and capability of performing adequately when confronted with problems related to his subject area. Competence may be acquired through formal training, if available, experience or a combination of both. Further, the competence of a person in one area does not automatically transfer to another. Thus a good historian or sociologist is not necessarily a good afrologist. *Clarity of perspective* means the ability to focus on the Afrocentric issues in the subject area and to interpret those issues in a way that will expose the essential factors constituting the subject .... *Understanding the subject* means that the scholar knows something of the interrelationship of his subject and the world context. He approaches the subject in relationship to the world at large and is able to analyze the phenomena accruing in and around the subject; the parts comprising the subject and the events constituting an Afrocentric focused study (Asante 1988: 60; e.a.).

In Afrocentric studies, therefore the subject of study is by definition related to African people. It is Pan-African in its objective of liberation of the black people around the globe. It also organizes their thoughts and ideas

into a composite whole. What black people believe intuitively is verified by Afrocentric methods. In this sense Afrocentric studies opens the door to African or black people to be true to themselves. Whatever is negative or positive is measured by the Afrocentric method.

The Indigenous Knowledge Systems in South Africa

It is ironic that the topic of Africanisation of education at least in some form has been taken up mostly in South Africa. The notion of indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) was propelled into academic discourse in the 1990s and has now become the major research theme funded by the National Research Foundation (NRF). The first reason may be historical, the alienation from one's cultural roots and traditional lands under colonial regimes and the apartheid system. While all other people of Africa have experienced the severity of colonialism, in South Africa the effects of displacement and dispossession were most far-reaching. As a result of that, the sense of loss has found expression in an ideological quest for African identity. The second reason why the IKS discourse has gained prominence is because of its perceived significance as a vehicle of African identity. More especially that the concept was introduced into the public sphere in the transitional period after 1994 by several leading Africans and related to ideological framework such as the African renaissance and ubuntu (Grossman 2004: 332). The notion is also seen in South Africa as a potential successor to the ideologies of Pan-Africanism and Black Consciousness. In the midst of the pronouncements the call made on universities in South Africa was to take up the challenge of introducing IKS into their curricula or to Africanise their curricula. Driven by government grants, the departments at a number of universities have developed research programmes in this direction.

The notion of the Indigenous Knowledge System has also been taken up by developmentalists who are part of international development discourses. They promote the use of local or indigenous knowledges and technologies for the purpose of social and economic development.

The Need for the Development of African Indigenous Technologies in South Africa

European colonialists on their arrival in Africa took it for granted that,

whatever might be there of technology and traditional system was primitive and inferior. Therefore in their endeavour in 'developing' Africa they had to replace whatever existed with the superior European model. They never even recognized that any significant technology existed in Africa. Even though Africa did not have the technology of a modern industrialized society, nevertheless it had an effective technology in metal working and smelting, pottery, woodwork, and building construction and music instruments (Kerre 1992: 370). Even agriculture was also developed in line with African conditions. Mashupye Kgaphola and Namane Magau (1999: 365) have this to say:

> Long before Europeans set foot on the continent, Africans had achieved technological and scientific sophistication in such carried fields as astronomy, metallurgy, agricultural science and medicine. The enterprises of science and technology are not, contrary to the conventional Western portrayal, alien or new to Africa and its people. However, both internal and external factors led to a discontinuity in the rich tradition, culminating in the unfortunate state where Africa was relegated to a virtual footnote in the history of its conquerors. This relegation to the margins is but one manifestation of the systemic wounding of Africa's psyche. Likewise, the restoration of Africa's towering legacy and her claim to historical validity, cannot fully be brought about without the reclaiming of her spiritual and historical essence.

Traditional African science and technology played a pivotal role in economic development. It embodied social responsibility. Unlike Western science and technology, which pursue profit, this one served perceived human needs. Production was not merely for profit but to serve human needs. While traditional African economy embodied desired features, which could be incorporated into modern economy, the imperialists decided to ignore that, and suppress African technologies in favour of Western technology (Kerre 1992: 370). According to Kerre, as a result of this, 'Africa's traditional technologies stagnated and in some cases fell out of use' (Kerre 1992: 371). African politicians also after colonialism failed to promote African technologies and instead entrenched Western technologies

in the name of modernity. According to George Ayittey (1992: 111):

> These new leaders acted as if Africa had no history, no culture, no native institutions, and no indigenous revolutionaries for its people to salute. We should recall that the Europeans used the same arguments to justify colonialism. Now, the African leaders were using these arguments to support the imposition of Marxism and other alien 'isms' on Africa. These black neo-colonialists were no different from white colonialists.

The very same African leaders who opposed the Western denial of the African intellectual capacity placed more faith on expatriates and foreign systems than in their own African people. Even in the public sectors African governments preferred to employ expatriates as heads. As George Ayittey (1992: 111) wrote:

> African leaders also proudly pointed to Timbuktu as a world-renowned ancient seat of learning and boasted of their world-class universities, comparable to those of the West. They seldom used them, however. They allowed universities to decay; arbitrarily closed them at the slightest sign of student unrest, and jailed professors. Intellectual freedom, which was the hallmark of the ancient Universities of Sankore, was nowhere to be found in modern universities.

African leaders, who had declared that Africa had bright, qualified and locally trained experts never used them. The history of Africa is indicative of the fact that Africans have the ability and initiative to develop science, technology and economic systems suitable to Africa's needs. There is no doubt that they can develop these again in the context of modern world trade and globalization. Given a chance these technologies developed by Africans for Africa can further African development more than Western imperial technological imports (Fowler 1995: 144). There is recognition in the field of agriculture recently that methods and technologies developed by indigenous African technologists have greater developmental potential than imported Western methods and technology (Davidson 1992: 217ff). This

however does not suggest that Africa should ignore all modern technology and commercial development. Africa can learn from the modern technology of the West just as the West can learn from African technology. However there is a difference between learning and imposition. The experience of Africans with Western technology is imposition with the assumption that Africa is backward or undeveloped or has nothing to offer. The renaissance of Africa will only be possible when African indigenous technologies are resuscitated, recognized and put on par with their Western counterparts.

There must also be collaboration with the national and international science institutions. An attempt must also be made to attract African intellectuals trained in modern Western science and technology to develop further African indigenous technology. As Ventura (1981: 61) observed:

> Because culture is the expression of man coping and relating to his environment, and technology a way of modifying it to suit man's urgent and necessary needs, it therefore follows that there is a direct relationship between culture and technology. Culture and technology relate to each other cyclically and reciprocally and each modifying the other as the environment changes.

This implies that the

> science being practiced in the developing countries is a direct result of what the society will accept as being worthwhile and the scientist has grown to accept as being meaningful. As a consequence of these values, development has tended to be regarded as the acquisition of more material things rather than the final goal of developing the total human being (Ventura 1981: 61).

Appropriate policy and technology for Africa will imply the employment of traditional technology with great emphasis on developing domestic capacity and technology rather than depend on exogenous technologies. The neglect of traditional technology will imply that developing societies are forced to accept the technological solutions that are commercially feasible and supported by the Western financial institutions. It serves the interest of the industrial nations and financial institutions and not those of the indigenous

people (Ventura, 1981: 61). The needs and policies of the industrial nations need to be translated into the needs of the rural poor. To avoid this imperial imposition it is necessary that traditional technology be included in the curriculum. This is an essential aspect of history that has been neglected.

The State of Afrocentric Studies in South Africa

There have been attempts in South Africa to develop Afrocentric studies for quite some time, particularly with the advent of the democratic order. In South Africa, the University of Cape Town has an established Centre for African Studies with other universities intending to do so. The Centre for African Studies based at the University of Cape Town is linked to various disciplines and departments. The university also offers a post-graduate diploma in African Studies and M Phil in African Studies. The University of Venda for Science and Technology also established The Eskia Mphahlele Centre for Indigenous Knowledge Systems. The University of Zululand has a Unit of Indigenous Knowledge Systems. The University of the North-West has a teaching programme on Indigenous Knowledge Systems. In some South African universities African Studies is mainly based on research, which means it is not connected with teaching or any discipline. These research projects have resulted in the publishing of materials, articles and books. Most university courses in South Africa offer no possibility for specializing in African studies, thus limiting the number of specialists in African Studies and confining them to research institutes like the Africana Institute of South Africa.

General information in African countries is available in different series of monographs, journals and newspapers. There is also among these a series on the scientific and technological potential of developing countries. Research in the economic field is concentrated on development in African countries, international trade and globalization. Although, the works are sometimes printed in academic journals, the research output is usually comparative with the objective of encouraging and investigating the possible areas of cooperation between African countries. Political Science includes the politics of African countries and political movements. The intention of these is to make clear the wider developmental problems of Africa and the most historical changes. Such studies also attempt to encourage the policy of

non-alignment of African countries to oppressive global institutions. African culture and literature are dealt with through African languages and Anthropology.

Academic journals on cultural contacts, cultural co-operation, traditional and modern elements in African culture and education have been published in South Africa. The research results and the knowledge of Afrocentric Studies acquired reach the general public through television and radio programmes. There is also strong emphasis on community outreach. There are also attempts to link South Africa to other African countries through student exchange programmes, seminars and continental conferences. Despite all these developments, it must still be said that the current state of African Studies remains undefined. A number of African scholars have tried to establish African studies as a scientific discipline at the same time maintaining contact with the community through the media and publications. As Nada Svob-Dokic (1992: 394) wrote:

> This keeps African studies somewhere in-between clear scientific research and cultural cooperation. They are not regarded as a scholarly discipline, and they are not included in the teaching programmes, although ideas of introducing an African department and teaching of African languages have been put forward. There is, however, little chance that the present situation will soon change.

Afrocentric studies in South Africa have generated interest in Africa. As a result, many works are being produced even by those who are not necessarily schooled in the field. Some successes, though, have been achieved in the field of Afrocentric studies, and the need is felt for a more organized approach to the accumulated knowledge and experience in a curriculum.

Challenges Facing Afrocentric Studies in South Africa

Introducing Afrocentric studies as discipline in South African universities, faces a number of challenges. *Firstly*, South Africa is a multicultural country and in the last ten years the democratic government has attempted to unite the people of this country and bring about racial harmony. It has also through its various organs attempted to protect the rights of various racial and cultural groups who have suffered under both colonialism and apartheid. In

its attempt to build a non-racial society the government has outlawed all forms of discrimination at all levels of the society including education. It is in this context that some opponents of the introduction of Afrocentric studies have argued that such a discipline will sow racial division and blow away the goal of creating a non-racial society. According to them Afrocentric studies is a racial discipline that cannot be allowed in this country. In the next section one will attempt to offer possible options for the South African context.

Secondly, Afrocentric studies as a discipline faces the challenge of competing with other disciplines within the broader education system. These are market related disciplines which higher education systems not only in South Africa but world wide are facing from the business and international markets. Universities are pressurized to produce quality students who will be able to serve the market world. Universities therefore are being pressurized to meet the demands of the markets in terms of their curriculum content. This therefore makes it difficult for universities to focus on the needs of the African people and the development of those societies. The pressure to meet the demands of the market by the universities has put Afrocentric studies out of step for these developments and caused it to not succeed in meeting the broader societal and developmental needs and demands of the continent.

The *third* challenge that Afrocentric studies as a discipline faces is that of funding. Funders or donors are not interested in funding non-natural science or non-business or non-technological disciplines like Afrocentric studies which they do not benefit from. They want to fund only those disciplines that are of direct benefit to them. Funding therefore makes it impossible for some universities to introduce Afrocentric studies. It is not seen as a discipline that can contribute towards the society's scientific, technological or business development particularly in this technological age when there is so much pressure to catch up with modern developments. Afrocentric studies are seen as of no developmental and technological value.

The *fourth* challenge that Afrocentric studies face is that it is ideologically biased towards the African people. Even though the discipline does not advocate human hatred, it unsettles those who have benefited from the racial oppression of the black people and those who harbour racial stereotypes about African people. It is a discipline that is in favour of the liberation of the African people. This liberation is at the top on the agenda of Afrocentric studies.

The *fifth* challenge that Afrocentric studies is facing is that there are many competing ideologies particularly in Africa. These are globalization, modernization, Americanization and other foreign ideologies dominant in Africa, thus creating confusion amongst the African people and even academics about which ideology is relevant for the African continent.

Afrocentricity, Multicultural Studies and Education for National Reconciliation: Policy Options on Unity and Diversity in Education in South Africa

This section proposes three main policy options for South Africa. These policy options have been formulated taking into account three main factors: the particular context of South Africa, lessons from the international experience and the constitution of the Republic of South Africa which advocates respect for human rights, justice and equality, freedom of conscience and religion, freedom of association, tolerance, etc. These policy options envisage an equalization of education, where differences particularly cultural ones, are promoted and respected.

a) Model A. Afrocentricity

The majority of the population in South Africa is African, and curriculum must reflect their values and culture as indicated above. Such a curriculum should provide a basis for originality and uniqueness that can contribute meaningfully to global knowledge and civilization. It also challenges the imposition of foreign and often alienating values.

Seepe (1998: 64) explains:

> By Africanising the higher education system, one starts from the premise that the majority of the people in this country are Africans. As such higher education should be reflective and be informed by the culture, experiences, aspirations of this majority as well as addressing itself to natural objectives. It refers to a process of placing the African world-view at the centre of analysis. Asante puts it as a perspective which allows Africans to be subjects of historical

> experiences rather than objects on the fringes of Europe. It is not a matter of colour, but an orientation of data.

The truth of the matter is that the current education system is not just non-African but also anti-Africanist. An Afrocentric perspective as Seepe puts it, 'provides an opportunity to make the effort to be best of ourselves and not to try to be the best or worst of others' (Seepe 1998: 64). An Afrocentric study programme can also be open to non-Africans yet directed by Africans to avoid dilution. It is not anti-white or anti-European but pro-African and about how one views data/ information (Seepe 1998: 64).

b) Model B: Multicultural Education

This policy option assumes that South Africa is a multicultural society. Besides the majority diverse African cultures, there are various European, and Asian cultures. A multicultural education will offer a more balanced approach to the relationship between the common and the diverse. This policy option will also be informed by the following principles which have operated in several countries and are generally applicable to the South African context.

Like any other educational policy, multicultural education should start 'where people are' (Appleton 1983). Basically this means that the education of students should take into consideration their socio-cultural background and begin with the experience they bring into the classroom. The principle behind multicultural education is that students are allowed to confront their own economic, social, cultural and ethnic background. It is only when people appreciate their cultural background that they can relate positively to others. This applies not only to students but also even the educators.

As Moletsane (1999: 38) puts it:

> The Multicultural curriculum sees individual identity as its focus, and places emphasis on developing and validating different ways of seeing, thinking, speaking and creating knowledge and meaning. From an understanding of individual identity as informed by multiple histories, locations, experience and perspectives, the

> curriculum should then aim to transform the unequal power relations that exist between and among the individual groups.

In the South African context the multicultural curriculum will be transforming or reconstructing the societies polarized by apartheid. Its main objective will be social justice for all in which every cultural background is respected and can contribute to social harmony. Multiculturalism will also eradicate all forms of discrimination like racism, sexism, classism, and xenophobia. Multiculturalism is also about mutual enrichment. It is also about social interdependence. Multicultural education can also promote cross-cultural learning, cross-cultural bridging and cross-cultural cooperation particularly in this global context. Multiculturalism is also not about the replacement of European values with indigenous values. It is not designed to diminish the contributions of white European males in the curriculum and substitute that with the experiences of the previously exploited and oppressed. It is about a representation of all human voices in the curriculum. It is about the fair treatment of both the minority and the majority whether they are black or white. It is about inclusivity. Multiculturalism is also not about the domination of one group by the other. Afrocentric studies, German studies, French studies, Indian studies can all be included in multicultural studies. Multiculturalism is also about national unity and not competition amongst various groups. Multicultural education refers to an educational theory designed solely for a multicultural society or a society where there is a legitimate acceptance of diversity of cultures (Gaine 1987: 30). From a multicultural education perspective, the needs of the students may vary from culture to culture (Appleton 1983: 205ff). Multicultural education is in several cases a response to situations of social conflict (Rizvi 1985). In South Africa for example conflict over issues such as separation or racism and economic deprivation forcefully calls for recognition of various cultures. In America the minority groups became aware of the pervasiveness of the Anglo-conformity bias in education and increasingly concerned about the damage this bias was inflicting on the minds of their children. Such concerns led to demands by various minority groups for multicultural education as an alternative to Anglo-centric curriculum.

Multiculturalism is open to a variety of interpretations. There are some who see multiculturalism as the reconciliation of the needs of the

'host' society and its ethnic groups by stressing the value of the wholeness of the entire society and the capacity of the existing structures to meet the various ethnic needs. This view has been referred to as holistic multiculturalism and is based on the concept of liberalism that regards 'mutual understanding and tolerance ... within the context of unity and diversity' (Kringas & Lewis 1981: 9). Others emphasize the role of political processes on ethnic relations and stress the need to examine questions of political access, power distribution and economic relations. The most extreme form of multiculturalism is the one, which asserts cultural facts of massive differences in ways that require equally massive differentiation in the educational provision. The apartheid education system based on separate development is a good example of extreme multiculturalism, which sought to promote and preserve separate ethnic and cultural identities. According to Rizvi, 'evidently, there are no clear guidelines as to what might constitute multicultural education' (Rizvi 1985: 23). Hence he stresses that the crucial point that should be made is that this ambiguity serves an important ideological function. The lack of conceptual clarification appears to be politically quite 'functional' in that it allows for all those involved in educational decision making to use the term in their own idiosyncratic way. For example, in South Africa and Australia multicultural education played a major role in marginalizing the indigenous people from mainstream economic, social and political institutions.

c) Model C: Education for National Reconciliation

Common themes in the democratic South Africa are national reconciliation, rainbowism, national unity, equality and justice for all, non-racialism and non-sexism. The assumption is that out of all these a united nation will be built. The commonality that is desired, it is thought is possible without taking into consideration cultural diversities. The unity and commonality that is desired is diversity free and suppresses diversity. Unity here means the absence of diversity. Unity, however, does not mean the absence of diversity and no national unity and reconciliation in South Africa will be possible without taking into consideration national diversity. And as long as we suppress diversity at the expense of national unity, there will always be tensions and struggles, which can result in violence. Diversity if not

recognized and given a share in the programmes of national unity will result in competition over unequally distributed social and cultural resources. Ethnic conflicts and secessionist movements are often the result of such cultural suppression and non-acceptance of diversity in a broader society. To minimize these tensions, an education for national reconciliation should affirm unity in diversity.

It should incorporate elements of diversity both ethnic and socio-cultural in order to develop critical awareness of the nature of this diversity. Such an education as indicated earlier shall eradicate all forms of discrimination. Recognition of diversity as an element of reconciliation can only occur when it is integrated into a curriculum for cultural liberation of all South Africans, African and non-Africans. In this diverse curriculum of national unity and reconciliation, all diverse cultures can be represented. No one perspective will be assumed better than the other and all viewpoints will claim legitimacy. Students will also be able to understand the complexity of the South African society through complex cultural views. These options therefore are available to us in South Africa if we want to introduce Afrocentric studies in South African universities.

Conclusion

The first purpose of this article was to explore various themes and principles of Afrocentric studies and how this can be applied at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, if it were to become a truly African university of African scholarship. The second purpose was to explore various ways in which African universities as public institutions located within the African continent can contribute towards Africa's cultural and social development. The public dimension of the university means universities have a role to play not only in the process of Africanisation, but also the development of the African people both culturally and socially.

As an actor in the public sphere, the public university has a dual status. On the one hand, as an institution financed and, to varying degrees, controlled by the state, it is potentially part of the ideological apparatus of the state (thus linking it to the reproductive apparatus of the society). On the other hand, it is, potentially, one of those social institutions of civil society that may help in holding the state and the business sector accountable while

potentially providing a source of debate on current directions and visions of the civil society's future.

It is in this sense that universities are integrated into the public sphere, defined by Habermas as 'a sphere between civil society and the state, in which critical public discussion of matters of general interest was institutionally guaranteed' (Sall et al. 2003: 128). Universities also are sites of struggle over power and resources. As an institution of civil society they have their own internal dynamics and may present a mirror of ideological influences and material interests (Sall et al. 2003:128). The University of KwaZulu-Natal as an institution of civil society has to position itself as a political ideologue of the African people.

This is the role that African universities should play without any fear and any comprise. Academics also enjoy the right to freedom of expression entrenched in academic freedom. This is the right that protects academics from any form of harassment even by state apparatuses which control even universities. Even ordinary citizens do not enjoy this privilege. Academic freedom according to Zeleza (2003: 151) '... is also an ideology used by academics to stake claims for and against friends and foes within and outside academia'. African people emerging out of centuries of oppression and injustice need a redress. For African universities, it is the redress of African knowledge that has to be placed on top of the agenda. Mazrui (1978: 352) notes 'the full maturity of African education will come only when Africa develops a capacity to innovation independently'. African studies can be a good vehicle of such redress of African knowledge.

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Indigenous Knowledge and the African Curriculum: A Case Study at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

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> Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past (Karl Marx - *The 18th Brumair of Louis Bonaparte*)

Introduction

Colonialism and the plundering of Africa not only devastated the moral and social well-being of inhabitants in the continent, but also resulted in the destruction, replacement and indiscriminate theft of local knowledge systems perpetuating a vicious cycle of oppression. In the 21st century Africa appears to be gaining a new sense of vitality in response to global pressures and demands. Initiatives such as Nepad and the African Renaissance aim to reverse the continents plight by providing new zest to alternative forms of development. Central to this quest for paradigms to move ahead with Africa's development agenda, is an inward examination and strengthening of its existing local knowledge capacity in informing and promoting development that is cost effective, readily accessible and reliable. It is in this

[1] The authors would like to acknowledge Joseph Radebe for assisting with the fieldwork.

context, that the role of African universities is intrinsic in the reformulation and adaptation of their curriculum with a IKS focus so that development challenges are met in the continent.

The article examines Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) in an African context and their importance for the Human Sciences and Humanities curriculum with special reference to the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN).

Following the literature review, an empirical study of 143 Social Science and Humanities students at level two and three were systematically selected from the Westville campus which sets the parameter for a position that strongly advocates the innovative gradual inclusion of IKS and especially African IKS in the Human Science Curriculum at the new University and beyond.

Definitions and Literature Review: Towards a New Conceptual Understanding of AIKS

The section will attempt to identify existing conceptualisations of IKS, which will not be exhaustive, given the limitations of space available. In conclusion, an attempt will be made to re-conceptualise the phenomenon so that a wider philosophical, sociological and anthropological debate can be opened.

Like any concept in the process of material life is transformed into reality and action, IKS has its own identity that needs to be explored scientifically, both in theoretical terms and in terms of its functions and outcomes. Hence the concept *per se* presents a serious challenge to both theoreticians and practitioners. Western thinkers such as Lakatos and Kuhn have debated for years the conceptual dynamics of knowledge through the creation of a number of constructs associated with issues of rationality, objectivity and subjectivity, as well as to some extent their material repercussions, although due to the nature of their philosophical context the latter element was not as meticulously tackled as the philosophical underpinnings of the phenomenon. Through debate and exchange of ideas, new theoretical constructs were created that led to a more holistic understanding of the foundations and dynamics of knowledge and its material connotations. It needs to be emphasised that what is one of the

crucial basis of the present paper is the belief that one of the foundations and understanding of IKS and especially in the African context is the relentless effort on the part of theoreticians and practitioners to eliminate the ideological dominance of colonial and neo-colonial thoughts and theories. This will ultimately lead to the development and articulation of a progressive African based knowledge discourse that will be based on the absorption of the historical experience of the continent and its people. This process, while not necessarily rejecting the progressive and community and class-based lessons evident in sections of Western knowledge literature, African and African-based progressive thinkers will be tapping on the historical experiences and processes in Africa, as well as their rich intellectual traditions. Thus the development of the theoretical and practical foundations and development of AIKS will be based on a relentless effort to re-invent African creativity and productivity at all levels of society with emphasis on communal endeavours, while theoretically eliminating colonial and neo-colonial distortions, exploitation, and imbalances.

Several years ago, a prominent African scientist had this to say in defining AIKS:

> IKS refer to intricate knowledge systems acquired over generations by communities as they interact with the environment .It encompasses technology, social, economic, philosophical learning and governance systems. Dr.Katherine Odora-Hoppers, one of the country's foremost advocates of IKS, describes it as not just about woven baskets and handicraft for tourists per se. It is about excavating the technologies such as looms, textiles, jewellery and brass work manufacture. (It is about) exploring indigenous technological knowledge in agriculture, fishing, forest resource exploitation, atmospheric management techniques, knowledge transmission systems, architecture, medicine, pharmacology, and recasting the potentialities they represent in the context of democratic participation for community, national and global development in real time (Seepe 2001).

The above definition, that certainly ignores the key parameter of the dialectical unity of the theoretical foundations of IKS with practice in all

fronts and fields mentioned, pinpoints to the fact that the phenomenon is more or less community based and it thus has both local and continental connotations in the African context. The above definition does not reflect its dynamic nature and the processes of experimentation and adaptation. It does not address the key issues of production and productivity and its effects on human and natural resources management and dynamics.

C.A. Odora Hoppers (no date:2) herself, in a discussion paper dealing with the indigenous knowledge systems and their integrated nature stresses the empirical dichotomy of the 'collective' that characterises the bases of African and other 'Third World' societies from the 'individual' basis associated with 'Intellectual Property Rights', the short-term profit motive, the role of Trans National Corporations (TNCs) , and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) , which is described as the global trade 'police'.

IKS is seen as an integral part of knowledge, which is described as a universal heritage and a universal resource (Odora Hoppers no date: 2). In the same context, IKS has been seen as both 'a national heritage' and a 'national resource' which should be protected, promoted, developed and where appropriate, conserved (Odora Hoppers no date:3).

Odora Hoppers (no date:3-7) poses a series of key questions in relation to IKS and its practical validity within its societal context:

- The question of knowledge generation and legitimation processes, especially in relation to the research generated in research and academic institutions.
- Its relation to the economic and social survival of local communities especially associated with their socio-cultural empowerment.
- The exploration of the interface between epistemology, diversity and democracy.
- Its critical evaluation and validation especially in respect of living research work.
- The direct interrogation of the historical, scientific and colonial discourses evident in their evolution.
- The realisation of the fundamental intolerance of modern science towards the legitimacy of folk and ethnic knowledges, as a direct effect of colonialism and a particular ideological mindset.

- The utilisation of IKS in order to move the frontiers of discourse and understanding in the sciences as a whole, that will consequently open new moral and cognitive spaces within which constructive dialogue and engagement for sustainable development can begin.

The author, who is considered as one of the most articulate and knowledgeable exponents of the study of IKS calls for a holistic knowledge framework for societal development through the operationalisation of empowerment within the African context. This needs to be done with degrees of flexibility and a continuous dissemination of knowledge throughout society and its institutions.

While she identifies several key ingredients of an emerging sense of disaffection, the author calls for a Strategic Project Purpose process that will ultimately contribute to the emancipation, development integration and protection of IKS by fostering a process of dialogue and social research that will lead to development and growth of communities and society at large (Odora Hoppers no date: 9-11). In this process there needs to be serious integration and cooperation between various stakeholders, entities and institutions, which in the process would adopt a 'Network Frame' with a number of specific objectives associated with

- Documentation,
- Integration of programmes,
- International networking initiatives,
- Analysis of sectoral policy provisions,
- Intellectual property rights provisions,
- Research and documentation of major shifts in the field, and
- Policy development processes (Odora Hoppers no date: 11-13).

These elements and initiatives can only be understood within the context of strategies that need to be adopted in achieving the research and empowerment objectives of the processes at play as a part of a 'critical emancipatory pedagogy' (Odora Hoppers no date: 12-14).

Odora Hoppers's contribution 'marries' in many ways the 'theoretical' with the 'practical' components of IKS, a standpoint that is shared by the researchers. The conceptualisation and deep understanding of

IKS cannot take place outside the ambit of social and productive relationships. Thus two examples one on the individual and one on the collective level need to be articulated in order to fully understand the vitality between theory and practice.

It has been reported that IKS were instrumental in the success of the Kenyan agricultural cooperative movement that is considered as a pioneer in agricultural development in the continent. It has a number of cooperative societies including transport and housing, but it is the agricultural cooperatives that have been hailed as a serious success. They have been described as the basis of agricultural development and growth in the country, with emphasis on small-scale agricultural production. So successful have been these cooperatives that much of the export production in the country has been generated through it, while sustainable job creation has been achieved in the rural areas. According to research produced in the country small-scale agricultural production has far overtaken large-scale production and has gone through a major revolution (*City Press Business* 2005:6).

The much-celebrated commercial success of traditional healer Elliot Ndlovu in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands underpins the significance of IKS in terms of individual success at a practical level. Ndlovu in partnership with other businesspersons have launched a cosmetics company by utilising his intimate knowledge of indigenous plants and herbs and their utilisation for healing purposes. Ndlovu supplies the raw materials that are commercially packaged by a Johannesburg-based company. He uses seven levels of healing and each colour has its own product range. One of the key materials used is the Artemisia Afra, which is commonly used for respiratory problems as is the herb Leonotis Leonorus that is used for gels, cologne, protective clays, lotions and creams (*Business Report* 2005: 1).

The Knowledge and Learning Center of the African Region of the World Bank, released an important report entitled 'Indigenous Knowledge for Development: A Framework For Action' (World Bank 1998). It was released in the context of the development efforts of the organisation in assisting poor communities throughout the continent to fight poverty and malnutrition (World Bank 1998:1).

IKS is described as a unique phenomenon in every society and agriculture, health and 'other fields' are described as practical examples of its applications. These applications provide the basis for problem solving

strategies for poor communities, especially the poor. Its sharing and implementation is seen as an integral part of the bank's assistance programmes (World Bank 1998:1).

Exchange of information between communities in regard to IKS is seen as instrumental in the implementation of IKS through the creation of databases throughout the continent, and the facilitation of exchange of IK amongst developing country communities (World Bank 1998:2). In this process the application of IK in the development process and the building of partnerships is a foundation of its success (World Bank 1998:3).

Several practical examples throughout Africa are identified in order to pinpoint the significance of the IKS in the continent, including the treatment of cattle ticks by the Fulani, soil and land classifications in Nigeria, the artisans' steel making technology in Somalia the communal use and allocation of land by the Washambaa in Tanzania etc (World Bank 1998:4f).

It is assumed that indigenous practices can generally adapt in response to gradual changes in the social and natural environments as they are embedded in popular cultures for hundreds of years. This means that their disappearance would ultimately have a negative effect on the efforts of communities and governments to move forward to societal development and growth (World Bank 1998:6-7).

The framework of action adopted by the WB includes ideas for disseminating information, facilitating exchange of IK amongst development communities, applying IK in the developmental processes and building of partnerships amongst role-players and stakeholders involved in these initiatives. The detailed diagrams associated with this framework identify the key elements related to the various steps of the process (World Bank 1998:11f).

It is interesting that one of the main ingredients described as instrumental in the success of such a plan is the role of information and communication technology such as the utilisation of local indigenous languages, telecenters and electronic networking, as well as the relevant government's initiatives in terms of introducing and implementing social and public policy measures that will make IK as a part of the developmental process a success. One needs to engage the World Bank approach to the utilisation of IK as a developmental axis at various levels.

The level of theoretical debate in the document and the understanding of knowledge in general and IK in particular do not demand a critique or assessment, as it is non-existent. However this reality can be understood in the context of the document, which has been presumably prepared by WB consultants as a 'developmental tool' or a 'train a trainer exercise'. However a neo-liberal theoretical framework underpins the various implementing developmental options described in the document. The philosophical basis that does not exist in the text is in fact more than obvious in the practical setting up proposed by the document.

Even if we accept, however, that the latter was the case, it is indeed difficult to comprehend the generalities that are a fundamental characteristic of the document, as it is evident that some of the suggestions, recommendations and ideas included cannot be applied to material conditions facing large numbers of underdeveloped and developing societies throughout the world (items such as data base creation, the establishment of telecenters and electronic networking are impossible to be implemented in such societies given the material realities they face).

Despite the fact that there have been suggestions that the WB policies and implementation aid strategies have been directed in the last few years towards the eradication of poverty, disease and generally some development, its historical role in Africa as a serious destabilising factor in the continent cannot be forgotten. Inevitably, then, it can be understood that key implementing agencies such as governments, NGOs and CBOs and communities in general can be seen as viewing such frameworks with a sense of suspicion and reluctance.

It can be understood then that the most crucial element of a theoretical understanding of IK cannot be seen outside its practical connotations and effects. Subsequently our treatise will be based on a new, all inclusive reformist conceptual definition of African and global IKS that will be rooted on the following realities and parameters:

- A re-union with the past.
- Self actualisation of the whole society with special emphasis on the historically disadvantaged social groups, the working class, the poor, the rural masses, youth, the elderly, women, the differently able and the terminally ill.

- Return to the past, reshaping of the present and the re-invention of the future.
- Rediscovering of collective social identities through the self-actualisation of the individual within the collective will.
- The identification of indigenous knowledge as a socially and collectively based activity that could be initiated by individuals, but can only become an integral part of societal engine of historical and future achievement only when it is transformed into collective knowledge.
- It can only flourish through political, ideological, emotional, moral and collective commitment.
- It can be only implemented through a process of continuous unification between the past, the present and the future.
- It is the epitome of the transformation of self-transformation into societal transformation.
- It can only be realised through the relentless engagement with existing material realities through the historical understanding of historical values and traditions.
- It is the realization of practical wisdom that transcends artificial ethnic and national divisions.
- Actualisation of knowledge is an activity-driven process shaped by:

    - Collective decision-making,
    - Sharing of information,
    - Collective planning, and
    - Collective action (Mantzaris 2004; Mantzaris 2004a).

In short, such a conceptual understanding of IKS is based on both a philosophical and sociological understanding of the *negation* of the positivist logic, while on the other hand it encompasses certain elements of Geertz's ethnology, where the interpretation of cultures need to be revisited in relation to their dialectical, community, and class-based dynamics (Geertz 1973; Mantzaris 2004; 2004a).

Having articulated in general terms some theoretical and practical parameters of IKS, let us briefly examine the steps undertaken by the South African government in relation to them.

The State's Initiative in Promoting AIKS

It took ten years into South Africa's democracy for the government to adopt the IKS policy for the country, which was unveiled in November 2004 (Department of Science and Technology 2004:1). Of course there was a debate on the issue that procrastinated the adoption of such important policies that are seen as the foundation of the new visions associated with NEPAD and the African Renaissance.

The policy outlined the commitment of the government and the various ministries, departments and stakeholders in implementing the policies through the recognition, promotion, development, protection and affirmation of IKS (DST 2004:6).

The document pinpoints the various facets of IKS in South Africa and the African continent through a sketchy historical exploration of the phenomenon and calls for:

- The enactment of further legislation enhancing IKS,
- The establishment of an IKS Fund, that will support institutions assisting indigenous and local communities at various levels, and
- A 'formal system to record IK'(DST 2004:10-11)

When these conditions are met, it is envisaged that IKS will inevitably become an integral part of the country's and the economy's efforts to become an equal partner with the world in the context of globalisation. It is assumed that IK has been one of the fundamental tenets of NEPAD and the African Renaissance, and it has described as a key 'continental imperative' (DST 2004:13).

The document identifies the Departments of Health, Trade and Industry and Science and Technology as the lead axes in terms of the implementation, research and exploration associated with AIKS as well as their positioning within the realm of the various market related copyright and 'formal recordal systems' within the context of globalisation (such as Information Transfer Systems, Material Transfer Agreements etc) (DST 2004:16).

The integration of IKS in Education and the National Qualifications Framework is of particular importance as it relates the lifelong educational imperatives of key legislative frameworks with the dynamic nature of IKS

audits and their future contribution to the education syllabi and curricula. It is assumed thus, that the transformation of the education syllabi to a 'problem solving' impetus would add a further dimension to the central recognition of IK (DST 2004:17).

It is envisaged that the integration of IKS in the national system of innovation in South Africa will be based on the particularities of the continental and international historical experiences of developing and developed countries such as Japan, India, Singapore and South Korea (DST 2004:18). This is indeed a group of highly diversified societies that has been chosen by the authors of such an important document as examples of IKS as well as historical experiences, levels of development and growth, inequality patterns and institutions of political democracy.

In this context there will be national research and developmental strategies adopted with the synergic help of the private sector and 'other major stakeholders such as traditional leaders and women' (DST 2004: 18-20).

The IKS governance and administration will be based on the promulgation and implementation of further legislation, the accreditation of IKS holders, a number of advisory committees, the creation of a National Office and the building of relationships of the IKS with other structures. In this cycle, research institutions and the IKS of South Africa Trust are destined to play an increasingly important role (DST 2004: 22-24).

Methodology

A systematic sample of 143 respondents was selected from two cohorts of level two and three social science students at the Westville Campus of the University of KwaZulu Natal. Semi-structured questionnaires containing items on respondents understanding and perception of IKS was administered to respondents. The questionnaire comprised qualitative and quantitative questions testing respondent's basic knowledge on IKS.

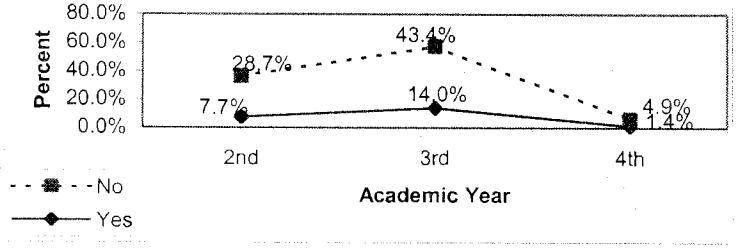
Results

In the study group 67.1% of the respondents were females compared to males 32.9 percent. More than half of the respondents (57.3%) were third year students whilst just over a third (36.7%) was in their second academic year. Only 6.3 percent of the respondents were in their fourth year of study.

Almost eighty percent (79.1%) of the respondents were between the ages 18 – 22 years compared to 21 percent who were above 23 years. More than three quarters (78.3%) of the respondents were Zulu speaking, followed by Xhosa (4.9%) and Sotho (2.8%). The remaining respondents (14%) did not speak any one of these indigenous languages. It becomes clear from this finding that the vast majority of respondents communicate in their indigenous language

Although respondents are exposed to a variety of indigenous languages when one examines their exposure to IKS, the findings become intriguing. Graph 1 demonstrates respondent's exposure to IKS by academic year of study.

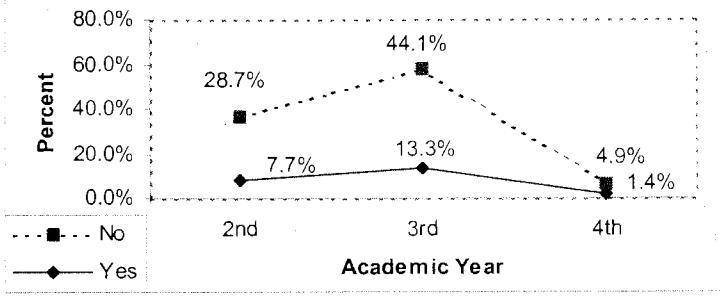
Graph 1 Academic Year of Study and Respondents Exposure to IKS



From Graph 1 it will be noted that respondent's exposure to IKS was significantly low in all academic years. Cumulatively less than a quarter (23.1%) of the respondents had some exposure to IKS for the different academic year. Interestingly, when one compares respondent's exposure to their knowledge about IKS, there appears to be no major difference in patterns. The findings in Graph 2 confirm that there is no difference between respondent's exposure to and knowledge about IKS.

The lack of knowledge on IKS is further confirmed by the respondent's response to factual questions in the survey. Only 7.7% of the respondents were aware that there are approximately 200 000 - 250 000 traditional healers in the country whilst only 14.0% confirmed that at least 81 - 90% of the South African population use traditional healers and

Graph 2 Year of Study and Knowledge of IKS



medicine. These findings strongly suggest that the present generations of Black South Africans are out of depth about their culture and traditional practices in their community. Guided by the level of awareness about traditional practices and cultures one need not go beyond the bounds of tertiary institutions to appreciate the demise of IKS in the wider South African society.

Although the study establishes a serious lack of awareness amongst respondents about IKS, there is overwhelming support for learning instructions through an indigenous African language at all levels. Table 1 illustrates respondent's perception on being educated through the medium of an indigenous language.

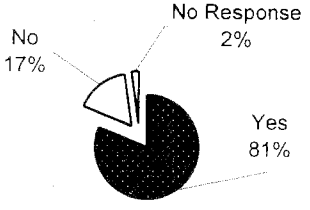
Table 1 Respondents' perception on being educated through an indigenous language

Very Important	56.6%
Important	24.5%
Not very important	5.6%
Not important at all	0.7%
Prefer to be educated in English	4.2%
Don't Know	6.3%
No Response	2.1%

It will be noted from Table 1; cumulatively 81.1% of the respondents perceive education through a medium of indigenous language to be both important (24.5%) and very important (56.6%). Interestingly, similar perceptions were elicited on whether all South Africans irrespective of history, social status or culture to know and speak at least an indigenous language.

Notwithstanding the fact that respondents have previously not been exposed to IKS and lack basic knowledge in this field, an overwhelming need exists for them to acquire such insight through formal training at a tertiary education level. Graph three demonstrates the needs of respondents to acquaint themselves with IKS through a formal course

Graph 3 Respondents perception towards pursuing a course in IKS



It will be noted from Graph 3 that 81% of the respondents have indicated that they will pursue a course in AIKS at the university if such is on offer. This finding suggests a strong need to acquaint students on the broad academic field of AIKS through formal instructions. In the field of humanities and social sciences, this should be relatively easy to introduce, but on the contrary it is most surprising to note from the respondents ignorance, that this is non-existent.

Discussion: The Importance and Structure of the Curriculum in UKZN

The glaring ignorance on the part of students, the majority Africans, regarding IKS as evident in the above empirical study, as well as the fundamental importance of both conceptual, theoretical and methodological challenges set by the quest for development and progress in Africa, make the introduction of IKS into the curriculum of UKZN an urgent priority. This because of its mission and vision the university has pledged its commitment to the continent of Africa and to academic and research excellence.

Such an introduction cannot be done in a vacuum, it needs to be thoroughly debated and discussed in intellectual and other forums.

It is evident that different disciplines need to approach such introduction through their own structural constraints and probabilities. An academic plan needs to adopt the various and diversified models in terms of:

- Content,
- Learning resources,
- Teaching methods and models,
- Theoretical grounding patterns,
- Empirical manifestations
- Learning strategies, and
- Approaches (Mantzaris 2004).

The proposed introduction to the curriculum will first tackle the possible positioning of IKS into the Curriculum, based on the two key prospectuses upon which the present merged system exists and operates in the Humanities and Social Sciences, the Westville Campus 2004 Faculty of Humanities Syllabus and the newly established 2005 Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences Syllabus (Faculty of Humanities 2004; Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences 2005).

This has been done for comparative purposes and takes into account the new structural changes that have taken place at the University due to the introduction of Colleges, Faculties and Schools.

2004 Curriculum at the former University of Durban-Westville with a perfect fit of IKS	2005 merged UKZN curriculum with prospects for the introduction of IKS
School of Governance/ Philosophy Stream/ Module SGP 216S 'Theories of Knowledge' School of Governance/ SGP 218S 'Post-colonial Philosophy'. School of Governance/ SGP 313S 'African Philosophy'. Programme in Cultural and Heritage Tourism CHT 207S/ Heritage Tourism and Contemporary Belief Systems. CTH 307S Art, Craft and Public Monuments. CTH 306S Indigenous Rock Art and Heritage Tourism. CHT 308S Oral Heritage. CHT 403S Tourism, Cultural Heritage and Policy. School of Social sciences and Development Studies/ SDS 207S Making and Heritage of the Black Diaspora. SDS 222S African Legacy and African Renaissance. SDS305S Patterns of Civilisation, Politics and Development in Asia. SDS 322S Community Development. SDS 308S Witchcraft, Ritual and Symbolic Action. SDS 405S History and Ethnography of Southern Africa. SDS 408S Medicine and Society. SDS 418S The Politics of Kinship in Africa. SDS 504S Culture and Conservation.	Classics / Classical Civilisation. At the moment it includes only Greek and Latin components . Community Development. Introduction to Community development. Community Economic Development. Issues in Community Development. Introduction to Cultural Tourism. Ethics Studies (Philosophy 102). Historical Studies (Africa in Crisis). All indigenous African languages courses, both in their complete and as a bridging major. Philosophy (Being and knowing). All courses in the Bachelor of Community and Development Studies (incorporating the Diploma in Community Development).

The comparisons between the two syllabuses not only pinpoint the differences in approach, content and outlook towards a more 'Afrocentric' curriculum which was more evident at UDW (now the Westville Campus of UKZN), but also cement the existing possibilities for the introduction and development of IKS as an integral part of the UKZN curriculum.

In cultural or linguistic studies for example the dynamic and historic expression of oral tradition as a medium of awareness, information and resource cannot be over- emphasised. This is a powerful historical and present medium of empowerment, knowledge and awareness that marries the myth with the legend, the proverb with the song, imagination with reality.

In the learning environment within which IKS as a learning and practical experience and process will be located, the emphasis needs to be put on the socially-based and transformative power of the subject in a pedagogical milieu that does not consider knowledge as an 'independent body of facts that should be learnt' through the divine intervention of a senior professor who acts as the only actor in the learning and assimilation process. On the contrary a consciousness raising process needs to be adopted that will engage the critical spirit of the students with a socially centered emphasis. The discourse will be rooted on the basis of both teacher and student empowerment through a dialectically based continuous activation of the students who are in the final analysis the center of the learning process.

The continuous development of the young mind is the epicenter of such a process through the continuous process of rigorous and wide-ranging activities with direct and relentless interaction and research with the community. Students will learn valuable and everlasting lessons from research and interaction with the communities surrounding them, so the learning process will not be a stale, book or Internet based knowledge, but knowledge that will be socially created and centered. In this process the relentless marriage between theory and practice, the theoretical foundations and the empirical realities will become inextricably intertwined.

The new IKS curriculum needs to be based on a carefully thought and implemented action plan that can initially take the following forms:

- It needs to be discussion led,
- In this sense the participation of students need to be active,

- Conversations, presentations, discussions, debates, questions and answers and direct communication between all participants will be the basis of the process,
- Lectures and tutorials will be run simultaneously,
- Concepts dialogue will be the first hurdle to be overcome.
- A good number of written assignments need to be a basic form of communication between the teacher and those taught,
- Feed back on the assignments need to take place at tutorials, and
- Student evaluation of the course is of paramount importance. These need to take place in the forms of both discussion and evaluation questionnaires.

Conclusion

This paper highlights the important developmental role of IKS both in the African and South African context. Although proponents of Nepad and the African Renaissance on the need for IKS have placed much emphasis, its actual development and integration into mainstream teaching curriculum especially at a higher education level is far from developed. In the case of South Africa national policy on IKS recognizes its relative place in development discourses but its implementation both at school and tertiary educational level has not gained full vitality. This is evident from the findings of the case study of the UKZN, which provides alarming insight into the lack of knowledge amongst undergraduate social science and humanities students on IKS. The introduction of IKS into higher education curriculum should not be perceived as a daunting task. The curriculum analysis of the social science and humanities disciplines highlights the ease with which IKS can be introduced or adapted into the mainstream curriculum or even expanded. If African universities are to take the challenges posed by 'Afrocentric' imperatives in higher education, then transformation in the existing curricula at all levels needs to be pursued with greater vigor. Universities are the epicenter for the production and dissemination of all knowledge systems and particularly in the African context, should take a lead in breaking away from Euro centric pedagogical mindsets in promoting the wealth of information buried in the dark parts of the continent.

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Language and the Postcolonial Condition[1]

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The outcome of the South African language debates saw the country adopting a multilingual language policy that *gives official recognition* to eleven languages, including English and Afrikaans and *nine indigenous languages*. While it is politically justifiable for the language policy to reverse the injustices incurred by speakers of indigenous languages through colonization, and later apartheid, I intend to caution against an unrealistic assumption that the introduction of indigenous languages as medium of instruction at all levels of education in South Africa will be a reality, and that, if it were to happen, that would result in economic development and improvement of living conditions for all.

Given the strikingly powerful status of English in most of South Africa's educational institutions and in the world of business and commerce, and the accompanying limited and/or non implementation of the new language policy-in-education, the success of the policy is unlikely. Jansen (2002:271f) ascribes limited and/or non-implementation of most educational policies after apartheid to what he calls 'the theory of political symbolism', by which he means 'a struggle for the achievement of a broad political symbolism to mark the shift from apartheid to post-apartheid society'. In many respects our language policy-in-education, I want to argue, achieves such a symbolism. To have eleven official languages, nine of which were previously marginalized and only used to divide and discriminate against their speakers, is the best the local masses and the international community can expect after the first democratic elections.

Using Kenya, Tanzania, and Namibia, to include a comparative element, this article offers a critical reflection on South Africa's language policy-in-education by contrasting policy intentions and implications with the practical realities that, like sunrise and sunset, are here to stay. The article will argue that the South African language policy-in-education is a response (by the government) to the pressure to succumb to discourses of freedom, equality, fairness, justice, liberation, and the grand narrative of decolonization. The latter (grand narrative of decolonization), with its accompanying populist rhetoric on language as both a product and reflection of culture,

> has, for the moment, been adequately told and widely accepted, smaller narratives are now needed, with attention paid to local topography, so that maps can come fuller (Hulme 1994:71f).

Through providing reflections on research I conducted in the three countries referred to previously, I hope to offer 'smaller narratives' as each one of them responded differently to post-independence demands with regard to language policies-in-education. Of the four countries, South Africa is the only country that has boldly given indigenous languages, and nine of them for that matter, an official status. To better understand South Africa's choice, on the one hand, and to be in a position to monitor, either its implementation or revision, on the other hand, it is crucial to understand how Tanzania, a country that took a similar decision hundreds of years ago by adopting Kiswahili as the official language and the medium of instruction, experiences such a policy decision in institutions of learning today, how Kenya, a country that has chosen to adopt English as the only official

[1] This paper is part of a National Research Foundation (NRF) funded project that ran from 2002 – 2005. The theme of the project was *Revisiting the Postcolonial Condition: A South African Perspective.* The project leader was Professor Michael Chapman. My contribution represents an attempt to give voice and/ or space to the so-called postcolonial subjects around the issue of language policy in education. The grand narrative of decolonization, with its accompanying populist rhetoric on language as both a product and reflection of culture, 'has for the moment, been adequately told and widely accepted; smaller narratives are now needed, with attention paid to local topography, so that maps can come fuller' (Hulme 1994:71f). This contribution hopes to achieve exactly this.

language and Kiswahili as a national language, manages such a policy in a country where there are forty two indigenous languages, and how Namibia, a country where, even though there are nine indigenous languages and Afrikaans seems to be the widely spoken language in almost every sector of society yet English is the only official language, tackles implementation challenges. It is within the context of finding answers to these questions that this article aims to re-examine South Africa's Language Policy-in-Education and the specific demands of the South African situation.

A Brief Survey of Some Postcolonial States in Africa

A closer look at language policies in various postcolonial contexts in Africa reveals that more often than not the language of the former colonizer continues to occupy prestigious positions. This is despite the effort made by political leadership to give local languages a more meaningful, or should we say *symbolic*, place in policy documents. With the exception of Namibia, the majority of African countries, whether former French, English, Portugues, Spanish or Belgian colonies have continued with the language policies of the colonizer. This is especially true with the choice of the official language and the medium of instruction in secondary and post-secondary education. Of course there have been changes in some countries, especially with regard to the role of local languages, but generally the position of the language of the former colonizer has still remained a privileged one. Many African countries south of the Sahara, for example, have elevated some selected local languages, but only to the position of *national languages*, and few have adopted them as official languages and/or as media of instruction. Countries such as Burundi, Botswana, Rwanda, and Somali, are almost monolingual, with Kirundi, Setswana, Kinyarwanda, and Somali, respectively, spoken as mother tongues by more than 75% of the population. In these countries the adoption of indigenous languages as both official and medium of instruction at all levels of education would make sense. But, in spite of this advantage, these countries still adopted English as their medium of instruction at all levels of education and the language used in the central economy.

Some countries, furthermore, have one language that, initially, became the second language for the majority of speakers of different languages but ultimately a first language for later generations. This is the case of Kiswahili in Tanzania and Amharic in Ethiopia (Whitely 1969;

Marcos 1970). In such countries it has been possible to choose such a language as the official, national language, as well as a medium of instruction for part, if not all, of the primary education, but not for secondary and/or tertiary education. The exception is Senegal where, similar to the four countries south of the Sahara mentioned earlier on, even though Wolof is spoken by 80% of the population, French was declared the official language at independence because of the need to ensure operational efficiency and to provide continuity and unity (Mansour 1980). It is also the medium of instruction at all levels of education. Six of the major languages are given the status of *national languages*, but they are only used for cultural activities on television and radio.

Other countries have many languages, none of which is spoken widely enough beyond its borders to be accepted by speakers of other languages. In many such cases, no local language has been designated as an official or national one or as a medium of instruction. The majority of African countries fall into this category. Cameroon provides a good example, with two European languages, English and French, as official. Post independence governments in this country decided to drop the use of vernaculars in education, *even though* they had been used during the colonial period (Todd 1983).

South African Language-in-education Policies

The South African situation with regard to debates around language-in-education policy, like with the foregone discussion, cannot be understood in isolation from the historical account of the development of English as an official language. According to Reagan (1988), from 1652 to 1806, the question of the language of instruction was not an issue because the majority of the white population spoke Dutch. At the time, African communities had not by then realized the implications of the sidelining of their languages and culture in education. While native languages occupied no position whatsoever as usable media of communication, the position of English as a medium of instruction came into play. Reagan (1988) reminds us that preparations for this began as early as 1809 when General Colin proposed that English teachers be imported to ensure that the next South African generation, both black and white, would be 'English'. When the British

settlers took charge of the Cape administration in 1814, General Colin's proposal received an official boost. All teachers who spoke English as an additional language and were efficient in teaching it received huge salaries *to promote the optimum use of English throughout the country,* that is, both in urban and in rural areas. In 1825 the implementation of policies that legitimized English as the South African first official language were effected, and this was followed by the Smuts Education Act of 1907 which made the teaching of English obligatory, stipulating that every child had to learn English at school. At this stage it was never dreamt that any African language would ever become the medium of instruction in education, let alone become an official language of the country. It was only towards the mid 1930s that indigenous languages found space in education. Wright (2002:8) records that

> From about 1935 in black schools a minimum of four years schooling ... took place in the mother tongue, with English as medium of instruction in subsequent years.

African children attended mission schools, for the most part, and were taught by clergy or by lay teachers, sometimes with government assistance. This state of affairs gave black children ideas of growing up to live in a world of equal rights between black and white. The large portion of the white community, however, did not receive racial integration with enthusiasm. McArthur (1998:12) records that

> Throughout the nineteenth century, Afrikaners resisted government policies aimed at the spread of the English language and racial integration, and many educated their children at home or in the churches.

As elections were approaching, the National Party (NP) election campaigns focused on criticizing government policies and, as a result, was able to capitalize on the fear of racial integration in the schools to build its support. The NP's election victory in 1948 gave Afrikaans new standing in the schools, and after that, all high-school graduates were required to be proficient in both Afrikaans and English. Following the recommendations of

Dr. W.M. Eiselen Report (1951), Dr. Hendrik F. Verwoerd introduced a bill in 1953 to remove black education from missionary control to that of the Native Affairs Department. This bill became the Bantu Education Act (No. 47) of 1953 which widened the gaps in educational opportunities for different racial groups.

Two of its architects, Dr. W.M. Eiselen and Dr. Hendrik F. Verwoerd, had studied in Germany and had adopted many elements of National Socialist (Nazi) philosophy. The concept of racial 'purity', in particular, provided a rationalization for keeping black education inferior. Verwoerd, then minister of native affairs, said black Africans 'should be educated for their opportunities in life', and that there was no place for them 'above the level of certain forms of labour' (McArthur 1998:11). The government also tightened its control over religious high schools by eliminating almost all-financial aid, forcing many churches to sell their schools to the government or close them entirely. Addressing the Senate on Bantu Education, Verwoerd had the following to say:

> I will reform it [black education] so that Natives will be taught from childhood to realize that equality with Europeans is not for them (McArthur 1998: 17).

He later explained to the Senate that there was 'no place' for blacks outside the reserves 'above the level of certain forms of labour'. So, 'What is the use of teaching a Bantu child mathematics when he cannot use it in practice?' He added, as McArthur (1998:13) puts it: 'Education must train and teach people in accordance with their opportunities in life'. Christian National Education supported the NP programme of apartheid by calling on educators *to reinforce cultural diversity and to rely on mother-tongue instruction* as means to achieve this government's separatist philosophy. This philosophy also espoused the idea that a person's social responsibilities and political opportunities are defined, in large part, by that person's ethnic identity and the language they speak.

It is precisely this philosophy that we, as young people, were committed to destroy during the 1970s and 1980s. Student strikes, vandalism, and violence were part of the attempts to undermine the ability of Bantu schools to function, although this had negative long-term effects on

the majority of learners from such schools. By the early 1990s, shortages of teachers, classrooms, and educational facilities had taken a huge toll on education, and black education in particular. South Africa's industrial economy, on the other hand, with its strong reliance on capital-intensive development, provided relatively few prospects for employment for those who had only minimal educational credentials or none at all. According to the Human Science Research Council's Report of 1999, this is because nationwide literacy was less than 60 percent throughout the 1980s, and an estimated 500,000 unskilled and uneducated young black South Africans faced unemployment by the end of the decade. At the same time, job openings for highly skilled workers and managers far outpaced the number of qualified applicants. These problems were being addressed in the political reforms of the 1990s, but the legacies of apartheid, the insufficient education of the majority of the black population, and the backlog of deficiencies in the school system promised to challenge future governments for decades, or perhaps generations.

On Deconstructing the Grand Narrative of Decolonization

Given the foregone brief survey of language-in-education policies of South Africa, it seems impractical, to say the least, for our government to achieve linguistic equity for eleven official languages, nine of them previously marginalized and only used to divide black people on linguistic grounds. Further complications have to do with the fact that the nine languages still need informed technical elaboration and standardization. Other related, rather ambitious projects by the South African government are endeavours to support the other cultural and heritage languages, including sign language, and helping to maintain dialects. All of this does not include the need to solve the problems of unqualified teachers, lack of teaching and learning materials, large classes, and shortages of classrooms and desks. Have I left out the perpetual challenge to make Outcomes Based Education modifications and adaptations a success?

If the South African education system is obviously confronted by these hugely complicated and two-pronged challenges; language related and resources availability, what is the rationale behind resorting to such an ambitious and, arguably, unrealistic language policy-in-education? Part of the reason, it may be argued, is a general belief that freedom from the

shackles of colonial and apartheid oppression warranted opportunities to reconsider, and ultimately recognize and adopt, to use Ngugi's (1986:8) words: 'the languages ... which ... were associated with negative qualities of backwardness, underdevelopment, humiliation and punishment'. Introducing such languages in formal education, furthermore, is thus seen as part of the decolonization process and the continuation of the liberation process. Kadeghe (2003: 80)offers a useful explanation with regard to the origins of such ideas:

> There has been a general conviction that one only learns within the familiar habits of thought, experience and expression suggested by one's traditional culture; and that colonialism occasioned a disruption of the *natives'* traditions and experience that left them culturally impoverished, spiritually dislocated and in a state of moral decline.

Implicit in this view is a claim that it is within their traditional culture that people are most at ease with themselves and that there is a comfortable co-existence between the world and them. The logic in this claim is the idea of African identity as an irreducible essence of the race whose objective existence is the traditional culture as the only thing that defines the world. This has developed into some kind of an African philosophy or way of life and society. Irele (1981:2) summarizes this philosophy as 'an appeal to traditional culture as a remedy to our manifold problems'. Prah's (2002:1) introductory remarks in *Rehabilitating African Languages*, a collection of essays he edited, offer a classical example of this philosophy:

> The need for the rehabilitation of African languages is a simple one. Africans learn best in their own languages, the languages they know from their parents, from home. It is in these languages that they can best create and innovate. Such innovation and creativity are crucial not only for development in an economic sense, but also necessary for the flourishing of democracy at a cultural level; they are languages which successfully engage the imagination of mass society. It is in these languages that the culture and histories of

> African people from time immemorial have been constructed. It is in these languages that knowledge intended for the upliftment of the larger masses of African society can be effected.

Within the context of South Africa, and other countries in Africa, this philosophy has had a huge impact on the language-in-education policy debate. That language is both a product and reflection of culture, thus the use of an additional language as a medium of instruction alienates one from one's culture is a direct manifestation of this philosophy. The Department of Education document of 2002a:5 insists that 'the learner's home language be used for learning and teaching wherever possible' and, as though to clarify this, Section 29 of the South African Constitution affirms that everyone has the right to receive education in the official language(s) of their choice, (although this is qualified by an additional comment), 'but only where this is "reasonably practicable"'. One witnesses the manifestation of this philosophy again in Vic Web's (2002:214) assertion that 'African linguists, it seems to me, ... suffer from intellectual and spiritual colonization'. These are but a few illustrations of the extent to which the so-called African philosophy of life underpins much of the language-in-education debates in this country. Inherent in such assertions is an erroneous belief that African traditional values and world concept form significant, if not permanent, essences of our identity and, as such, the use of languages other than our own leads us to become something other than our 'real selves', a state of affairs at the root cause of our underdevelopment. It follows then that as a corrective measure, the way forward is to reclaim African languages as media of learning and academic expression. One may ask: is the use of an additional language as a medium of instruction necessarily alienating? Can one only learn within the familiar habits of thought, experience and expression suggested by one's traditional culture? Is the crisis in education in South Africa and in Africa in general reducible to the choice of language so that reversion to indigenous languages is the answer to our educational problems? The findings of the research project I conducted in Tanzania and Kenya in July 2003 and Namibia in July 2004 will attempt to feed into these and other related questions into the next sections.

Tanzania, Kenya and Namibia

My observations in this section draw on a study conducted by Kadeghe (2003) about which he reports in his 'In defense of continued use of English as the language of instruction in secondary and tertiary education in Tanzania', a chapter published in *Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa* edited by Brock-Utne, Desai and Qoro. In Tanzania, Kiswahili has historically been a second language for the majority of the population, but has increasingly assumed first language status for later generations over the centuries. In an interview with Doctors Qoro and Professor Ragumbayi of Dar Es Salaam University, it became apparent that the older generation and academics that work as linguists resent the fact that Kiswahili has literary displaced indigenous languages in many Tanzanian people's lives. It is increasingly becoming a common phenomenon to come across Tanzanians who cannot speak a word in their indigenous languages, and can only speak Kiswahili. It is on the basis of these reasons that Kiswahili has become the medium of instruction in Tanzania from grade one to grade eight, after which English takes over up to tertiary education, although there are exceptions with English private schools. Kiswahili is the mother tongue, and so the hypothesis is that if the medium of instruction is this language, such learners should not experience huge learning difficulties because of language-related problems.

When I got an opportunity to interview four school teachers from the four schools where Kadeghe 's research was conducted, it became clear that the Kiswahili advocates, whenever talking about Kiswahili as a suitable medium of instruction in Tanzania, they, probably unaware, were talking about the non-technical Kiswahili register that is claimed to be known by all students. It is the same version of Kiswahili that some science teachers have been unofficially using bilingually for many decades now when teaching science subjects. One of the teachers, herself referring to the Kiswahili science dictionary, observed that the Kiswahili words that were used by teachers did not appear in the technical Kiswahili science dictionaries. Thus, most of the terms failed to drive home the concepts intended and were sometimes misleading:

Clearly, to assume that learners' achievement levels will increase should we use languages they bring with them in the classroom is not necessarily true. This can probably work in the acquisition of initial literacy.

Wright (2002:9) correctly points out that rushing to use indigenous languages before they are properly developed to suit the demands of the modern world may

> ... disguise situations where learners in African languages are failing to move steadily towards greater linguistic and cognitive sophistication, remaining in the safety zone of general communication. They may be failing to learn because their teacher does not have a sound approach to language education, or because appropriate text-books are not available.

While Professor Mwansoko (2003) argues that there is still a lot to be done by Kiswahili lexicographers, Dr. Yahya-Othman (1997; 1990) also discusses at length the status of Kiswahili terminology and its ineffectiveness in academic circles. This is pertinent to the South African debate around the use of indigenous languages as medium of instruction in education. If to date Kiswahili, whose 'origin has been dated around the 7th and 8th century at the eastern Kenyan coast, near the mouth of Tana River' (Nurse 1987: 168), still needs more development, how much time do we need, have, and are we prepared to spend, to develop our nine historically marginalized languages?

The challenges and dilemmas experienced by Tanzania echo Kenya's adoption of English as an official language and the medium of instruction, with Kiswahili as a national language. In the words of the Eldoret District officer: '... of course we have Kiswahili as a national language, but when you come into the office you have to speak English. That's the way it is here' (2003), it is clear that Kenyans have made their choice to have English. Based on my research findings, attitudes towards English tend to cluster around two extreme positions – acceptance of the dominant position of English among some academics and the mass population, on the one hand, and strong opposition, in Professor Kembo-Sure's words: 'of the imposed colonial language among sections of the educated elite', on the other.

The interviews I conducted with the District Director of languages (English and Kiswahili), the retired magistrate, a parent, an English school teacher, two academics, four university students and four pupils gave an

impression that for many Kenyans there is no point in finding out whether Kenya needs no English or more of it. Broadly speaking, it is a given fact that access to the learning and teaching of English, especially in rural and semi urban areas, needs to be addressed. According to the high school teacher,

> even though the new government has made education free, not all children have access to education, and to learning English. All depends on parents' ability to provide basic necessities for their children. Not all the children can come to school.

The most interesting finding is that, according to the teacher,

> most learners display extreme readiness to learn English as subject, and in English as medium because of the job prospects that the language carries with it. Most of them come from [financially] struggling families and they see English as promising some kind of a way out of poverty.

Of course they have their own ethnic languages but, according to the interview with one of the parents, his language

> ... has no status outside specific ethnic groups and play no role to the fulfillment of their future dreams. If I go to a shop and speak my Nandi no one will pay attention to me.

Several responses during the interview further confirmed a trend that one observes in most postcolonial contexts that knowledge of the language(s) of the colonizer tend(s) to determine individuals' social mobility. According to one of the senior citizens, a retired magistrate from Kenya's supreme court,

> for those of our old folk who have not had time to buy these foreign languages, that is, buying literary by going to school to be educated and get it, they are restricted in terms of getting jobs. Even for entry into higher education you are asked how did you do in English. So English is central to Kenyan life.

It is mainly the educated elite who is opposed to the status of English as an official language. The link of English with the past causes this group to assert that Kenya will not be fully free from neo-colonialism until it breaks itself away from the language of slavery and oppression. The suggestion is to have Kiswahili developed, adapted and adopted for the roles played by English today, a project that Tanzania has been engaged with 'since the time of the Arabs in the 18th century, [to make Kiswahili] become an effective medium of communication in education and administration' (Batibo 1997: 58), without any impressive successes (see the above section).

Relatively speaking, Kenya, on the other hand, has managed to introduce English as a medium of instruction from primary to tertiary education, with significant success stories. According to the Eldoret district officer for English and Kiswahili, his government, as early as the 1960s,

> made bursaries available to [the then] school leavers who intended to take teaching as their career, and encouraged such candidates to take English as one of their specialization subjects.

This arrangement was further complemented by the availability of overseas scholarships for selected student teachers that performed exceptionally well 'to spend three to twelve months, depending on the nature of the funding, in respected English universities to further their studies in the teaching and learning of English'. This is similar to what happened in South Africa during missionary education in that first language speakers of English gave instruction to learners who were to learn English as an additional language, and who in turn taught other learners of English as an additional language. Such decisions guaranteed future and upcoming generations of both countries the necessary *linguistic capital* crucial for survival in *modern world.*

Namibia has a population of just over 1,8 million people with a mere 0,8% (less than 1%) of this population speaking English as a first language. Yet English was chosen by the government as the official language after Namibia's independence from South Africa in 1990. Throughout Namibia's history the medium of instruction played a crucial role. The pre-independence era was dominated by Afrikaans and, in many respects; this state of affairs undermined the self-concept and cognitive growth of the

African language speakers. From this era, two notions were born, first: that African languages are deficient within the context of modern advances; secondly, the use of indigenous languages as medium of instruction is a self-destructive decision. According to Heugh (1995:43), among African language speakers in Namibia 'the notion that English was the key to empowerment therefore grew ever stronger'.

Data Collection

The fourteen days I spent in Namibia in July 2004 revealed the extent to which, more often than not, policy making, especially in postcolonial contexts, tends to be political responses and reactions to the oppressive past. As the data will show, Namibia's adoption of English as an official language and the medium of instruction in institutions of learning was, in many respects, a strategy to marginalize Afrikaans as a way of throwing-off, symbolically, the legacy of colonialism, apartheid and oppression. To have English as a medium of instruction from pre-primary to tertiary education, in other words, had other primary motives behind other than transforming realities of teaching and learning in classrooms.

The purpose of the research in Namibia involved finding out first, reasons behind the choice of English as the only official language, secondly, challenges around English language use in the school classrooms and lecture theatres at university, thirdly, the proficiency of English teachers and students and, finally, basic education teachers' and principals' perception of English language use in their schools. I visited the University of Namibia and ran interviews with colleagues in the English and Linguistics departments and the Language Centre. I then travelled to Okahandja, a region where there is an institute called the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED). I managed to hold interviews with the English language development officer and four officers who deal with the development of four Namibian indigenous languages, and, finally, two schools: Eros Primary School where I met with the principal and observed two lessons and interviewed one Social Studies teacher. I then visited the Jan Jonker Afrikaner High School where I interviewed the principal and two teachers after observing their History and English lessons respectively.

There were two broad research questions. Do Namibians have adequate proficiency in English to succeed in the job market? Are the

teachers able to use their proficiency in English to teach it as a subject and in the medium of English?

The NIED alone yielded relevant and useful data that almost served the broader purposes of this research project. As a national organization responsible for educational development for the whole country, it has officers for all subjects, including both English and Namibian local languages. Its duties involve designing syllabuses, curriculum, and workbooks for all school subjects from pre-primary to secondary levels, and evaluating school textbooks produced by different publishing companies. My interviews involved five candidates, four of which are responsible for the development of Namibia's indigenous languages and one who deals with the development of material for the teaching and learning of English, both for learners and in-service teachers.

The interview I conducted with the education officers responsible for the development of indigenous languages for classroom purposes was done with all of them present. Four of them had an opportunity to respond to questions as they saw fit. Although not often, there were occasions where as individuals they would respond to a specific question differently. At the beginning it was explained that a response to a specific question by one individual must not hinder others to comment about, substantiate on, or challenge what the other person had said. The first interviewee is responsible for Kimbukushu, the language spoken in the North East of Namibia, and, according to the education officer, 'a minority language in terms of the number of its speakers'. The second interviewee is responsible for Oshindoka, the language spoken in the North and it draws form other languages and has several dialects, with an average number of speakers. The third officer is responsible for Koi Koi Kovamp, a language spoken by the Nama and the Damara. According to the educational officer, 'in terms of the 1999 census the language was spoken by 175 000 people, but I think it must have improved closer to 200 000'. It is one of the languages that stretches and branches into the North and closer to the Angolan border. It is spoken all over Namibia, North, South, West and East. The last interviewee is responsible for Romana, a language spoken in the North East of Namibia.

I drew my respondents' attention at NIED to Crystal's (1995) assertion that a 'global' language has to be taken up and be given an official status and become the medium of learning in countries where there are few

or no speakers of such a language as first language. I then asked them if they thought a similar idea could not be said to have informed the Namibian government's decision to make English the only official language and the medium of instruction, even though it is spoken by less than 1% (0.8%) of the population as a first language. The respondent responsible for Nama and Damara languages argued that for him

> that statement is very narrow and is also seen against the background of linguistic imperialism, and very elitist because if one chooses such a language it results to the elite of a country becoming the beneficiaries of such a policy and the general population losing out.

Generally speaking, the concept of a global language suggests that the language is used, both orally and in writing, in many parts of the globe for different purposes ranging from education, economy and trade to politics and diplomacy. But, as mentioned earlier, respondents gave different, and sometimes contradictory responses to this understanding. While the officer responsible for Kimbukushu language saw a global language as 'a language of wider communication which makes possible communicating across borders and across nationalities', the Oshindoka officer argued that English, in the first place, is not necessarily a global language, and he referred to SADC where quite often in academic conferences one finds that most conference participants cannot in fact speak English. French and Portuguese seem to be predominant languages. He further pointed out that in some conferences one finds that the forum uses French and/or Portuguese, which then makes him begin to wonder whether English is a global language. This is just around the SADC region, not to speak of the whole continent where the West Africa is predominantly French and. the East predominantly English, with North Arabic and South English. Thus there is already a disparity already in Africa, not to speak of the whole world, 'which makes one to wonder how global is English'. The respondent responsible for the development of Kimbukushu, however, insisted that the state of affairs his colleagues were referring to would not last longer. For him:

> all the countries that do not 'use' English at the official level are in fact making advances towards such a decision. Mozambique and

> Tanzania, for instance, have already made funding available to secondary school leavers to go overseas in institutions where they can get advanced tuition in English, and where it is the medium of instruction.

It has to be acknowledged, however, that although such moves are made for the benefit of a country and generally English ultimately plays a vital role in international trade and industry, not every citizen actually benefits.

The respondent responsible for Nama and Damara languages points out, for instance,

> India was the British colony for more than five decades, and yet one finds very few Indians who speak proper English. Mozambique is another country where, outside Maputo, very few people can follow Portuguese. So, as long as English remains elitist, only the haves will have access to the language of empowerment like in the Namibian case, and the have not will largely be excluded.

The principal of the Jan Jonker Afrikaner High School raised poignant issues around the question of the place and/or role of English in most postcolonial contexts. When asked about his perceptions on the use of English in his school, his response revealed several rather painful facts about postcolonial Africa. Unlike Germany, France, Japan, to name a few, where technological, economic and social advancements occurred side by side with language development,

> Africa's problem is that our economies do not grow with our languages. Unlike the European Union (EU) where, during meetings all European languages are used (through the headphones), even our African Union (AU) uses either English or French, but not a single African language. We basically leave our languages behind as we develop economically. No wonder the Germans and the Japanese command their economies because they are developing with their languages.

It has to be acknowledged, at the risk of sounding like I am contradicting the

thesis of this article, that Africa's talent and potential lie dormant in most rural areas because brilliant ideas that could lead to social and economic upliftment of most local communities cannot be communicated and be taken seriously if they are not communicated in the language of the former colonizer. In Okahandja, one of the rural places in Namibia, for instance, the principal reported,

> I discovered that most indigenous people could not get funding for their small scale farming projects because proposals had to be written in English, the language they do not understand.

When asked whether he would change the country's language policy-in-education if he were to get an opportunity, the principal insisted,

> if our leaders have inherited the boundary demarcation from Europe after the Berlin conference of 1884, and the resultant plundering of the continent's natural resources, all of which resulted in endless cultural and economic dependency of all former colonies, how can anyone change the status quo? As a principal of a high school, my duty is to see to it that this generation does not go through the difficulties and dilemmas that the previous generation had to endure because of limited or no access to the language that is on its way to becoming *the only world language*.

Classroom observations in two schools, Eros Primary School and Jan Jonker Afrikaner High School, revealed that the high school principal's commitment to 'see to it that this generation does not go through the difficulties and dilemmas ... because of limited or no access' to English needs as much support as possible. Quite often teachers themselves, let alone learners, seem to have difficulties in using English as a medium of instruction. The use of English for several teaching purposes, particularly explaining concepts, was disappointing. Teachers in the upper primary (grades five, six and seven) and in junior secondary phase (grades eight, nine and ten) seem to have struggled more than teachers in the lower primary phases. Heavy reliance on the textbook by the lower primary phase teachers is the reason why they never committed as many linguistic errors as their

counterparts in the upper primary and junior secondary phase where there is much pressure to go beyond the textbook. As the Afrikaans speaking principal of Eros Primary School pointed out, 'the syllabus for the lower primary phase allows teachers to stick slavishly to the textbook and, as a result, do not use language creatively, thereby minimizing the chance of making mistakes'.

I spent two periods (35 minutes each) observing two grade seven Social Studies lessons at Eros Primary School. Quite often the teacher would switch to Afrikaans in order to clarify some concepts, with learners doing the same thing. Both learners and teachers seemed more comfortable with using Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. I noted with concern, furthermore, that most of the time was spent on writing notes on the board, word for word from the textbook, than on explaining concepts and responding to learners questions during the actual lessons. These observations confirm the large-scale investigation of teachers' English language proficiency that was done in 1999 by the English Language Teacher Development Project (ELTDP). The Namibian government, in conjunction with the United Kingdom Department for International Development, instructed the ELTDP to coordinate a research programme with its Namibian educational colleagues to 'design and conduct research into English language use and the proficiency of English teachers' (ELTDP 1991:1). For the purposes of this article it is sufficient to note that the results of the vocabulary test by region (seven regions in total) indicated that

> 26% of teachers in the Rundu region (across all phases) do not achieve a 2000 word vocabulary level. We must keep in mind that a 2000 word vocabulary level was deemed the minimum level to be able to teach in the lower primary phase, but more than a quarter of these teachers do not achieve that level ... Katima Mulilo region only 12%, in Rundu only 17%, and in Ondangwa East and West only 14% of the teachers achieved a vocabulary level which could enable them to follow academic studies in English, compared with 47% in Khorixas, 45% in Windhoek and 64% in the Keetmanshoop region. (ELTDP 1999:24)

Looking at these results, one simply cannot avoid the question: if the

teachers' vocabulary is so low, what happens to their learners' vocabulary? It is not surprising then, that during my classroom observations learners, both at primary and high schools I visited, have insufficient vocabulary in English and that is why they resorted to Afrikaans during lessons. Furthermore, as I spent time taking walks around schools and public places, both in Windhoek (city) and Okahandja (rural) I noted that more and more the younger generation, the middle-aged and older people, during their informal conversations, speak Afrikaans as a first language of choice. It is only at the University of Namibia that quite often I would come across students using English in their conversations. I then began to wonder if it is not better to strengthen the language which people are comfortable in?

One of the realities, certainly in the sub-region is that political decisions are taken to decide which language to use as official language after independence. The Namibian case is an example of this. The decision to go for English directly after independence, it seems, was a distancing mechanism from the old colonial power, but also because it meant Namibia's integration within the region will be easier. As demonstrated by evidence drawn from Namibia's classrooms and public places, the lingua franca still seems to be Afrikaans. Adopting English as an official language was in many respects a strategy to marginalize Afrikaans as a way of throwing-off, symbolically, the legacy of colonialism, apartheid and oppression.

In spite of the negative legacy of Afrikaner Nationalism, Afrikaans is, in many respects, an indigenous language that, according to Professor Hacker of the linguistics department at the University of Namibia, 'has so many loan words from the Bantu languages', that it may be argued that in fact Afrikaans is an African language, even if it ended up being associated with the language of oppression because of the Nationalist government's policies from 1948 onwards.

A crucial related question, especially in the context of Namibia, can be raised about English. If Afrikaans is seen as an oppressor's language, at least by the government of the day, which explains reasons for not giving it official status after independence, why is the same thing not said about English? This could be associated with the Soweto Uprising of 1976 in South Africa that was to specifically choose English as it was regarded as the 'less oppressive language'. Of course, South African history reminds us that the origins of racism can be traced back to the British miners who came

over to South Africa in the 1920s. They had just gone through the trauma of the closure of the tin mines in their country and came to South Africa and pushed for job reservations and did not want black people to be trained for jobs in the mines (www.anc.org). All of this came from the English speaking community. Furthermore, English is associated with the empire as it is the language of Britain. Partly because of Britain's policies of indirect rule, where basically so long as people paid their hut tax and did not cause trouble, what they did with their languages was their own affair. The trick, however, was that people needed to master English in order to get official jobs, and this has always been the 'blossom' of English as it implied the mastery of the culture, at least as far as the perception goes from without, of the dominant group. As in South Africa, English in Namibia seems to have been the easier option because the 'score settling' was with the Afrikaners and not with the English.

Implications for South Africa

The indigenous languages advocates, in an endeavour to persuade South Africans that their judgment is correct, argue that countries such as Switzerland, Holland, Finland, Japan, Germany, and others, all use their own languages as languages of instruction, both in secondary and higher education (see Alexander 1994; Rabagumya 2003; Qoro 1999; Web 2002), and this is the reason why such countries are economically better off. Such simplistic assertions cannot be used as one of the valid arguments for implementing indigenous languages as medium of instruction in a postcolonial context. None of these countries has gone through what Africa experienced in 1884 when the colonial powers during the Berlin Conference decided to subdivide Africa between themselves. The direct implications for Africa, as a consequence of such invasions, range from political, economic, to social, cultural and educational spheres. The African history of education alone reveals that, as Batibo (2001:9) points out:

> Many African societies placed strong emphasis on traditional forms of education well before the arrival of Europeans. Adults in Khoisan- and Bantu-speaking societies, for example, had extensive responsibilities for transmitting cultural values and skills within

> kinship-based groups and sometimes within larger organizations, villages, or districts. Education involved oral histories of the group, tales of heroism and treachery, and practice in the skills necessary for survival in a changing environment.

If things were to remain this way, that is, assuming no European invasion whatsoever, probably it would be fair to compare Africa to the developed countries referred to above. Otherwise I find it to be an irresponsible, subjective and shortsighted comparison. It requires very little, if any, sophistication to understand that as early as the 17th century Africa's future (in every sense of the word) was in the hands of the colonial powers, and still is through, for instance, financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monitory Fund. Countries such as Burundi, Botswana, Rwanda, and Somali who have deliberately decided to adopt English as the only official language and the medium of instruction at all levels of education need not be read as a betrayal of indigenous languages and cultures, but as a brave policy decision that acknowledges the irreversibility of the 1884 Berlin Conference resolutions concerning the future of the African continent. To have 75% of the population speaking the same indigenous language, yet choose not to give it an official status is the best these countries could do for later generations.

In the context of South Africa, the example of Afrikaans is often advanced as an argument in support of the capacity of indigenous languages to be developed as languages of learning and teaching. Foley (2002:56) reminds us that:

> In the case of Afrikaans, the development of the language served as part of an intense political and cultural struggle for power and identity in the form of Afrikaner nationalism. A single, distinct people were united and mobilized, and, once power was achieved, vast amounts of human and material resources were channelled into the drive to expand the status and utility of the language ....

It is not surprising that as a result of all these efforts Afrikaans became the medium of instruction from primary to tertiary education. Foley (2002:57) mentions 'the socio-historical context ... the ideological fervour

... and the monocultural solipsism of Afrikaner nationalism ...' as reasons of the success story for Afrikaans. The current South African historical context is different and as such, does not encourage any tendency towards monocultural solipsism. Probably this is one of the reasons why Afrikaans, after all the efforts and expense for its development,

> ... has become, and will continue to become, an ever diminishing language – in the media, in public life, in politics, and, most pertinently, in education, where, for instance, students numbers in Afrikaans language courses at English-medium universities are almost nil, and where even at nominally Afrikaans-medium universities, the use of the language as a medium of instruction has been drastically eroded by English (Foley 2002:57).

The story is even worse for the nine other indigenous languages. African Languages Departments in most universities have dwindling enrolments to the point where one wonders where the expertise is to be drawn for the future development of indigenous languages. Wright (2002) records that

> According to UNISA, the only institution that offers tuition in all African languages, the number of undergraduate students registered for these courses has dropped from 25000 in 1997 to 3000 in 2000. The number of postgraduate students has also decreased, 511 to 53 in the same period. Other institutions confirmed an annual decline of 50% (quoting from *Sunday Times*, 4 March 2000).

Even though the constitution has granted nine indigenous languages official status, this is not surprising. The opening of the job market to the previously disenfranchised, the majority of whom are starting out with their careers, means that more and more young graduates will be attracted to English. Research findings show that speakers of languages other than English will want to gain access to those discourses that are communicated in English, for the globalized world of economic possibility is symbolized by English. A recent observation in the *Mail and Guardian* (2005) under *Economy and Business Section* confirms this:

> Research estimates that the United States and United Kingdom could send five million jobs offshore during the next decade, provoking vociferous complaints from trade unions. The US and the UK tend to be the biggest offshores because of the global dominance of English language ... (*Mail and Guardian* Online 26 January 2005).

This does not mean South African indigenous languages cannot become part of the world of the economy. But are they, and, will they ever be ready to become part of it? This leads to other questions: to what extent has the teaching and learning of indigenous languages been developed? Are there any cutting-edge research discoveries that feed into the study of indigenous languages as disciplines, thus making it possible for such languages to be part of the central economy? According to Wright (2002:17),

> Rather than focus on African languages as living cultural media, the academic study of African languages in South African universities has in general followed the international pattern of change in the field of general linguistics: briefly, grammatical studies on the lines established by C.M. Doke in the 30s, 40s and 50s were followed in the 60s by structuralism, pioneered in South Africa by E.B. van Wyk. The 70s saw work shaped by the transformational-generative approach (L.W. Lanham, A. Wilkes, D.P. Lombard, H.W. Pahl et al.). The African Linguists who now work in the field have generally stayed with this model of academic linguistic inquiry, seeking ever more accurate descriptive and analytical knowledge.

The above is a clear indication that the development of indigenous languages so that they can carry all aspects of a modern technological society and become a medium of instruction in our schools is unlikely to be achieved. One wants to see an environment where indigenous languages' teaching also moves to becoming more relevant and more engaged with the reality of the language as experienced by people on a day-to-day basis.

Kamwangamalu's (2000) research on language practices in South Africa's institutions further demonstrates the extent to which English, and not indigenous languages, continue to dominate South Africans' lives. In his *A new language policy, old language practices: status planning for African*

languages in a multilingual South Africa, Kamwangamalu exposes the extent of the fact that even our own national broadcasting co-operation, by the look of things, does not necessarily seem convinced about the value and development of indigenous languages. According to the TV guide of the 10 – 16 May 1998, the weekly air time distribution of the eleven official languages of this country, English was 'taking up 20855 (91.95%) minutes of the total weekly time; Afrikaans 1285 (5.66%), and all the nine African languages a mere 520 (2.29%) minutes, or an average of 0.25 air time per language' (see Kamwangamalu 2000:54 for more details).

Conclusion

It is important to understand that the line of argument of this article is not advocating English or British culture. From the historical surveys on language policy-in-education in some African countries and South Africa, the interrogation of the grand narrative of decolonization and the so called 'African' philosophy of life and society, the findings gathered from the results of the academic tests in four Tanzanian schools, and data collected in Kenya and Namibia, one can determine that English as a language is not necessarily the root cause of academic underachievement. Prah's (2002) claim that 'Africans learn best in their own languages' does not clarify which Africans, taught by whom, with which resources and teaching styles, teachers with which qualifications, which textbooks, and in which register. While it can be successfully argued that the rehabilitation of African languages will have positive effect on the strengthening of cultural ideals and identities, it is rather naïve to suggest that this would guarantee a successful economic upliftment.

The development of our indigenous languages in order to become the media of instruction is too complicated, a fact emphasized by Neville Alexander (2000). Even if we were to succeed in such an endeavour, there is no compelling evidence in any postcolonial African country to suggest that indigenous languages can compete where the primary desires are fuelled by capitalism, and South Africa cannot pretend to be an exception. We thus need to consider the fact that the adoption of any language as the medium of instruction in this country needs proper contextualization, that is, the social, political, economic contexts and the history that produced that context.

Ignoring this reality will render our language policy documents as, to use Wright's (2002:3) words: 'a paper fantasy of merely ideological import'.

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Conference Opening Address

The African University in the 21st Century: Indigenous Knowledge Systems and the Academy[1]

Fikile Mazibuko

The theme of this conference, namely 'The African University in the 21st Century' dovetails neatly with the overall ambitions of our institution, the University of KwaZulu-Natal. We at the University of KwaZulu-Natal aspire to be the premier University of African scholarship. Let me emphasize this from the beginning: We do not strive to be a University in Africa but an African University; there is a big distinction between the two. Universities located in Africa are no different from Universities located elsewhere in the world, Europe in particular. Universities in Africa function more or less as extensions of European and American universities. Outward directed, these universities generally adopt research and teaching agendas of foreign institutions. This is not surprising in a way, given that most modern African universities – I say modern because the idea of a University or Higher Centre of Learning is not a new one in Africa – are intertwined with the colonial project in one way or another. Most African intellectuals were trained abroad after independence and unfortunately it is not unusual for them to return to their home countries to replicate the research and teaching agendas of their foreign institutions. As a result, these universities largely remain Universities in Africa.

An African University, on the other hand, takes Africa as its point of departure. Research and teaching agendas are set with Africa in mind. While

[1] Paper delivered at the opening of the SAARDHE Conference, 27th JUNE, 2005.

taking cognizance of knowledge developments elsewhere, an African university addresses itself to matters of concern to the African continent. An example would be how to re-establish Africa as a major role player and equal partner in science, the arts, technology, and other disciplines. An African University seeks to affirm the dignity of peoples of the continent. It is highly critical of the view that nothing intellectually significant has ever come out of Africa. It also seeks to show that there is a direct relationship between knowledge and human interests, in the tradition argued by the German philosopher Habermas.

While there are many issues one could speak to in connection with African universities in the 21st Century, in this address I want to re-visit two issues: *the language question* and *the development of indigenous knowledge systems*. The question of *language and the academy* is of course not a new one. However, as we enter the 21st century, it is high time that major advances are made with respect to it. It is indeed difficult for African Universities to enter the global dialogue on unequal terms. Following Castellan (1999), the term indigenous knowledge systems will be used in this address to refer to inter-generational knowledge passed down by the elders of the community, as well as empirical knowledge based on careful observations of the surrounding environment (e.g. nature, culture, agriculture, and society). The term will also be used to refer to revealed knowledge (e.g. in dreams [*ukuboniswa*]), the philosophical underpinnings of knowledge, as well as the presumed relationship between the knower and the subject of his or her knowledge.

Throughout the address, examples will be drawn from South Africa and Africa at large.

The Language Question

It would be remembered that in South Africa, *the language question in education was one of the issues that led to the student uprising of 1976*. It is this uprising that served as a catalyst for a series of events culminating in the democratic political dispensation in the early 1990s. Like her sister African states in the aftermath of formal independence, South Africa has to deal with the question of language – particularly, the language to be used in the courts, educational institutions, and the public sphere in general. During the

apartheid era the situation was very simple: English had already established its hegemony by virtue of being associated with the colonial enterprise. On the other hand, Afrikaans nationalists actively promoted the use of Afrikaans as a second national language, *using massive state resources* to achieve their objectives. Black/African languages remained the languages of the Bantustans and never achieved national prominence beyond those borders.

It is perhaps this association of Black/African languages with the apartheid mission that led to some eminent Black scholars such as Mphahlele actively promoting the use of English as a medium of instruction. Mphahlele wrote as follows on this matter:

> ... the [South African] government has decreed that the African languages shall be used as the medium of instruction right up to the secondary school. The aim is obviously to arrest the development of the black man's mental development because the previous system whereby English was the medium for the first six years of primary education produced a strong educated class that has in turn given us a sophisticated class of political leaders and a sophisticated following – a real threat to white supremacy (Quoted from Mphahlele 1963).

As Ngugi wa Thiong'o notes, the then government of South Africa did not restrict the use of language simply because it is inherently the best educational medium per se; it did so in order to limit access to the revolutionary literature available in the English language. *There is reason to believe that being educated in a language other than English retards one's intellectual development. There is a wealth of scientific literature that has been produced in French, German and other languages*. For example, it is highly doubtful that intellectual giants of the German School of Critical Thought, such as Habermas, would have reached their intellectual potential if they had received their education in a language foreign to them. There is also a wealth of philosophical literature in Japanese and Chinese, produced by communities who can hardly speak the Queen's language. Would the communities have reached this level of intellectual sophistication if they philosophized about their people in a language foreign to them? That is highly doubtful.

Mother-tongue Education and Concept Formation: The Russian School of Thought

To the contrary, there is strong evidence indicating that mother tongue education plays a major role in the child's ability to form concepts, especially in the early childhood years. This literature has come from the Russian scholarly tradition, and is represented mainly by the seminal work of Vygotsky. Vygostky, a Russian psychologist, argued that the development of mental concepts takes place at two levels. First, the child learns at the social plane, where significant others at his/her life, such as the parents, peers, and the like, play a critical role in educating the child. In the African tradition, the significant others could be extended to include the entire community, which is expected to provide social and moral education to the child. Later on, the child internalizes what he or she has learnt, and is now in a position to manipulate concepts on his or her own, without external assistance. *If one assumes that there is substance to this socio-cultural view of learning, how is the African parent expected to meaningfully play that scaffolding function of enabling the child to master abstract concepts,* if the concepts are being taught in a language that is foreign to both parent and child? It is not surprising that for the African child generally, learning merely becomes rote memorization for the sole purpose of passing examinations: learning is not internalized and owned by the child and it has no immediate applications outside the formal classroom environment (abstract not easy to related to one's broader life experience or even generate one's owns repertoire of life competences). For the African child, there is this wide discrepancy between his or her lived world and education. *For her/him, education is reduced to disowning not only his or her language but his lived experience and identity as well.* Of course, the African middle class continues to play a major role in this, as noted by Frantz Fanon. For some of them, education has become synonymous with mastering European languages. It is not unusual to find African parents who derive immense pleasure from the fact that their children not only speak a European language without an accent, but also of the fact that they are completely ignorant of their own mother tongue. Another related perspective is that in the high school experiences of high school learners in the late 1960s and early 1970s, mother-tongue languages such as isiZulu were made so difficult and abstract (with an emphasis on phonetics, for example) that the learner developed a negative disposition to

the language and an 'it's not worth it' attitude.

We are now delving into matters of identity, which we cannot explore at length here. Suffice to say that education, as demonstrated by the language question, is not a neutral process. To the contrary, it represents the very process by means of which subjectivities and negative valuations – ways of thinking about oneself and the world – are crafted. Kwesi Kwame Prah reflected as follows on this:

> The use of French or English in the Elementary school is but a destruction of the African youth because their fragile minds are impressionable, their bodies fragile. And when you impose a foreign language as a language of culture, you are systematically destroying them .... The use of a given language leads you to assimilate at the same time the culture and the vision of life of those whose language you have borrowed ... The problem we face here is the fact through the colonial encounter Africans in most areas of human activity have acquired a syndrome of inferiority. The language problem and the dependency on colonial languages is a reflection of this (Prah 2000: 4, 5).

While the topic of *language and identity* is of immense importance, I leave it to students of identity theory. It is my belief that it is a very important area for research because for the African, the process of education could be most alienating. Of course, the situation is not as simple as I've depicted it here. I give another example where language in a subtle way entrench negative self-evaluations and relations. I am reminded of a poem that we were made to recite with much passion, 'Lui Letta'. We recited it in Afrikaans, a beautiful South African language – it is about *my lazy* sister (emphasis mine). This poem could easily confirm perceptions of the time, that 'Africans are lazy, they spend time sitting under the trees drinking' – a perception which does not consider very fundamental democratic ways of engaging with social issues, sharing and collective approaches to matters of the community and family. The other one is a beautiful poem titled 'The Cataract of Loudour' a poem which could easily make learners detach oneself from one's own beautiful natural environment – distance oneself from one's environment.

Castells (1998:52) opines as follows:

> I would make the hypothesis that language and particularly a fully developed language, is a fundamental attribute of self-recognition, and the establishment of an invisible national boundary less arbitrary than territoriality, and less exclusive than ethnicity ....

Let us return to the question of language and mental retardation. It is *not* the use of African languages that retards mental development: the opposite could in fact be true. The use of foreign languages to educate people whose communities are not proficient in them, retards concept development [example of successful universities integrating culture, language and education: Stellenbosch, Pretoria, Japanese, Chinese universities]. Neither do African scholars, philosophers nor artists have total freedom when they express the philosophies and arts of their people in a foreign language [some South African poets & storytellers for example]. This is of course an issue that our brothers and sisters on the continent have debated fiercely. For example, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, in *Writers in Politics*, raises the question: *who is the audience targeted by African writers when they write in languages such as French, English and Portuguese?* He opines that:

> If a Kenyan writer wants to speak to peasants and workers of any one Kenyan community, then he should speak in a language they speak and understand. If on the other hand one wants to communicate with Europeans and all those who speak European languages, then he should use English, French, Portuguese, Greek, German, Italian and Spanish (Ngugi wa Thiong'o 1981: 58).

The above reflections indicate that we should think critically about what we are educating our people for, and who our audiences are.

African Philosophy, Language and Lived Experience (The Forms of Life)

It is perhaps unthinkable to talk about indigenous knowledge systems without touching on the relationship between *language and philosophizing*. Indeed, it is the very question of the existence or non-existence of African philosophy, and the languages it ought to be expressed in if it existed, i.e.

that it provides the major impetus for the indigenous knowledge debate. Indeed, great scholars such as Hegel, in their arrogance, dismissed the existence of African history and philosophy as a matter of fact. To them, there was no African knowledge or history outside the African's encounter with colonialism. Without delving much into this debate, I would take it as a given that any given cultural community will be forced by the challenges of life to develop responses to some core questions such as the meaning of life, the nature of human nature, and our relationships with each other and the universe. To reflect and philosophise about questions such as these is not the sole preserve of the European mind.

That there are African philosophies and knowledge systems is to me a fact of life: If there are Africans, it follows that there must be African knowledge systems, unless the African lived a pre-reflective life prior to the colonial encounter. African languages are repositories of philosophical knowledge. It is perhaps time this knowledge is explored in the languages that gave it birth. It is highly unlikely that philosophical traditions such as romanticism and existentialism would have taken the direction they took if they were expressed in *isiXhosa* or *isiNdebele*. This is because language captures the lived experiences of the people. The call for indigenous philosophizing in the local languages is not a call for a return to atavistic forms of knowledge – knowledge that is frozen in the past. It comes from the recognition that there is a direct relationship between language and thought. Further, language does not reflect the idiosyncrasies of individual thinkers, completely divorced from the background life-forms of linguistic communities in question. This is perhaps best expressed by the German philosopher Wittgenstein. For Wittgenstein, language does not refer to an independent entity 'out-there', to be discovered by speakers of the language independently. Instead, language refers to a background life-world – the forms of life. By forms of life is meant the nexus of social relationships and practices, the taken-for-granted ways of doing things, the social practices, the things people do, the unspoken ways of engaging with each other and the world (see Gramsci 1971). Here I quote Sewpaul (2003):

> ... issues regarding social justice, human rights, citizenship and democracy cannot be addressed within the restrictive language of markets, profits, individualism, competition and choice which

> creates indifference to inequality, hunger, deprivation, exploitation and suffering, which excludes the voice of the *OTHER*. Educators, and practitioners in the field of social policy, social welfare and social work must have the power of criticism, and *MUST NOT* (e.a.) in the name of science and objectivity, distance themselves from power relations that exclude, oppress, subjugate, exploit and diminish other human beings. We need to create opportunities for the development of critical consciousness and transformative action (Sewpaul 2004:100).

A simple example, it is so common to hear those 'who have resources to help' in development and social welfare sector saying, 'We are only here to help'. It is not common to hear the mutual language (to communities): 'Can you share with us your programmes, can we be party to your programmes?' For Wittgenstein, it is against these background life forms that we justify our actions. In the academy, it could be argued, justification takes place with respect to the life forms of the dominant Western groups, while local ways of being in the world are ignored. The call for the need to conceptualise in the local languages is an attempt to bring ideas as close as possible to the lived experiences of the people whose meanings are in question. It is also an attempt to facilitate broader participation in education.

Language, Education and Power

Apart from the themes above, it is also my belief that this conference will also engage the question of *education, language and power*. Questions of language and curriculum reform in the academy cannot be divorced from the question of power and equality, as philosophers such as Foucault have so eloquently reminded us. These questions cannot be divorced from the question of voice: that is, whose experiences matter and why? It is for this reason that I will now turn to how indigenous knowledge systems could be empowered.

Transforming the Curriculum – the Question of African Languages

It is often argued that African languages lack the technical vocabulary to be

used in educational contexts. I argue that it is a question of readiness, it cannot be done with a 'bang approach'. Rather than becoming emotive, 'throwing tantrums' or defending the dominant languages of knowledge on this matter, I prefer to ask questions such as:

- Do South African languages have the technical vocabulary to produce and transform knowledge?
- If yes, how consistent are they – can they participate in global discourses or embed themselves in other forms of knowledge?
- If not, is there a possibility or potential for the South African languages to develop the technical vocabulary in the knowledge production and transfer industry, locally and globally?
- Are there specific forms of knowledge that can be clearly conveyed in certain African languages without corrupting the content and philosophies?
- Can we develop case studies for ourselves as academics addressing these issues in practice?
- How do we begin to address issues of originality and repletion in African language-based science?
- How can we measure the elasticity level of some of our African languages in so far as production, exchange and transfer of knowledge are concerned?

A colleague for example argues that these questions can not be answered. He cites two objections to my position: African languages, like all languages are capable of absorbing other ideas. (That is why we already have terms for HIV/Aids in isiZulu, isiXhosa.) However, in the event that the technical vocabulary cannot be assimilated into local languages, there is no reason why specific specialist terms cannot continue to be referred to in the languages of their origin. For example, English is replete with specialist terms borrowed from Latin which continue to be used to date. Likewise, medical and legal discourse in English is replete with borrowed terms. Are we suggesting that African languages are not elastic enough to do just that? Experience proves us otherwise.

There is however, an even more important objection. Objection to curriculum transformation and the use of local languages also have to do

with the belief that indigenous communities have nothing to contribute to the curriculum. We have already spoken to that with respect to African philosophy and history, Hegel's brave assertion that there is no African history being cited as an example. However, we should take cognizance of the fact that education as we know it – that is formal Western education – was never meant to benefit the African. It was meant to service the needs of the colonial masters. To that extent, there was no need to include indigenous knowledges in the curriculum, except for that knowledge deemed essential to facilitate the African's capitulation to colonial rule (i.e. to accept his subjection and the accompanying subjectivity as a fact of life).

Unfortunately, *the view that there are no African knowledge traditions* remains firmly established in the academy. The dominance of this view is such that it is not unusual to fib aboriginal Africans who would be prepared to fall on their swords in defence of it. To be educated does not only mean to be educated in Western ways and traditions. Africa has a profound stock of knowledge in medicine, agriculture, educational and psychological development, theology, and the like. These knowledge traditions predate the colonial encounter and have continued to date. For example, the World Health Organization has consistently showed that close to 80% of people in Africa depend on traditional healers for primary health care. African knowledge traditions need to become part of the curriculum. Our students and academics need to be encouraged to research and write scholarly articles on them. Of course, the knowledge should not be taken at face value and in isolation. It needs to be studied in relation to other intellectual traditions. The interpenetration of African and other knowledge traditions is important. Most important, we need to resist the token status afforded indigenous knowledges in the academy: their special status as subjects reserved for ethnic students of the occasional, curious European or American student. Indigenous knowledges need to be fully entrenched in all aspects of the curriculum. It is my belief that mechanisms to achieve this objective need to take centre-stage in related studies.

On the Decolonization of Research Methodologies

In addition to the above, there is an urgent need to revisit the research paradigms and methodologies in the academy. While the dominant

empiricist paradigm is suitable for researching natural science phenomena in particular, they are not necessarily the best for contextualizing education. This is because these methods are based on the assumption that the purpose of research is to discover dis-embedded, supposedly universal facts of nature. Knowledge production is generally regarded to be value-free: it is considered to be independent of the presuppositions and philosophical orientation of the researcher. With this assumption of researcher objectivity, the dominant trend has been to reproduce – by way of replication – Western findings. Most of these replicated studies have taken place without the questioning of their philosophical underpinnings. The tendency to replicate Western ideas has stifled the growth of indigenous knowledges. In some quarters, it has grossly distorted the experiences of indigenous communities. This is *not* to say that empirical research has no place: this is merely a call for the diversification of research methodologies and a critical reflection on one's pre-suppositions.

There is a view in some circles that those who use narrative/qualitative research methodologies are better equipped to study indigenous knowledge systems. Such methods put the researcher in a much better position to study in depth the lived experiences of a people, it has been argued. We have perhaps already seen this with the study of HIV/Aids as a social and cultural phenomenon. Apart from this, such methods are considered to be in tune with the oral nature of most African societies. Further, they are generally regarded to be critical and emancipatory, the best example being the manner in which they have been employed by feminists to question dominant gender relations in society. Similar methods could be used to question the hegemony of Western forms of knowledge. Most important, we need to note that it is not the method per se that is important, but the critical, reflective attitude of the researcher.

Another example comes from the need to address the issues of informed consent when engaging traditional healers and counsellors. Do we only require of them to sign an Informed Consent Form, or are there more complex issues we need to address – e.g. intellectual property rights.

Recognizing Diversity in Ways of Knowing

Diversity exists not only with respect to the content of knowledge but also

with regard to the ways of knowing. In the conventional Western tradition, the knower is a disinterested observer: he/she stands at a distance, uninvolved. He/she maintains a doubtful, sceptical and very adversarial attitude. Indeed, an element of doubt and scepticism is essential to knowledge production. What becomes problematic is the assumption that this is the only authentic way of knowing. Also, it is problematic if the teacher, in adhering rigidly to this approach to knowledge, alienates the students in the process. Education becomes a painful process.

On the other hand, there is what is called a *connected approach to knowing*. This form of knowing is characterized by an attempt to find resonance between one's ideas and the ideas of others. The goal is not to achieve dominance over the other, but to create a joint space – a dialogue – in which ideas are shared. Special attention is paid to the feelings of the other as well. The overall objective is to find connection and to enhance the relationship between the knowers. Throughout the learning process, there is a deliberate attempt to affirm, rather than dominate, the other. This is a way of knowing that is prized in most African communities. It is the attitude that most African students bring with them to the academy. This way of knowing needs to be recognized and affirmed.

There is thus an urgent need to look into alternative teaching and assessment methodologies to affirm this way of knowing. These could include the following among other methodologies:

- The use of stories/ narratives (orality)
- Smaller group discussions supervised by senior students acting as mentors
- Biographies and case histories
- Journal methods in which personal reflections are captured
- Comparing socio–linguistic experiences

As mentioned above, these teaching methodologies need to be accompanied by matching assessment procedures, which I also believe will be discussed in this conference.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there are multiple challenges facing the African University in

the 21st century. African universities need to break away from the tradition of seeing themselves as appendages of Europe or America, that is, Universities in Africa. African universities need to engage as equal partners in this global dialogue which is the production of knowledge. To achieve this, we need to seriously revisit the position of indigenous African languages in the Academy. I have also maintained that indigenous knowledge can contribute to mental decolonization and hence, empowerment. Indigenous knowledge is part of the global dialogue constituting international knowledge. However, first it needs to be salvaged from marginalization so that it can enter the dialogue about how to create universal knowledge as an equal partner. These are some of the challenges facing the African University in the 21st century.

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Book Reviews

Structural Adjustment and Universities in Africa

A Thousand Flowers – Social Struggles against Structural Adjustment in African Universities
Editors: Silvia Federici, George Caffentzis and Ousseina Alidou
Trenton: Africa World Press, 2000, 248 pages
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A Thousand Flowers is a collection of articles that chronicles the social struggles against Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in African universities from the 1980s into the 1990s. Divided into two parts, the first deals with the policies and the logic that motivated them and the second with the consequences of these policies for the people who had to live with them.

Part 1, entitled 'Structural Adjustment and the Recolonisation of Education in Africa', seeks to highlight the role of the Bretton Wood institutions undermining higher education on the continent. The first article, by Caffentzis, 'World Bank and Education in Africa' sets the pace for the rest of the book. It provides the background to World Bank's (WB) drive to

cutting funding of tertiary institutions in Africa. Caffentzis shows that the WB claimed that cutting funding to the tertiary sector was driven by the desire to create a more egalitarian distribution of scarce educational resources by diverting more funds to primary education and to create more efficiency in the tertiary education sector that was bureaucratically blotted. In the WB's view African universities are '... "Sacred cows" consuming an undue amount of limited resources, they are an example of fiscal overgrazing ...'. But Caffentzis argues that this project actually has a more sinister motive than initially meets the eye:

> More likely, the WB's attempt to cut higher education [funding] stems from its bleak view of Africa's economic future and its belief that African workers are destined for a long time to remain unskilled labourers.

So Caffentzis explains WB called for cuts in funding to tertiary institutions and increase in funding to primary education during the SAP period, on the grounds that investment in primary school education would realise a higher return than investment in tertiary education. The WB also argued that tertiary students came from the elite or 'white collar' urban families who were already at an advantaged position and so funding cuts would not seriously harm their economic standing.

Although there was much opposition to all aspects of the SAPs, they were a 'blessing in disguise' for African universities because they were an opportunity to 'rationalize' the delivery of educational services, decrease the burden on taxpayers, and allow governments to reroute funds to primary education.

Caffentzis says that the WB intended to achieve these goals by encouraging governments to remove subsidies to students for accommodation, food and stationery. *The removal of these subsidies*, as Caffentzis points out later, was *a prerequisite for the awarding of the SAP loans* by the Bretton Wood institutions. The WB also called for 'an expansion of cost sharing with beneficiaries' which meant an increase in tuition fees that would 'reflect the true value of the service provided'; the opening of a 'credit market option' to students so that they could 'complete their studies by borrowing against future earnings'; and the 'reduction in unit

cost' by retrenching 'excess' staff. Furthermore African governments would be encouraged to create 'centres of excellence' which would be regionally based to coincide with the WB's aim of decentralization of education.

Against the backdrop of what may seem like noble intentions on the part of the WB Caffentzis points out that social spending, in all the Sub-Saharan African countries undergoing SAP, fell by 26% between 1980 and 1985. The WB had argued that wages had to be reduced to 'attract foreign investment' and as a direct result of WB polices in this regard real wages had often fallen to below sustenance levels. Furthermore currency devaluations, also undertaken at the behest of the WB, dramatically inflated the cost of educational materials that were mostly imported. Caffentzis says that all these points taken in unison resulted in a situation where 'Enrolment rates were declining in many countries for the first time in history'. He points out that these policies resulted in increased suffering of African students and that:

> ... today it verges on the catastrophic. Overcrowded classrooms, students running on one meal per day, failing water and electricity supplies, collapsing buildings, libraries without journals and books, lack of educational supplies from paper to chalk and even pens are the visible test of what SAP stripped from the ideological smoke.

The WB assertion that African university students were drawn from elite families was simply untrue. Only 40% came from 'white collar families' and the rest were from smallholder farmers and traders who could hardly afford the tuition and board that was required. Furthermore the dwindling real incomes in structurally adjusted African countries meant that even middle class families found it very difficult to afford education. Caffentzis discounts the credit loan facilities recommended by the WB on the grounds that they require collateral or some form of modest income to be able to access them and this was very often just not available. He concludes that the WB's policies with regard to tertiary education in Africa amount to 'academic exterminism'.

Caffentzis further points out that reducing the number of universities and university students in Africa compounded Africa's relative disadvantage in this area. He explains that only 1% of the 500m African population has

some form of higher education compared to Latin America with 12% and the rest of the developing world with a combined average of 7%. He quite rightly calls the African university student an endangered species.

He rounds off his analysis by saying that when students rise, often at the cost of lives, to protest against these measures and are subsequently crushed by authoritarian governments, the WB turns a blind eye. This contradicts its stated commitment to the fostering of human rights in Africa. He gives a number of examples of the violent crushing of students' protests including an incident in Nigeria where a dozen students were killed for demonstrating against SAPs, and similar incidents in Uganda and in Zambia where the campus was closed for political reasons. South Africans will of course recall how neither the state nor the agencies that are driving structural adjustment programmes and its current attack on higher education, took a stand against the police killing of Michael Makhabane[1] during a protest against the exclusion of poor students on the campus of the University of Durban-Westville in May 2000.

In 'The Recolonisation of African Education', Silvia Federici moves away from the more 'well-known facts' of the political and economic recolonisation of the African continent and limits herself specifically to the intellectual ramifications of this process. She states unequivocally that

> ... conditions are being created whereby African academics cannot produce any intellectual work, much less be present in the world market of ideas, except at the service and under the control of the international agencies.

She says that the systematic demonetarisation of the continent has resulted in a situation where many African academics are no longer paid a living wage. For example, the average salary paid to lecturers at the University of Dares Salaam provides for about three days of subsistence. In many cases salaries have been reduced to paper values through the devaluation of currencies and SAP policies instituted by the government. Lecturers are now supplementing their incomes through bartering and consulting, with teaching time being

[1] Pithouse, Richard 2001. Student's Murder an Outrageous Assault on Democracy, *Daily News* 20 May.

shortened. As a result this has forced many lecturers to migrate to US/UK in search of a better livelihood for themselves. Others have to do lucrative consulting work for the WB or agencies like USAid. Federici believes that the loss in autonomy of African institutions began with the

> ... systematic defunding of African academic institutions. This is instrumental to their takeover by international agencies, who can thus organise and reshape Africa's academic life for their own purposes.

Federici says that defunding is a direct result of the cutting of subsidies by African governments as a result of obligations imposed by the Bretton Woods institution. The subsidy cuts have lead to the escalation of costs of education i.e. a rise in residence fees, books, transport and food on campus and the rapid deterioration of university infrastructure because of reduced capital investment.

She argues that the worst effect has been the forced dependence on foreign agencies and individual donors for research grants and general funding. The implications of this factor alone led to research being done on commission. In many cases foreign donor agencies (e.g. The Rockefeller Foundation) have actually taken over the infrastructural facilities and thus have a direct say in how the institution is run. This has resulted in the extensive curtailment of independent and oppositional thinking.

Federici sums up her article by appealing to all Africans to help each other through material support so as to break dependency on foreign donor agencies. She reminds us of our need to educate ourselves.

'Booker T. Washington in Africa between Education and (Re) Colonisation' is Ousseina Alidou's first article. He focuses on Francophone Africa. He begins by reminding us of Booker T.'s ideas of practical education in the face of the oppressive Jim Crow laws of the Deep South. The idea of practical education was centred around self-reliance, moral upliftment and, more importantly, the emphasis on vocational training as opposed to mere book learning. Alidou believes that in the time of structural adjustment these ideas have assumed greater importance.

He says that in especially Southern Africa's settler regimes and British colonies these ideas had a special appeal both for racist and capitalist

reasons. He gives an example of how the British in Zanzibar published a ten part series of Booker's life story in a journal intended for a school teacher and adds that:

> What was significant is that the series appeared at a time when the colonial government had just launched the Rural Middle School, whose curriculum was disproportionately vocational in substance.

This project was premised on the racist idea that Africans lack the intellectual capacity to grasp anything that requires critical, analytical thinking. Alidou points out that the WB's new ideas are in agreement with the colonial project. He also argues that the WB's 'African Capacity Building Initiative' is a policy that seeks to dominate our academic institutions and to gear them for its designs.

In the last part of this article and the one that follows (*Francophonie, World Bank and the Collapse of the Francophone Africa Education System.)* the emphasis is on French patronage in education in its former colonies. The use of the French language as a medium of instruction, cultural imperialism and economic dependency influenced the educational system of these countries. The Agence Culturelle De Cooperation Technique (ACCT), controls the reform and design of school curricula of Africans. This can be through the employment of under-qualified French expatriates who would not have got the same employment in their home countries as trainers of African educators and the dumping of books that were not considered appropriate for French students on the francophone Africa market.

Part 2 of *A Thousand Flowers* entitled 'African Students' and Teachers' Struggles against Structural Adjustment and For Academic Freedom' goes a step further than just analysing the causes of strife in African scholarship. It documents real student struggles. In the first article the editors give us a brief chronology of actual protests of students in the various universities in Africa from 1985 to 1998. From Algeria to Zimbabwe, the story is the same, students boycotting for more subsistence grants, better facilities, against increased fees and meal hikes. Students were harassed, arrested, expelled and some even killed by authorities. The editors point out that the WB's

assertion is that tertiary education on the continent is for the privileged few. They further claim that these protests are more than just political demonstrations for greater democratic rights, as the WB have us believe, but also socio-economic, and directly directed towards the SAPs that have been introduced in their countries.

In Zaire (DRC) 52 students were shot dead, in Uganda 2 have been killed, in Guinea 3 have been killed and thousands more have been arrested in other countries. The article shows the lengths to which students go so that they can get a decent education in the face of hostile economic policies that seek to make them skilled workers for foreign companies instead of enquiring intellectuals.

Ousseina Alidou's next article in this second part zeros in on the Niger Republic. Here students protest against government's plan to privatise public high schools and the national university. Students claim that the government wants to turn the university into a *de facto* teacher training college as state subsidies are removed from those studying courses the authorities deem as unnecessary. Money is rerouted to private schools offering vocational training (courses in Accounting, computer programming, marketing, administration) on the grounds that 'technical and administrative skills are more competitive on the global stage'. Local companies taking their cue from government, employ these students whereas bachelors and masters graduates are seen as being 'over qualified'. Here, again, withdrawals of university student stipends and lecturers' salaries incite protests. Again, the government retaliated by deploying a heavy military and police presence on campuses to stifle dissent. Academic freedom has suffered as a direct result of the WB's policies.

Ousseina Alidou interviews Babacar Diop, President of the Senegalese Union of Teachers and Researchers. Diop castigates the SAPs, and states that they have lead to political favouritism, embezzlement and corruption in Senegalese universities. Diop talks about 1988, which he calls a 'terrible year' because in that year a student uprisings took place, triggered by a fraudulent presidential election that led to the subsequent closure of the universities. The following year teachers went on a 70 day strike in solidarity with students and for increased salaries. He says that the WB irked by these protests released a document that called for a weakening of students' and teacher's unions. This of course is a flagrant violation of what the WB

preaches i.e. 'good governance, democracy and transparency'. The government also called in the police to suppress the unions and then cut funding to universities. It also instituted the hiring of part-time lecturers to cut costs, by avoiding the benefits that are normally due to permanent staff. Once again, the same old story of vocational schools beginning to receive more funding than universities surfaces. Diop believes all these to be measures designed to destabilise the research capacity and thus development of African scholarship on the part of the WB.

A particularly fascinating article is from Franco Barchiesi called 'South Africa, Between Repression and Home-grown Structural Adjustment'. He mentions University of Durban-Westville, the year is 1997 and the air is thick with repression of students protesting against fee increments and financial exclusion. The university which had been struggling to shrug off its apartheid past and working towards democratisation of its faculties, had to deal with privatisation of services and outsourcing (in other words retrenchment of support staff) in what he calls the 'new democratic dispensation'. This has led to an increase in workers joining the university union Combined Staff Association (COMSA), to fight for greater worker rights. We are then transported to the University of the Western Cape where a leftwing lecturer is arrested for being an illegal alien, but Barchiesi says that the lecturer was better known for being a critic of a student organisation aligned to the ruling party. The article highlights the rightwing shift to neoliberalism in higher education. The writer finds it strange that contrary to other countries throughout the continent, South Africa was not forced into structural adjustment programmes but followed a 'home-grown structural adjustment'. This was because of

> ... the rise of a new, technocratic, market-orientated and previously exiled leadership inside the ANC-led government, mainly around the likely future president Thabo Mbeki.

He ends by reminding us that in South African the state is the main proponent of neo-liberal policies.

The next article is about military rule, the scourge of post-independent Nigeria, and its role in suppressing academic freedom. Attahiru Jega's article chronicles the student struggles during martial law. Where

corruption results in less funds flowing to universities through inflated contracts and dubious projects where the money is squandered by administrators with the blessing of the military. Where resources for infrastructure and facilities go missing, academic freedom and autonomy is attacked because the generals fear rival power centres. Vice-chancellors are rendered powerless and bend to government directives to allow soldiers on campuses to prevent student demonstrations. Jega claims that this is in part because Vice-chancellors also want to protect their positions. We read of lecturers and students summarily dismissed or expelled because of protesting for academic freedom and against reduced grants. This is aggravated by the SAP forced on the country by the WB.

An article on the Malawian Writers Union is about writers in a dictatorship and their struggle for freedom of expression in the face of state repression and economic deprivation resulting from the SAP. Formed by university students, it has grown and spread across the country to include high school teachers and students too. It has organised plays, festivals, other cultural events to protest the Bretton Woods policies and the state's human rights violations.

In their conclusion the editors focus on the continuing growth of the African students protests against SAPs. They explore ways in which these protests can be mutually and externally supported and suggest that connections with progressive organizations, like Jubilee 2000, may prove useful. They conclude that the primary goal of the book is to alert progressive people in the North American academy to the crises in African universities caused by the WB and to mobilise them to refuse to work with and for the WB and donor agencies with similar agendas, and to support struggles by staff, students and workers at African universities.

A Thousand Flowers makes for sober reading at this juncture in South African history. Our self-imposed structural adjustment program, GEAR, has been in place since 1996 with the result that unemployment has declined, poverty has increased dramatically and the state has been implementing 'cost-recovery'[2] polices in sectors like water, housing,

[2] Mcdonald, David & John Pape 2002. *Cost Recovery and the Crisis of Service Delivery in South Africa.* HSRC.

electricity, education and so on with catastrophic consequences for the poor[3]. Furthermore we are now in the middle of a state-lead project to rationalize the tertiary education sector that is clearly no different from similar projects elsewhere on Africa. Many people have bought into the clearly dishonest claims that the current mergers are about 'addressing the legacy of apartheid'. This book makes it clear that they are really just one more step in the ANC's home-grown structural adjustment program and that they will have disastrous results for higher education in South Africa and that the negative consequences will be disproportionately visited on the poor. *A Thousand Flowers* challenges its readers to respond to SAPs with the same courage and determination that has fuelled student, staff and worker struggles elsewhere in Africa.

[3] Desai, Ashwin 2002. *We are the Poors: Community Struggles in Post-Apartheid South Africa.* New York.: Monthly Review Press.

Ghandi in South Africa

The Making of a Political Reformer:
Gandhi in South Africa, 1893-1914,
By Surendra Bhana and Goolam Vahed
New Delhi: Manohar, 2005, 181 pages, Appendices, Glossary, Bibliography, and Index.
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Bhana and Vahed have written a compact but immensely rich study of Gandhi's years in South Africa. As the title implies these were the formative years of Gandhi, the political *reformer*. Indeed, the authors quote Sushila Nayar to the effect that 'there was not a single new idea that he was inspired with after leaving South Africa'. He developed his ideas and techniques further in India but he had formulated them all in South Africa[1]. As an example of the importance that Gandhi himself attached to his time in South Africa, they cite his statement that it was 'in South Africa that the Indian nation was being formed' and his claim that the Hindu-Muslim problem had been solved in South Africa (86). No doubt, for readers of Indian history, there is a sad irony to these words and Gandhi himself was haunted by his failure to forge Hindu-Muslim unity in a context where it was literally a matter of life and death. But just as one cannot hold Gandhi uniquely responsible for political successes in South Africa and India, so one cannot

[1] Sushila Nayar 1989. *Mahatma Gandhi: Satyagraha at Work* Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing House p. 752, quoted in Bhana and Vahed (2005:149). In the text, number in parenthesis will refer to the latter book.

hold him solely responsible for the failures either. A biography of a great historical figure has its risks and Bhana and Vahed have done well to avoid those while still giving us a vivid picture of the South Africa that Gandhi lived and worked in, and a thoughtful, and thought-provoking study of the potentialities and limitations of Gandhi's ideas and strategies of mobilization.

It follows that Bhana and Vahed are not after some addition to the hagiographic literature on Gandhi, nor are they about to construct some sort of teleology of Gandhi's life, whereby the South African years were simply to lead to the greater glory of liberating India from British rule. The South African years are seen for what they are: a period in which Indian immigrants and settlers in Natal province of what later became the Union of South Africa tried to forge themselves into a community of political cohesion, capable of mounting limited if still significant initiatives to improve their situation in conditions of intense discrimination and racism. Thus, Bhana and Vahed wish to begin with the real-life constraints, the religious and cultural orientations of South Africa's Indian immigrants and settlers and the specific challenges that they faced as indentured labourers, post-indentured working-class settlers, merchants, professionals, preachers, and so on. Gandhi's entry into this situation in 1893 was not as a *deux ex machina* who walked in with solutions to complex problems, but as a young man with still somewhat romantic notions of the historic role of the British empire, of India's and South Africa's place in it and the potentialities it held for defining the place of India and Indians as partners in the imperial enterprise. The years Gandhi spent in South Africa were slowly but surely to peel away the layers of illusion, reveal the structural place of racism in empire particularly after 1902, and lead him from a somewhat cosmopolitan if highly conventional liberalism to a more indigenous style of ideas that still sought reform as a pre-emption of more radical solutions.

As such the argument of the book revolves around a triad of intersecting forces: *South Africa* itself as a crucial part of Britain's imperial reconstruction—thus implicitly South Africa's rising star alongside India's setting star, rhetoric notwithstanding—with the specific racialised political economy of Natal as an important subset of this reconstruction; *communal-racial relations,* whereby Indianness (or Africanness) were being constructed both as responses to white supremacist and racial doctrines in

South Africa, alongside the larger disciplinary developments in metropolitan social sciences, and as subaltern discourses of difference between Indians and Africans (and more complexly still, between Hindus and Muslims, and within the various ascriptive identities, e.g. caste, among nominally Hindu populations); and finally *Gandhi* himself as someone who by study, observation, trial and error, and above all a shrewd ability to mix high principle and clever strategy developed into a leader par excellence of the movement for important yet tragically limited reforms in the condition of Indian immigrants and settlers in South Africa. This makes for a compelling and sophisticated argument, raises questions (some of which will be indicated below) about both strategic aims and movement principles that can be applied to Gandhi's leadership of the Indian independence struggle itself but will undoubtedly fail to satisfy those who are looking for an addition to the worshipful biographies of Gandhi of which in this reviewer's opinion there are too many already.

Within the brief scope of this review, one can only indicate with brutal brevity the South African situation itself, and here Bhana and Vahed sketch with a sure hand and a knowledge that comes from being grounded in the soil of South Africa the manifold layers of racial manipulations that sustained the structure of empire. Not only were Indians and South Africans pitted against each other in the workplace, with regard to access to land and living spaces, the two were systematically put in positions where they would enter into supervisory or exploitative situations vis-à-vis each other. To give but a couple of examples, Africans were sometimes hired as overseers over Indians and allowed to administer the lash for lapses of work discipline (28); in other circumstances, the situation was reversed, with free Indians ousting Africans from their land, indeed being preferred tenants by white landowners (31), and employing Africans as labourers contributing to the latter's proletarianisation and growing indebtedness (38). At the same time, white propaganda alleged that Indians were contributing to 'drunkenness and crimes among Africans', while making money and repatriating wealth to India, thus impoverishing Africans. Africans, like Dube, concluded that the 'coolies have come to our land and lord it over us, as though we, who belong to the country, are mere non-entities' (30). Bhana and Vahed themselves note that there hasn't been a systematic study of African-Indian relations in South Africa and one is perhaps overdue, but also note correctly that

Indianness and Africanness (as ethnic or proto-national identities) emerged against these deliberate manipulations of workplace and community relations and against the backdrop of the creation of demeaning stereotypes of both (46)[2].

Indeed, two issues here are of paramount importance: the extent to which European supremacy depended on this intentional accentuation and exorbitation of frictions caused by imperial expansion itself and the subaltern reproduction of these frictions by exploited and oppressed groups. If so, it would also explain the persistence of communalism within the Indian immigrant-settler populations themselves. For, as Bhana and Vahed point out, the multiplicity of religious organizations in South Africa not only reproduced their specific communal orientations as they became politicized but were by and large only able to come together for significant action occasionally either during high symbolic moments such as Gokhale's visit in 1912 or for specific short-lived movements to address the egregious overreach of the white governments, probably more to avoid social or political extinction rather than to enlarge the domain of challenges to imperial hegemony or white supremacy.

In the meantime, within colonial South Africa, as examples of the petty communalism that obtained among Indians, they point to colonial-born Hindus in Pietermaritzburg applying for trade licences in part because they resented Muslim traders in the city and the Indian Farmers Association in 1909 boycotting the Grey Street Mosque Indian market because Muslim traders dominated it (86). There was a good deal of name calling and sheer lack of common courtesy (85,144), barely balanced, it would seem by, individuals reaching across communal boundaries. This is not the place to debate whether the white rulers of South Africa deliberately set about creating communal categories and inflaming them for short-term advantages; Bhana and Vahed don't vouchsafe much information on this issue. There is some considerable evidence that the British colonialists did so in India just as they inflamed relations between Indians and Africans in South Africa.

[2] Wolf, Eric 1982. *Europe and the People without History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp.381ff,. has a marvellous study of this, and goes some way to debunk the notion that political economy cannot supply a critical understand of identity issues.

Perhaps, imperial strategies were context driven and in South Africa there was no need deliberately to sharpen communal divisions; Indians themselves could be relied upon to do so arriving as they did from an intensely and increasingly polarised subcontinent. What this book does show through examples is the utter absurdity of ascriptive identity politics faced with the rather larger challenges of imperialism and colonialism.

Undoubtedly these were great challenges that political organizers would have to face, and the extent to which they were able to work to overcome these obstacles would in itself signify the range and depth of the political transformation they sought to bring about. This is where Bhana and Vahed throw down the gauntlet to the hagiographers of Gandhi. It is not the saintly Gandhi striding effortlessly over the historical landscape they seek to present us with. Rather it is the Gandhi who invoked 'Indianness' as a strategic necessity (151) while perhaps hoping to overcome communal and caste narrowness through the education provided by uniting for disciplined and ethical action. No doubt, he was hamstrung both by the introversion of the various religious and sectarian groups of Indian immigrants and settlers and the negative class consciousness of the middle-class components. In the aftermath of the *satyagraha* of 1913-1914, Gandhi was to admonish the latter not to succumb to provincialism, to get rid of ideas of high and low, and to stop calling indentured labourers 'colchas'. At the same time, he made his characteristic call to workers to get rid of dirty ways, drop addiction to alcohol and generally get respectable (131). This is the sort of thing that would infuriate Ambedkar later, and was the subject of parody in Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*.

Bhana and Vahed note that Gandhi was indefatigable not only in insisting that India was a nation composed of many religious groups, a 'single nation of brothers' as he put it (148), that a composite nationalism was possible but also in publicly challenging those like Shankeranand who denigrated Islam (67). This was the principled thing to do and Gandhi never shied away from his insistence on 'interfaith harmony'. He seemed to view religion not so much in terms of its formal practices but as a kind of service to humanity (93). This is a very noble ideal indeed, and Gandhi should be remembered for it, but one wonders whether there was not also a privileging of the Hindu ethos as a kind of organic outgrowth of Indian civilisation which other religions could aspire to but never really in equal measure. Did

Gandhi see people as somehow already/always preconstituted by their faith, so that they could develop civil and spiritual connections with each other as representatives (in themselves) of their faith? In South Africa, where Indians were considered outsiders regardless of their faith, such an idea may not have caused problems. However, in India where Hinduism constituted a powerful strain within Indian nationalism and a Hindu xenology was developing that exoticised and excluded Muslims from the nation proper, such a position, however implicit and subtle, could be hugely more damaging in the symbolic and political domains.

Be that as it may, two issues that preoccupied Indians in South Africa in the early 1910s were the £3 tax on former indentured-labour immigrants and the non-recognition of Hindu and Muslim marriages contracted in India as a result of the Searle decision of March 1913. The *satyagraha* that Gandhi launched in 1913 reveals, according to Bhana and Vahed, Gandhi's 'creative use of opportunities as they arose' and his 'boldness and maturity as a leader' (112). This is something of a mixed compliment for, as they also show, Gandhi had come under some criticism for not taking up the tax issue earlier, qualifying it as 'the cause of the helpless and the dumb' (115). What had changed Gandhi's mind perhaps was the mass strike among indentured Indians in Natal and, of course, the Searle decision itself. Did Gandhi co-opt the energies of the strikers to push through an agenda that while benefiting the workers none the less also benefited middle-class immigrants? Was it also designed to activate Indians at home on behalf of their émigré compatriots? One cannot, despite the success of this movement, avoid the suspicion that Gandhi's movement—like the ones he was to launch in India later—was part of a strategy of containment and redirection. Bhana and Vahed show the energy and leadership that Indian workers had shown on their own behalf (125, 142). Was Gandhi effectively trying to channel this energy to bring Indian workers into line with the rather more conservative agenda of the Natal Indian Congress and the Natal Indian Association? Further, one might wonder to what extent the success of the *satyagraha* in having the tax repealed and the Searle decision reversed (129) also, ironically, institutionalized Indians in a subordinate position. Certainly the energy, conviction, and organizational brilliance put into the *satyagraha* of 1913-1914 showed Gandhi's ability to translate abstract concepts into concrete action even as that action itself

curtailed further possibilities. Perhaps this view is strengthened by Gandhi's own view that Indians should only 'eat' according to their capacity and await the opportunities of the future that would 'far exceed the present one' (130). In this context, the benefits of *padayatra*, slow motion by foot, in raising consciousness and building unity do need to be critically assessed. Bhana and Vahed are suggestive rather than explicit about the limitations of Gandhi's overall achievement even as they laud his organizational capacity. Perhaps this could be said of the results of his leadership in India as well.

Undoubtedly the most tragic legacy of Gandhi's time in South Africa was his attitude towards Africans. Gandhi sought at least a notional equality for Indians and Europeans, but felt no compulsion to demand the same for Africans. While *Indian Opinion* did publish on African issues from about 1910 onwards, Bhana and Vahed note that Africans and African life remained largely hidden to Gandhi. His autobiography, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, published as a book in 1928 fails to mention a single South African leader by name (152). Still, Bhana and Vahed caution against considering Gandhi a racist but it is unclear what to make of this assertion. After all, in response to critics who lambasted him for his reliance on whites like Polak, Kallenbach and Albert West, Gandhi insisted that 'personal qualities were superior to religious, ethnic and racial considerations' when judging individuals (149). But, apparently this was not a courtesy Gandhi was prepared to extend to Africans. Further, Bhana and Vahed themselves point out that the system of White domination required that Indians be treated as a 'separate entity' to discourage their 'uniting politically' with Africans (39). If this is so, Indianness is the middle term of a descending hierarchy of which Africanness was the bottom. Subaltern reproduction of elite categories, fragments of the master discourse so to speak, simply aided in cementing the structure of empire and later apartheid itself. One should not shy away from the implications of this sort of subaltern register of master-race political doctrines. That Gandhi should have walked into this trap is egregious to say the least.

One of the reasons for Gandhi's stated opposition to including Africans in his movement is that Africans had not yet reached a level where they could understand the rigours of *satyagraha*. One would have to doubt such a proposition: after all, non-violent (if not passive) resistance to vastly superior ruling-class force has often been a weapon of the weak, and as I

have shown elsewhere Gandhi was not always opposed to the principled exercise of force in defence of one's honour[3]. The philosophical principles of *satyagraha* may not have been immediately accessible to Africans, as any alien discourse based on unfamiliar categories would have been, but to suggest that this was an adequate reason for exclusion is shocking. The only conceivable reason would be that Indians—including Gandhi—almost preferred their subordinate position in empire (which would allow them to stay in South Africa with minimal civil rights) to uniting with Africans if it meant that they along with their imperial masters might at some point be asked to leave. This is a discomfiting conclusion to draw about someone who has become a demigod to millions and whom the ANC in a magnanimous gesture has decided to include as a progenitor of the struggle against apartheid – a richly ironic conclusion to a troubled period of history.

Bhana and Vahed write with the sure touch of accomplished historians, apparently unafraid to tackle controversial themes. Perhaps they will take up a more exhaustive study of Indian-African relations and Gandhi's instrumentalisation of Indianness in due course. If it achieves the quality and distinction of the present volume it will be a major addition to our stock of political knowledge.

[3] Kaiwar, Vasant. 'Philosophy and Politics in the Hind Swaraj of Mohandas Gandhi', talk given at a symposium on the Ideas and Philosophies of Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi: Contrasting with the Current Violent Ways of Conflict Resolution on April 1, 2005 at North Carolina Central University.

*Alter*nation
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Contributors must submit *one computer-generated and three double-spaced printed copies* of the manuscript. The computer-generated copy may be on double density stiffie in Word Perfect 5-6, Word for Windows 6 or ASCII. If accepted for publication, 10 original off-print copies of the article will be returned to the author after publication.

Manuscripts should range between 5000-8000 and book reviews between 500-1000 words. However, longer articles may be considered for publication.

Attach a cover page to one manuscript containing the following information: Author's full name, address, e-mail address, position, department, university/ institution, telephone/ fax numbers as well as a list of previous publications.

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Head, Bessie 1974. *A Question of Power.* Oxford: Heinemann Educational Publishers.

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Mngadi, Sikhumbuzo 1994. 'Popular Memory' and Social Change in South African Historical Drama of the Seventies in English: The Case of Credo Mutwa's *Unosimela. Alter*nation 1,1:37-41.

Fanon, Frantz 1986. *Black Skin, White Masks.* Markmann, Charles Lam (trans). London: Pluto Press.