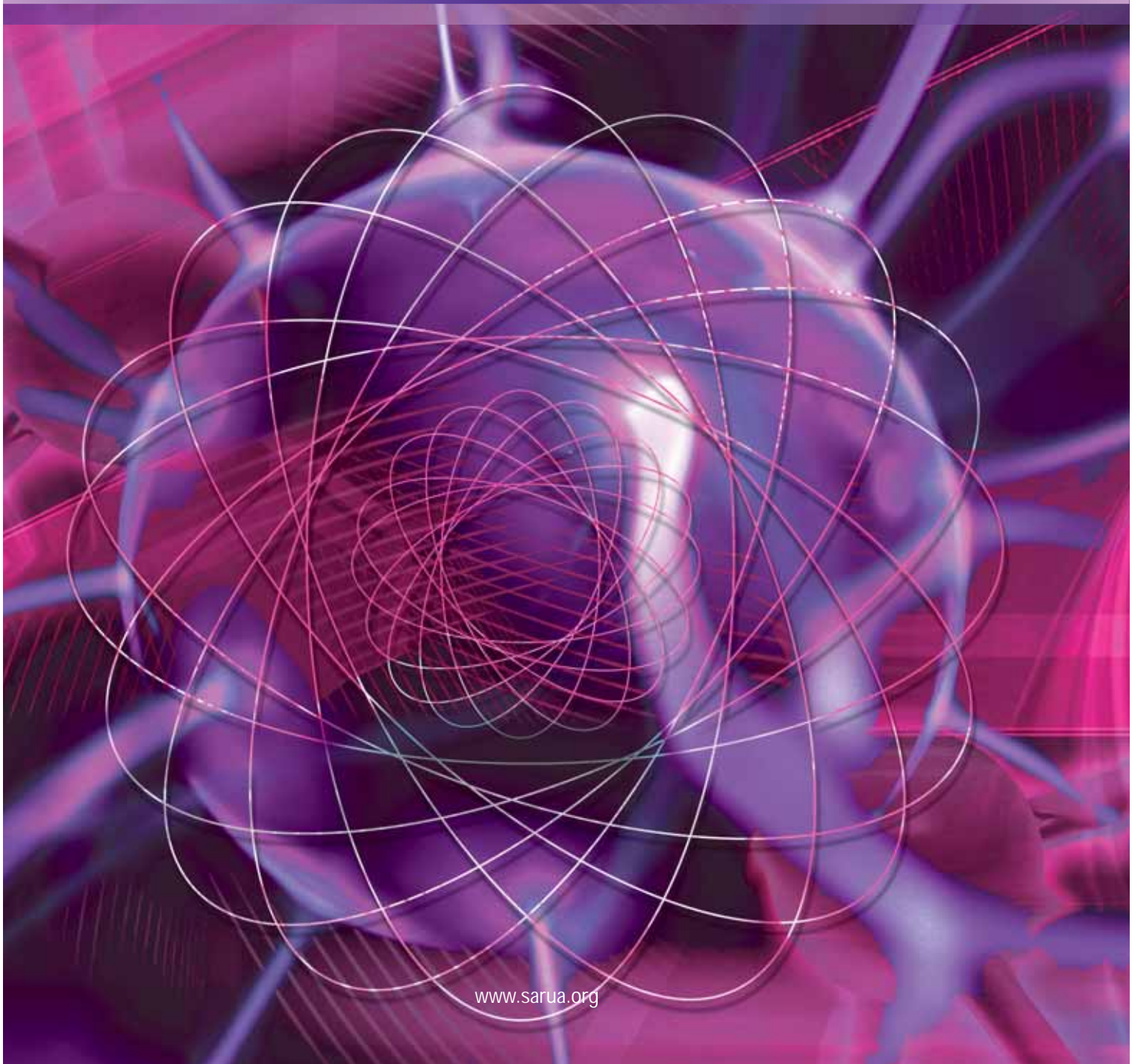


DEVELOPMENT

and its Implications for Higher Education in Southern Africa





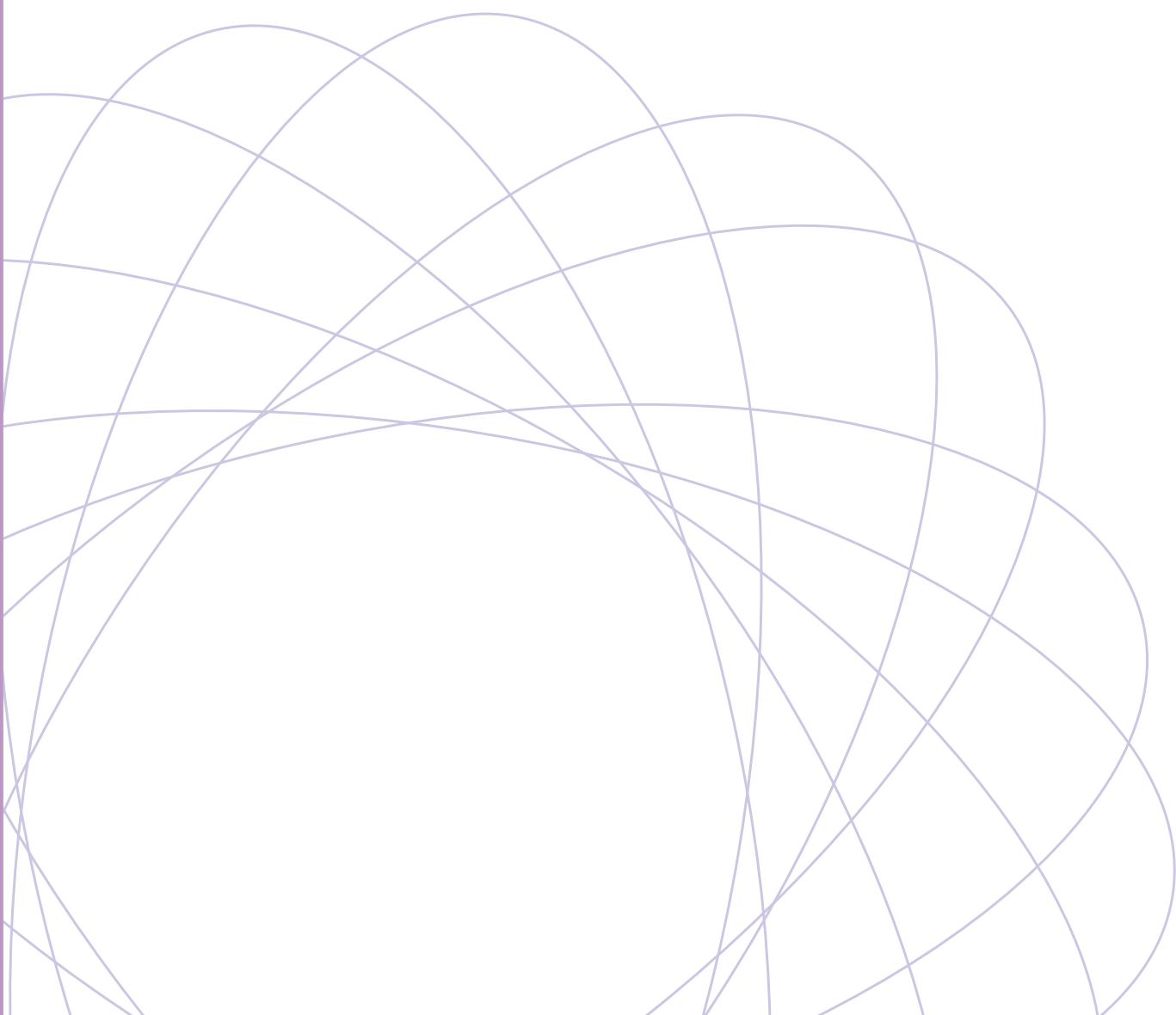
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DEVELOPMENT

and its Implications for Higher Education in Southern Africa

Series Editor: Piyushi Kotecha





FOREWORD

HIGHER EDUCATION IN DEVELOPMENT

The term 'development' has long become a byword in modern international affairs. The same is true in regional and national affairs. The term has gained in currency since before the middle of the 20th century, as the world began to grapple with the increasingly visible inequities within the global arena. Indeed, before the end of the century the world had been divided by the pundits into roughly two halves: the developed world and the developing world.

But how should 'development' be most accurately defined? Or more specifically: how should it be defined in relation to the whole realm of higher education? And how should higher education be responding to the challenges posed by national and regional development imperatives? Should higher education institutions, as suggested, fashion themselves into leading agents of social change, a role that would place them close to the heart of any country's development agenda? Or should the focus be on economic development – including industrialisation that will add value to local raw materials and stimulate higher employment rates – and to finding a viable niche in the global economy? Or is there 'a strong need for the re-establishment of the African university as a site for the fostering of civic identities and democratic values'?

These are the questions that arose from the VC Dialogue Conference held in Maputo 8-9 October 2009. They describe the focus of this, the third publication in SARUA's Leadership Dialogue Series for 2009.

It is hoped that this discussion document will stimulate much more than discussion. There is an urgent need in the region for action. The world is at last realising that higher education is a vital component of both economic and social development. We, in SADC should respond with an agenda specifically designed to transform the relationship between governments; as the chief agents of development, and universities; as the guardians of a country's intellectual and cultural capital, into firm and productive allies on the road to genuine human development.

Piyushi Kotecha
Series Editor
Chief Executive Officer
SARUA



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SARUA is a not-for-profit leadership association of the heads of the public universities in the 15 countries of the SADC region. Its mission is to promote, strengthen and increase higher education, research and innovation through expanded inter-institutional collaboration and capacity building initiatives throughout the region. It promotes universities as major contributors towards building knowledge economies, and towards national and regional socio-economic and cultural development, and also the eradication of poverty.

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The opinions expressed in the publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of either SARUA or the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Due to the constraints of space and budget some sections of the articles in this publication have been summarised with the authors consent. The full set of the original articles are available in downloadable PDF format on the SARUA website www.sarua.org.

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------------|--|
| AAPS | – African Association of Political Science |
| AAU | – Association of African Universities |
| AERC | – African Economic Research Consortium |
| CEDAW | – United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women |
| CODESRIA | – Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa |
| DST | – Department of Science and Technology, South Africa |
| ECOWAS | – Economic Community of West African States |
| GAD | – Gender and Development |
| GED | – Gender and Environment |
| GICAU | – Gender and Institutional Culture in African Universities |
| HEIs | – Higher Education Institutions |
| HIV / AIDS | – Human immunodeficiency virus / Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome |
| IMF | – International Monetary Fund |
| INGO | – International Non-Governmental Organization |
| IT | – Information Technology |
| MDGs | – Millenium Development Goals |
| NGO | – Non-Governmental Organization |
| OECD | – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| OSSREA | – Organisation of Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa |
| PRSP | – Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers |
| SADC | – Southern African Development Community |
| SAPs | – Structural Adjustment Policies |
| SARIPS | – Southern African Regional Institute for Policy Studies |
| SARUA | – Southern African Regional Universities Association |
| SET4W | – Science, Engineering and Technology for Women |
| SIDA / SAREC | – Department of Research Co-operation of the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency |
| UEA | – University of East Africa |
| UNDP | – United Nations Development Programme |
| UNICEF | – United Nations Children's Fund |
| USHEPIA | – University Science, Humanities and Engineering Partnerships in Africa |
| WAD | – Women and Development |
| WED | – Women, Environment and Sustainable Development |
| WID | – Women in Development |



INTRODUCTION

In the first paper, titled *Conceptions of Development in the Context of the Challenges of Transformation facing Africa*, Adebayo Olukoshi provides a historical account of how changing ideologies (prior to 1945-to date) have defined development and dictated the implementation thereof in the policies of not only the different SADC regions and the continent, but also globally. These policies have defined the purpose of higher education and the fate of universities. He reasons that development can be defined as permanent work in progress, an unfinished business in need of constant refinement. Finally, he explains why the current concept of development should be rethought to ensure the progressive transformation of the different societies in Africa, and to prevent the countries of the SADC from remaining marginal in the realm of international development.

In the second paper, titled *Gender and Development: Universities for Social Change in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Relebohile Moletsane discusses the circumstances that could prevent member states and development agencies globally, and particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, from achieving gender equality and women's empowerment – a Millennium Development Goal set for 2015. She also debates the possible interventions that universities could/should make as agents of social change.

In the third paper, titled *Alternative Models to Traditional Higher Education: Market Demand, Networks, and Private Sector Challenges*, Ebrima Sall focuses on the changes that took place at the turn of the millennium in traditional higher education institutions and need to be read within this context. He looks at the pluralisation and complexities of the higher education landscape in Africa, highlighting the evolution of the traditional institutions, the development of alternative models, the spread of knowledge networks, and the challenges of private sector involvement in higher education.

In the final paper, titled *Constructing Democratic Developmental States in Africa: The Role of Universities*, Omano Edigheji explores the possibilities envisaged in constructing democratic developmental states to end Africa's international marginalisation. He debates the concept of development by indirectly questioning whether the freedom people enjoy, can only be achieved through development. Or whether development can only be achieved through freedom? Based on the dominant paradigm of anti-developmentalism, he discusses the current role and purposes of African universities. He explains how these roles and purposes will change once a paradigm shift has been made towards building democratic developmental states.

This publication is intended to encourage a deeper understanding of general developmental trends in SADC, and the African continent as a whole, and also a more vigorous debate around the implications for higher education.

April 2010

¹Sen, Amartya. 1999. *Development as Freedom*. Oxford: University Press. p.3, Oxford

OVERVIEW

Enver Motala and Pam Watson

The idea of 'development' is widely referred to in the missions, policies, strategies and plans of multilateral and other international organisations, national, provincial and local governments and authorities, business enterprises, parastatals and other public institutions, non-governmental organisations, universities, colleges, scientific, cultural and other bodies. It is referred to in relation to economic, social, political, cultural, environmental and other activities in which human endeavour is expended and is regarded as the panacea to the roles identified in the institutions and societies for which it is proposed.

Over the decades, a considerable body of academic writings has sought to illuminate the purposes and aims of development and has explicated a variety of approaches to this subject.¹ The consequences of this is that it is a concept used in a very wide range of ways both to describe a set of conditions which is the subject of its concerns and also a strategy for dealing with these. It is both a discursive category and constitutive of the discourse around it.

In the social sciences, there is no doubt that the field of economics has been the most persistent and long-served in the usage of this concept. In some ways it is as old as the ideas of Adam Smith and has since been a constant refrain in the writings of the many important economic thinkers. It achieved much greater prominence and usage in the 20th century when its usage grew beyond the limits of economic thinking. In universities it is used in a wide range of disciplinary areas both in the social sciences and in the field of science and technology.² In addition it is highly prevalent in the field of education (and higher education) policy studies – an area of research which is currently the subject of greater concentration and study.

Much of the study about higher education policy in Africa is concentrated on the relationship between the orientation of governments to higher education institutions and the role of these institutions in society. Reflecting on the role of governments, the invariable complaint is that they have not provided adequate resources to higher education institutions to enhance the possibilities for a concerted approach to the growth of the institutions of higher education, and the growth of scientific and technological endeavours and outputs. There is a constant refrain about the failure of national policy a consequence of the absence of co-ordination between various government Ministries responsible for fiscal policy, national planning and the higher education and science systems. This lack of co-ordination exists despite the fact that there is a wider acceptance, in the literature, of higher education's necessary role in economic development and the failure to properly conceptualise this role relative to the challenges of 'development'.

The implication of these criticisms is that the fate of higher education (especially in the SADC region) is profoundly affected by developments from 'outside' the higher

¹ For instance, in relation to African Development, the African Development Review is devoted to the study and analysis of development policy in Africa. And *Africa Development* is the quarterly bilingual journal published since 1976 by the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA). It is a term which also has wide currency in the natural and biological sciences which is not the subject here.



education system even though it has an important part to play in influencing the very conditions impacting its role and the purposes of higher education. Hence any view of the role of universities, and scientific institutions, in relation to the question of development, now, the 'developmental state' is inextricable from the policies espoused in many of the protocols for the SADC region and the continent.

Regrettably these rarely produce positive outcomes for higher education institutions themselves, requiring a closer examination not only of the weaknesses of policy but also of the evolution of such policies in the period after the achievement of political independence by post-colonial states. It necessitates a deeper appreciation not only of the contested conceptualisations of the idea of 'development' but also of how these are affected by historical and contextual factors whose impact on the shaping of national policies on the states of Africa was and remains profound.

A failure to reckon with these contextual factors has impoverished much of the examination of the idea of development, reducing it to a quantification of the outputs of various categories of growth or decline, such as: population, birth and mortality, schooling, GDP and other such social and economic indicators. And although these quantifications are not unimportant, their analytical power is curtailed by the absence of any orientation to the contextualising value of historical circumstance. Such contextual realities speak to the framework of national and global relations in which states evolve, the limits imposed on their possibilities, and the forces impacting on their historical trajectories as they evolve into post-colonial and independent states.

Deeper analysis beyond the quantitative indicators is necessary because conceptions of development in relation to these states are heavily contested and would need to be explored more fully since 'development' is embroiled in debates about trade, aid and debt and is directly affected by the impact of global financial, production, distribution, trade and other systems. The decline in the place of higher education as a consequence of the policy choices of governments in the period after the 1970s (based on the policy-advice of international institutions such as the World Bank in particular), is illustrative of the precarious place of higher education institutions in a broader framework of policy imperatives.

It is this broader framework that has to be understood more fully. Higher education is directly affected, not only through trade and financial regimes and their consequences for the management and governances of universities, but also by 'national' factors like fiscal and economic policies, and political and social stability. These factors shape the conditions for the role of educational institutions to a lesser or greater degree. Discussions about the place of higher education and its possibilities are dependent on the weight of these factors on higher education institutions.

What then is the most useful way to better understand the issue of 'development'? Even within the region the concept of 'development' cannot be used in a generalised

way. Despite the ostensible similarities of the countries in the region they are not homogenous since there are important differences in their political and economic systems, their histories, traditions and social-cultural attributes. Any discussion about 'development' will also need to provide an opportunity to raise deeper analytical questions about higher education through the lens of the 'development' question.

Understanding the broader conceptual issues frames the way in which we think more fundamentally about higher education's place in the societies of the region. This would mean that the basic data produced in the research published by SARUA and other bodies can be explored through the lens provided by the dialogic processes which SARUA has itself facilitated through its *Vice Chancellor Leadership Events* and its publications – especially about the issue of Regional Integration.³

Issues about regional integration also concern the extraordinary varieties of economic, political, socio-cultural and historically developed systems that presently exist in the region. Any conception of regional integration must reckon with both the opportunities and the impediments which these differences represent for 'development'. Questions about the relative distribution of economic and social power in the region; access to markets; international trade and finance; levels of technological innovation and the structure and capacities of the labour market are all elements of the question of 'development'.

From the perspective adopted here there are at least two important reasons for a discussion about this issue. The first is simply that any organisation that has a regional role in Southern Africa should stimulate discussion about the issue of 'development'. Such discussion is both useful and unavoidable in clarifying the approaches to development that might be adopted by the institutions and the responsible individuals. It would help to examine and to answer questions about the proper role of the state and the private sector in the stimulation of the process of 'development'; set 'developmental' priorities and make socially valid choices about these. The critical barriers need to be examined regarding the potential path of a chosen development, such as the availability of human and physical resources, determining what particular conditions are conducive to the augmenting of a 'development strategy' and similar questions. In relation to the very first issue, discussions of the role of states and markets for instance, has often been based on polarised conceptions of what this relationship could mean for 'development'. The Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen captures the conundrum succinctly as follows:

It is hard to think that any process of substantial development can do without very extensive use of markets, but that does not preclude the role of social support, public regulation, or statecraft when they can enrich – rather than impoverish – human lives. The approach used here provides a broader and more inclusive perspective on markets than is frequently invoked in either defending or chastising the market mechanism.⁴

³ See SARUA Leadership Dialogue Series – Volume 1 Number 2, 2009

⁴ Sen, Amartya. 1999. *Development as Freedom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.7.



In this publication the interest in development is not pursued only from the perspective of its theory building and analytical strengths or weaknesses, but from the point of view of its relation to practice – in the domain of policies, and its impact on the orientation of the state to higher (and other levels of) education. A discussion of the various approaches to development will hopefully lead to much greater clarity about the purposes of 'development' in the region and about what strategies might be adopted to deal with them. Such clarity is important to rescue the idea of 'development' from the dominant approaches that have sought to appropriate it for narrow ends. In the words of Sen:

Development can be seen, it is argued here, as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy. Focusing on human freedoms contrasts with narrower views of development, such as identifying development with the growth of gross national product, or with the rise in personal incomes, or with industrialisation, or with technological advance, or with social modernisation.⁵

The second reason is that while education (including higher education) has undoubted value in relation to economic development and the potential for employment and meaningful work, it is not the sole or primary end of education. In fact, for education to have relevance in developing societies it must aspire to a broader and all-encompassing 'developmental' role. The benefits of education (like the requirements of development) are predicated on specific contexts. The value of education is largely dependent on its socially-defined purposes constituted by reference to history, context and purpose. It requires the making of policy choices that speak to the particular needs of the states in question that are defined meaningfully.

Schooling, technological acumen, higher learning and other learning attributes are extremely important, especially in countries evincing high levels of poverty, unemployment and social inequality. This importance is derived, both from their uses in the labour market, productivity and competitiveness, and in their social, political and cultural uses for enhancing the ability of the citizenry to participate in democratic processes. This means that the best purposes of education are realised both through greater levels of citizen participation in educational processes and through the particular qualitative attributes that speak to the broader reconstructive purposes of education's role in society.

Questions about the role envisaged for higher education in regional development are perhaps the most important of all. The importance of stimulating discussion to provide a conceptual vocabulary to re-think the relationship between higher education, the scientific system, the economy, the labour market and the citizenry without privileging particular aspects of its role to the exclusion of others – and especially to the exclusion of the most vulnerable and marginalised members of society, can hardly be overstated.

⁵ *ibid*:p.3

It would enable the key participants in the 'development agenda' in the region as a whole, to understand the challenges facing higher education relative to the goal of development in the region, and more specifically to assess its role in influencing the political and economic preconditions for long-term sustainable development and regional integration. It would enable universities to conceptualise an agenda for higher education more fully by reckoning with the problematic of development in relation to the mandate of higher education. Moreover it would enhance understanding about who some of the key role players in the region are and what their particular roles are.



CONCEPTIONS OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CHALLENGES OF TRANSFORMATION FACING AFRICA

Adebayo Olukoshi¹

INTRODUCTION

It is gratifying to note that one of the themes for the 2009 Leadership Exchange Programme of the Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA) is devoted to a collective reflection on the question of development and its implications for African universities. It is not such a long time ago that the concept and practice of development was called into question and delegitimised in international policy and political circles. The immediate context for this attack on development thinking and action was what one scholar, Paul Krugman, described as the neo-liberal 'counter-revolution'. It began to gather pace in the early 1970s as a monetarist critique of the post-1945 Keynesianism, on the basis of which national economic strategies had been organised and the international economic system governed.² The neo-liberal challenge to Keynesian development thinking was most eloquently stated in the writings of Milton Friedman and the so-called Chicago Boys.³ It became politically emboldened towards the end of the 1970s and in the course of the 1980s following the rise to power of Ronald Reagan in the United States; Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom; Helmut Kohl in Germany and Brian Mulroney in Canada. The electoral victories of these four political leaders, whose countries were at the heart of the 'Group of Seven' industrial economies, signalled not only a major shift to the right of the political centre but also the ascendancy of a peculiar, unbridled free market ideology that was at once anti-state, anti-labour, and pro-finance capital, pro-free capital movement and pro-trade liberalisation.⁴

Up to the early 1970s, in contemporary world economic history, there was not only a broadly shared assumption that 'development', conventionally understood as the growing of aggregate national wealth in the context of structural change, was the primary goal of public policy but also that the state was more or less central to securing it. The dominant Keynesian model of development that emerged in the period after the Second World War placed considerable emphasis on the important role which the interventionist state could play in securing stable economic growth, including the effective management of growth cycles and the fight against unemployment. It was this broad consensus that was challenged by the monetarists who posited that the free, unfettered forces of the market were far more efficient in promoting development, which in their view had become increasingly threatened by the inflationary pressures associated with the unrestrained and burgeoning expenditures of the interventionist state. The monetarists defined inflation as the public enemy number one, rather than unemployment, a perspective which they believed called for fiscal restraint through deflationary economic policies.⁵

The monetarist critique of Keynesianism was given considerable ammunition by the plethora of challenges that confronted the global economy during the 1970s. Rising

¹ Dr Adebayo Olukoshi is Director of the UN African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), Dakar, Senegal

² See Paul Krugman, 'Towards a Counter-Counter-Revolution in Development Theory', World Bank Annual Conference, Washington D.C., 30 April - 1 May, 2009. In this paper, Krugman, explains the revolutionary rise of development economics into importance, its subsequent exclusion from the mainstream by a counter-revolutionary movement within the economics discipline against interventionist models of development, and the need for a counter-counter-revolution that would bring development economics back in, and stem the tide of a counter-revolution gone too far.

³ Friedman was easily one of the most prolific and charismatic exponents of the ideas of the Chicago school of monetarists. See for, example, Friedman, 1973. *Essays in Positive Economics*. Chicago: Chicago: University Press

⁴ See Krugman, 1992. *Ibid.* Also: John Harvey, & Robert Garnett, 2008, *Future Directions for Heterodox Economics*, Michigan: University of Michigan Press

⁵ Harvey & Garnett Jr. (eds.), 2008, *Ibid.*

unemployment, growing inflation and stagnating rates of growth were exacerbated by the shocks occasioned by the OPEC oil price revolution that accompanied the 1973 Yom Kippur War and the devaluation of the dollar via its delinking from gold. This move effectively marked the final collapse of the gold standard. The approach taken to recycling the petrodollar windfall, that accrued to the oil exporting countries organised into OPEC, both fuelled global inflation and set the stage for the accumulation of debts by many, mainly developing countries. The second oil price shock that accompanied the Iranian revolution of 1979 further weakened the post 1945 global economic architecture. It paved the way for the triumph of the neo-liberalist ideas over Keynesian ones in the management of national economies and the global system.⁶ Meanwhile, in the advanced capitalist economies, a string of right-wing governments that were elected into office committed themselves to market liberalisation. In the countries of the global South the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, pushed by the Treasury Department of the United States to embrace neo-liberalism, took advantage of the debt crises and the balance of payment difficulties of Africa and Asia to push through a market reform agenda that they enforced through orthodox structural adjustment programmes.

Amidst the triumphalism of the neo-liberals during the 1980s and 1990s, various suggestions were made in academic and in policy circles about the end of history; the death of development; the death of ideology; and the end of geography. Celebratory claims were added about the final death of inflation. For Francis Fukuyama, the most prominent proponent of the thesis of the end of history, the defeat of communism in the Soviet Union, and the alternative to capitalism in eastern Europe, the widespread liberalisation of markets that was taking place, and the broad embrace of liberal democracy across the world, all added up to settle the historic politico-ideological struggle over the appropriate path to development to mark the end of history.⁷ For a number of neo-liberals, one of the consequences of the promotion of free market reforms across the world was the death of an ideology in the quest for development. In particular the ideology that was anchored on state interventionism and which dominated post-War thinking and action up to the end of the 1970s.⁸ Market liberalisation and increased competition in the context of anti-inflationary monetary policies also had the effect, according to Roger Bootle, of producing the death of perpetual inflation – at least in the advanced capitalist economies.⁹ Similarly, the closer integration of markets across the world; the further enhancement of the capacity of key economic actors to act on a global scale; the facilitation of global transactions in real time, in spite of time zone differences and distance; the revolution in information and communication technologies; and major leaps registered in shipping and air travel all underscored or helped to underwrite the arrival of an age of accelerated globalisation that spelt the end of geography, the death of distance, and the advent of a 'flatter' world.¹⁰

Yet, throughout the 1980s and 1990s and into the new millennium, as neo-liberal ideas and practices gained in ascendancy and vigorously pursued an agenda of rapid, unidirectional trade and financial liberalisation – under the auspices of the

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Francis Fukuyama. 1992. *The End of History and the Last Man*, London: Penguin.

⁸ See Krugman. 1992. *Op Cit*, for a further discussion of this.

⁹ Roger Bootle. 1996. *The Death of Inflation*, London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

¹⁰ Kenichi Ohmae. 1990. *The Borderless World: Power and Strategy in the Interlinked Economy*, London: Collins. Richard O'Brien. 1992. *Global Financial Integration. The End of Geography*, New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press.



World Trade Organisation and the Bretton Woods institutions, repeated bouts of crises – mostly associated with market failures, suggested that the triumphalism of the advocates of local and global free markets and competition may have been far more premature and fragile than initially imagined. The various incidences of economic meltdown experienced across markets: liberalising Latin America from Brazil through Mexico to Chile and Argentina, the East Asian crises of 1997/1998 that devastated South Korea, Thailand, Indonesia, and to some extent Malaysia and Singapore; and the spectacular failures of the structural adjustment programmes across the global South, all pointed to the new vulnerabilities and the enduring difficulties associated with the agenda of unidirectional, economic liberalisation that was being relentlessly pursued. At the same time, some of the fastest growing economies in the world during the 1990s, most notably China, India, and Russia, pursued heterodox policies that clearly questioned the validity and relevance of the orthodox policy rulebook which the IMF and World Bank foisted on most of their client countries.¹¹

The various crises and breakdowns that were experienced during the 1980s and 1990s certainly did add up, as much by their frequency as by their effects on eroding confidence in the neo-liberal model of local and global economic governance. However, for as long as they remained localised and did not pose wider systemic risks with deep-seated global ramifications, no radical, root-and-branch re-thinking of the overall market liberalisation agenda was contemplated. In fact, the localised market failures that occurred were mostly blamed on corrupt leaders and elites who swirled in a cesspool of neo-patrimonialism and rent-seeking, to the detriment of economic efficiency and the building of liberal democratic institutions. On the basis of this analysis, the solutions that were offered comprised of more – not less neo-liberal policy measures and market liberalisation.¹² It took the global financial and economic crises of 2008, with its epicentre in the United State and far-reaching systemic consequences that played out in the advanced capitalist economies of Europe across Asia and Africa, for development thinkers and policy practitioners to seriously think beyond the market and to bring development and development issues back into the national and the global agendas. Significantly, in spite of the massive evidence of fraud undertaken by business players and market operatives across the United States and Europe, the discourse at the roots of the crises was not about the detrimental effects of the rent-seeking behaviour of leaders, or the neo-patrimonialism in the system. The solutions that have been pursued to overcome the financial and economic crises were also distinctly reflationary – not deflationary, alongside the reinstatement of regulations and controls as opposed to more opening and liberalisation.¹³ Clearly, with the current preoccupation of policy makers in the leading economies with curbing speculation; strengthening market regulation; protecting household consumption; supporting the real sectors of the economy; overcoming unemployment; and generally reasserting the interventionist role of the state, it is obvious that the *nunc dimittis* of development, which was announced with glee in the early 1980s, was completely misplaced. Development may have

¹¹ See Ha Joon Chang. 2002. *Kicking Away the Ladder: Development Strategy in Perspective*, London: Anthem Press.

¹² Ha Joon Chang. 2002, *Ibid.* Also Ha Joon Chang. 2008. *Bad Samaritans: The Myth of Free Trade and the Secret History of Capitalism*, London: Bloomsbury.

¹³ *Ibid.*

been temporarily sidelined as a preoccupation of policy makers and politicians in the face of a neo-liberal onslaught and ascendancy, but development concerns, however, variously defined or understood over time, have always been present in society. Furthermore, although packaged as a set of technical ideas for achieving technocratic solutions to a variety of social questions, neo-liberalism was neither free of ideology nor ideologically neutral. With its dogmatic attachment to the principle of the free market, irrespective of history, context and circumstance, and with its foreclosure of any debates – even academic ones – about policy alternatives, neo-liberalism was not just very ideological but, in fact, it ranked as perhaps one of the narrowest and most narrowing ideologies ever seen. It was also an ideology that was built on a doctrinaire foundation that tended to be authoritarian. A constant refrain of the 1980s and 1990s, as neo-liberalism spread across the policy and political world was the notion of TINA, that is, that there was no alternative to the free market. In response a few commentators were to note, that there are few things in life to which there are no alternatives available or possible.¹⁴

Changes in technology may have compressed time and space to open many new possibilities for carrying out cross-border transactions on a global scale and in real time. But to proclaim this as marking the end of geography was clearly going too far. For one, development within countries and internationally has always had clear spatial patterns associated with it that set different regions within countries and in the world apart from one another in terms of the economic, social, and political outcomes registered. For another, there are geographical factors that alone and/or in combination with other factors account for the patterns and rates of development that take place. Furthermore, development also carries geographical consequences, not just with regard to environment but also with reference to the spatial patterns of inclusion and exclusion that occur. Thus, while contemporary globalisation may have narrowed distances and closed gaps, it has not done so uniformly, equally, and universally. While some countries and regions are more geographically integrated into the global system, others have become more geographically marginalised. A substantial part of the import costs borne by African countries is accounted for by geographical distance – in spite of major advances in both transportation and in transport technology. This is especially attested by the experiences of land-locked countries. All the arguments about the death of geography, rendering national boundaries irrelevant, putting sovereignty at bay and the irreversible decline of states, are undermined by the fact that the state remains the most coherent and powerful actor in global affairs. Borders may have been opened for capital to flow freely but fortresses are being constructed to prevent the free movement of labour, and private investors still rely on sovereign guarantees and protection for their operations.

If, the apparent victory of capitalism and liberal democracy over socialism and the soviet system marked the end of a phase in human history, it did not necessarily amount to an end of history itself. If anything, the collapse of the Soviet Union; the dissolution of

¹⁴ See Harvey & Garnett. Jr (eds.), 2008, *Op Cit*.



the Eastern bloc of Socialist countries and the Warsaw Pact military alliance; along with the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany, all important historical developments, only marked the end of one phase of history and the beginning of a new one. The rise of China and India alongside a growing Brazil, a resurgent Russia, and a recomposition of the ranks of international middle powers both embodied and chronicled the beginning of a global redistribution of power and influence. A reinforcement of multipolarity in world affairs allows spaces for a reaffirmation of social, political, cultural and economic pluralism, the promotion of alternatives and the exercise of choice. As socialist/communist ideas declined, new ideologies emerged into a new or a renewed historical significance. This development led some scholars, particularly those concerned about the Islamic revivalism – championed by regimes such as those of Iran and a variety of social movements, to warn about an impending or unfolding ‘clash of civilisations’ fuelled by competing cultural and religious identities.

COMPETING CONCEPTIONS OF DEVELOPMENT

Development as an ideal

In spite of the ideological attacks it suffered at the hands of the neo-liberals, the endurance of development as a key conceptual frame and policy objective should not be surprising. The advancement of society and the improvement of citizenry is a permanent ongoing struggle, because development conceptualised at its most complete, is an ideal that societies and people strive towards. However, even though there are many approximations of what an ideal system of development should look like, no perfect model of development exists either historically or contemporarily. In this regard, development could be, and has been, conceptualised as a permanent work in progress, an unfinished business in need of constant refinement. Every bit of advancement in the development project produces its own contradictions and shortcomings that sooner or later have to be revisited. What is considered as the summit of development at any given moment in history is, in a sense, an imperfect, even incomplete sum total of all the experiences and experiments that have proceeded it. However, developmental reversals have not been excluded in the human experience.

Development as an embodiment of power relations

Development, in theory and practice, is also suffused with relations of power. When organising society to promote progressive transformation, a variety of social interests must necessarily be brought together in interaction. In fact, it is primarily in this interaction that development is produced. The interaction inevitably also involves a distribution and redistribution of power and benefits among various social interests. That is why the content and the direction of development is always contested as different development actors constantly seek to minimise their losses, maximise their

gains, and to struggle for a reconfiguration of the process to protect their interests until an acceptable equilibrium is attained. It follows from this that, conceptually and in practice, development is not simply a technical/technocratic question but an eminently political issue too. As a contested idea and terrain, its content, meaning and direction, at any given historical moment are also under constant contestation. They carry different meanings and consequences for the central actors, depending on their location in the structure and relations of power.

Development as a dynamic process

Considering that societies are themselves susceptible to a permanent experience of change arising from a multiplicity of factors and sources, it is also logical to assume that conceptualisations and practices of development cannot and, historically, have not been static. The demands of every epoch bring forth their own development challenges which necessitate a continuous re-thinking and refinement of the concept and the practices that flow from it. Thus, over the years, ideas of development and practices, and ideas for securing it, have witnessed shifts that correspond with the changing concerns, values and perceptions of society. Historically, conceptualisations of development have also been driven not only by the needs of the time but also by the context within which development takes place. Theories of development may seek to abstract ideas about the ways in which societies can advance themselves. But it is from the contextually derived challenges which societies have to deal with that development theories can find both their relevance and their validation. Universal conceptualisations of development may be attempted, as indeed, they have been over the years. However, the full test of their relevance and their validity must also take place within a specific context, with its specific challenges, to which development thinking and action must respond. In this regard, geography and location play as much a role in shaping context, as history, culture, demography, and social structure.

Many roads lead to development

Over the past few decades, development thinkers and practitioners have devoted considerable effort to understanding how best to secure development. It is clear that there is not only one route to development that all nations and peoples must tread, but many different paths that reflect the historical forces at play in different societies. Lessons from the experiences of different countries may be extrapolated to establish the patterns of causation in the development experience, or to determine the initial conditions that are required for development to take place. However, such efforts are only useful to the extent that they are limited to offering comparative insights, as opposed to establishing rigid laws of development for all societies. Differences in history, culture, and even geography and language are often written into the development process to make it possible to differentiate the one process from the other. The development experience may be unifying in many ways but it should not



necessarily be understood as uniformising. Diversities of experiences and outcomes have always been part of the history of development even if the omnibus notions that are used in everyday discussion tend to hide or underplay this fact.

Development propelled by contradictions

In theory and in practice, development is not a unilinear and unidirectional experience. Instead, it is contradictory and characterised by zigzags. It also involves a considerable amount of guess work, experimentation, trial and error. *Ex poste facto* accounts of successful development outcomes often paint a picture of highly intelligent, meticulous planning, championed by a small group of high-flying policy thinkers and decision-makers, usually educated in Western Ivy League institutions. But such accounts, usually stylised to fit into a pre-determined conclusion, are little more than embellishments that gloss over the simple fact that policy-makers anywhere are not all-knowing super-technicians who are gifted with an unusual sense of prescient certitude and accuracy concerning the decisions they take and the outcomes that result. While, without doubt a strong degree of careful deliberation, meticulous planning, ideological conviction and political commitment are useful and ought to be vigorously promoted, in contexts such as those of African countries. Development policy making can, and is, also often characterised by evidence of bureaucratic ineptitude, internal rivalries, dysfunctionality and waste, alongside doses of simple good luck arising from circumstances that technocrats may not even have anticipated, or over which they do not necessarily exercise any direct influence.

Rationality and irrationality in development

In the scholarly and policy literature during the 1990s, attention was given to the rationality of economic agents and the actions which they take. In the specific African context, this discussion was informed by rational choice theories in general and the public choice component in particular. The discussion focused on the specific reasons why African elites were refusing to commit, first to IMF/World Bank structural adjustment, and then to the external pressures for good governance. Rational and public choice theories have been critiqued on many grounds that are not discussed in this paper. However, as far as it relates to the development process, economic rationality has to be understood beyond the economic, itself, to encompass the social, the political, the historical, and the cultural, as well as the structural and the conjectural. Not all development initiatives and projects issue *ab initio* out of an economic rationality, indeed, they could be the products of other competing non-economic rationalities. Similarly, the basis for determining rationality in the development process is not and cannot possibly be limited to the economic. Furthermore, even when development initiatives or projects may not *ab initio* be defined as being economically rational, this does not preclude the possibility that over time, they might acquire a strong economic rationality that could even become

the primary argument for justifying them. Furthermore, it needs to be understood that most of what is defined as the economic embodies a complex of elements that include history, culture, geography, and demography, glued together by a plethora of social relations.

Development models for exportation and importation

While lessons may, justifiably, be learnt across national and regional frontiers, attempts at a wholesale exportation or the importation of development models are fraught with immense difficulties since, in theory and in practice, they are an exercise in futility. Every development experience has its unique attributes and a particular set of conditions that informs and sustains it. These attributes are not always present in the same way and on the same terms as elsewhere, nor are they transferable. That is why development co-operation programmes, that seek to replicate the development models of particular donor countries in aid-receiving countries, turn out to be both irrelevant and irresponsible, amounting to unhelpful experimentations that, at best, lead nowhere and, at worst, turn out to be obstructive. The extrapolation of development experiences into compressed models could be a useful academic exercise. However, it should be remembered that such models, a condensation of complex historical experiences into a few variables, are remarkable as much for what they include as for what they omit. The opinions of scholars like W.W. Rostow, who suggest all that a developing countries need to do is, to understand the conditions that existed at an earlier phase of the development of industrialised Western countries and which corresponds to their contemporary situation, is both ahistorical and too simplistic.

Development and progress

Amidst the vigorous debates that have been raging among scholars and practitioners about development, it is often forgotten that the concept has a relatively recent history. Before it entered into the discourse of scholars and policy-makers, the more frequently used notion among thinkers was one of progress which, philosophically, was conceptualised as an all-embracing framework for capturing all-round and incremental societal advancement. As a concept, the notion of progress was far more comprehensive and included both the measurable and qualitative indicators of the advancement of human kind. This fact partly explains why the concept of progress was used across disciplines. By contrast, the concept of development, although subject to a multidisciplinary interpretation and usage, is dominated by the discipline of Economics which, in turn, has placed considerable emphasis on quantitative measurements for capturing it. Efforts by development sociologists and anthropologists to remedy the one-sided quantification – privileged by economists through the introduction of various qualitative tools – have been useful but have not been fully successful in properly balancing out the quantitative methods that continue to be dominant.



Development and the other challenges

As part of the attempts to invest in a more comprehensive understanding of development that overcomes narrow disciplinary parochialisms; dedicated intellectual efforts were made in the 1970s to promote the field of development studies and to build a curriculum for it. Those efforts were, without doubt, courageous and must be recognised for the important contributions they made over the years. Contributions which, inter alia, are evident in the significant number of development studies, research institutes and centres operating within and outside universities across the world; the equally broad range of certificate and degree programmes which they offer; the consultancy services they offer, and the advisory activities they carry out. Almost without exception, the academic efforts deployed by the range of established development institutes and centres are underpinned by a commitment to overcoming poverty and to improving human welfare. And yet, the way research and studies have been conducted over time gives the impression that the challenges of development exist only in one region of the world, namely, the so-called developing countries. In this approach, which has predominated over the years, development, both in theory and practice, is really only for and about the 'developing' countries. They are the countries that have a monopoly of the problems while the countries of the global North, especially the aid-giving ones among them, have a monopoly of the solutions. This is an approach which has fossilised to become almost a natural state of things, but it is one which must be changed as part of a wholesale rethinking of development and of the kind of research that needs to be carried out, to have a resonance that is global and a relevance that is locally anchored. All countries and regions of the world are faced with development challenges. Admittedly, the challenges vary from country to country, if not in their severity then in their manifestation. A more holistic and integrated approach will however; seek to understand the challenges in the countries of the global South and those of the global North and the inter-linkages between them.

Growth and development

As the concept of development gained in currency, scholarly contestations mushroomed over the question of how best to measure it. The privileging of quantitative indicators over qualitative ones was to place economists both in a frontline position in the debates and in the process of economic growth. This included, as a central pre-occupation in the early stages, the rates and phases in which it occurred. In the most extreme cases, some scholars equated or conflated growth with development, using the two interchangeably. W.W. Rostow's classic on the stages of economic growth which 'developing' countries would need to go through to become like the developed ones was, in many ways, exemplary of this approach.¹⁵ Although, it is inconceivable that development could ever take place without sustained economic growth driven not by speculative bubbles but by the expansion of national productive capacities in the real sectors, many were to

¹⁵ Rostow, W.W. 1960. *Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

contest the idea that development could be reduced to or collapsed into growth. In time, a consensus was to be built that development is much broader than economic growth and includes many more indices, economic and non-economic, than those which are captured by the growth models favoured by (mainstream) economics. Growth may be a necessary condition for development to take place but it is by no means sufficient. Indeed, in order for growth to be developmental; public policy interventions and incentives are required and it is here that the developmental moorings of the state and its institutions become critically important.

Development beyond the economic

If the general agreement was established, fairly quickly, that development is more than economic growth, there remained the thorny issue of the tendency of some economists to conceptualise development only in terms of the economic. Within this framework, a country was considered to be developed only on the basis of a set of economic indicators. Also, the development performance of countries was primarily assessed in terms of economic indicators that included the Gross National Product, Gross Domestic Product, balance of payments, external debt, etc. This approach excluded a whole range of sociological indicators, political parameters, cultural well-being, and the spiritual health of the populace germane, to a more complete understanding of the development experience – and citizenship. In its excessive and narrow economism, the approach did not even pay attention to such issues as patterns of income distribution; inter-sectoral linkages and (im)balances; the terms of trade; and other indicators that could go beyond the measurement of annual rates of growth and the average per capita income, to give a more nuanced picture of the nature of development taking place. When this gap is compounded with the neglect of sociological, political, cultural, and spiritual concerns, mainly on the ground that they cannot be modelled, then the roots of the discontent that spread about the reduction of development to the economic - and a very narrow economic at that, will be fully understood. Spirited criticisms were mounted against the notion of the rational human being as being only or mainly a *homo economicus*, and various trickle down theories propounded to address concerns about (mass) poverty and deep inequalities amidst (high rates of) growth that were shown to be unsatisfactory on many academic and policy grounds.

In search of human development

In the quest to overcome the limitations inherent in a conceptualisation of development only or primarily, in economic terms, various alternative notions were proposed which had implications for what was measured or not measured. The notion that eventually emerged into a dominant position was that of human development popularised by the UNDP. Human development encompasses not only all the key economic indicators but also incorporates measurements of the



quality of life, patterns of social inequality, experiences of political participation, and the state of freedoms to produce an index on the basis of which countries are ranked. The so-called Human Development Index does involve a considerable amount of aggregation without which it would not be easily intelligible. Still, for the fact that it successfully broadened the basket of indicators to produce a more rounded account of a development process in which human beings are at the centre, it represents a significant contribution that is closer to the idea of progress that interested an earlier generation of thinkers. Yet, it is not without its weaknesses, not least among them, an absence of the politics of development that is integral to an understanding of the state of health of a polity and the well-being of its members.

Sustained and sustainable development

If development is neither simply reducible to growth nor limited to the economic arguments raged in the 1970s into the 1980s, as to whether development could really be considered to be such, if the elements that comprise it were not sustained over the long-term to provide it with deep-roots and durability. In this thinking, it was not simply enough to know whether the accumulation taking place was a sustained one. This was an argument that many found compelling, especially as it combined concerns with the process of accumulation over the long haul with an interest in the extent to which the distribution of the national wealth was equitable and the welfare of the citizenry catered for. Its merit lay in being able to sift through short-term trends and structural imbalances to assess the viability of patterns and phases of accumulation. Its strongest proponents were keen to distinguish between it and the notion of sustainable development. This incorporated concerns about the depletion of finite natural resources through uncontrolled exploitation that was fuelled by a growing (Western) consumerism, and the rapid degradation of the environment. If left unchecked, it could threaten the long-term survival of the human species on earth. In this conceptualisation, development is neither meaningful nor desirable if it is not sustainable from an environmental point of view. In other words, a sustainable development is one which allows present generations the use of resources to meet their needs without endangering the prospects for future generations to meet their own needs, using the same resources.

Development as the small and the beautiful

Out of the reflections that took place in the 1970s on sustained and sustainable development, there emerged an associated critique which challenged the ideas and practices of development as gigantic projects that tended to be very expensive white elephants. They were often delivered as capital-intensive turn-key projects planted in labour surplus developing countries that did not have the means or wherewithal to maintain them. Such gigantic projects not only represented a

drain on the economies of the developing countries, they also became important sources of dependency. They were challenged by critiques that proposed a more down-to-earth conceptualisation of development: small interventions and projects that were easy to manage and to master, which contributed to technological and managerial learning, employed labour which was available in abundance, helped to strengthen domestic economic linkages through the use of local inputs, and which met the needs of the domestic market efficiently. The small-is-beautiful notion appealed to various sensibilities about sustainability and even mushroomed into a movement before it eventually petered out for want of local bearers. In recent years, however, a new emphasis is being placed on the important role small and medium enterprises play and, therefore, on the need to provide an enabling policy environment for them to flourish. It is also broadly recognised that while development could also be beautiful, even if it is small, not all small development projects and interventions are necessarily beautiful, not least from the point of view of labour relations and the welfare of workers’.

Development from above vs. development from below

Managing the development experience is an issue which has also been pursued in literature with particular reference to the governance framework. In this connection a strand of the literature has underscored the important role of a technocratic elite, whether insulated or not, in the organisation of development. These elite, knowledgeable, skilled, and networked people, are embedded in the state and are able to take the centre-stage of decision-making to advance the development agenda, independent of local – and even foreign – interest groups, which might, otherwise, obstruct it out of parochial concerns. A critical approach in the literature has, however, challenged this development-from-above strategy and presented the case for a development-from-below strategy that not only includes ordinary people as participants but also valorises their knowledge, skills, and agency as makers of change. Furthermore, development-from-above driven by a technocratic elite – as opposed to the broad citizenry – has been critiqued for being neither democratic nor popular.

Development as an ideology

From the earliest thinkers to the more contemporary ones, whether explicitly stated or not, the conceptualisation of development-which has been favoured – has always been wrapped in an ideology understood as: a comprehensive vision of the organisation of human society to achieve social transformation. That is why some scholars have argued, with justification, that development is a condensation of ideologies. From this point of view, no development is neutral and neither is it value-free. Technical attributes may be required to frame a development strategy, and technocrats may be called upon to implement the programmes flowing from



it, but these do not reduce from the ideological anchorage of development. Every development experience involves the making of choices and choices are exercised on the basis of values which have an ideological – even doctrinal – foundation. When the mercantilists held sway in the history of development, they advanced their interests through nationalist ideologies that legitimated the trade barriers they erected to protect their national markets. The ideological platform, on which Adam Smith and David Ricardo launched their historic diatribe against the mercantilists, was free trade. Karl Marx's critique of the capitalist model of accumulation was erected on the ideology of socialism. The counter-attack against Marxian socialism has been pursued in the name of liberalisation and free competition. In matters of development, an ideology does not die; it is only reconstituted according to the interest of the group(s) whose interests are dominant.

Engendering development

If ideology is integral to development, gender is its engine. For much of the history of economic policy-making and development thinking, very little attention has been paid either to the specific roles which women play, or to the articulation of gender relations. Indeed, until a sustained feminist challenge was launched in the 1970s, against the masculinist biases of economics and development, gender remained a blind spot in most of the analyses carried out and the policies pursued. It was not uncommon for conventional arguments such as; difficulties with measurement and an alleged impossibility to meaningfully factor it in, to be deployed as explanations for why gender is written out of economic and development models. More than this, key sites of the labour of women, such as the household and the informal sector, were also not reckoned with in any serious way. Some of the types of labour they carried out such as; care in the household and unpaid roles on the farms, were simply not either counted, because they were either not deemed easy to account for, or they were simply subsumed under the roles exercised by men. It is thanks to the efforts of an array of feminist scholars and gender specialists that the position has been fully accepted on grounds of: no development system can be considered balanced, just as no democracy can be considered meaningful, unless it is fully engendered.¹⁶

States, markets, and development

Intertwined with the debates on the concept of development are discussions about the institutional mechanisms by which it may be achieved and sustained. This discussion has largely polarised the scholarly and policy communities between those who consider the state to be indispensable to development and those who see the market as the more effective instrument/mechanism. What is usually forgotten in the debate is the fact that states are themselves instrumental in the emergence

¹⁶ Drucilla K. Barker. & Susan Feiner, 2004. *Liberating Economics: Feminist Perspectives on Families, Work and Globalisation*, Michigan: Michigan University Press.

and the functioning of markets, just as markets play important complementary roles to states in the development process. If it is the case that states and markets have a dialectical relationship in the development process, it follows that no development experience can occur successfully with the complete exclusion of either the market or the state. Historically, early stages of development have been driven by heavy state interventions designed, in part, to create, nurture, regulate, and direct markets to achieve the desired outcomes. As markets mature and increase in reach and in capability, states may assume new, less directly interventionist roles that do not diminish from their central role in the development process. In practice, therefore, the development experience is a continuum in which, depending on a variety of factors and considerations, states may play a greater or lesser role and markets may be more or less critical.

For late developers such as the countries of Africa, the state clearly has a central role to play in matters that range from the creation of markets, the promotion of a domestic entrepreneurship, and the provision of an enabling environment for business, the equitable distribution of incomes, provision of major infrastructure, and the encouragement of innovation. Instead of the polarisation between the state and the market, in the conceptualisation of development and the translation of concept into action, it would seem more appropriate to focus research and policy attention on the types of states and the types of markets that are required to secure development at different moments in the history of countries. Such an approach will make the debate less ahistorical and unnecessarily polemical and more attuned to the demands of the context within which development is being planned.

States, civil society and development

During the 1980s and 1990s, at the height of the single-minded anti-statism associated with the pursuit of IMF/World Bank structural adjustment programmes across Africa, investments were made promoting civil society organisations as an alternative to the state in the quest for the development of the continent. Steps were taken by an array of donors, acting either directly or through international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), to strengthen civil society organisations where they were weak. As the state suffered successive waves of rationalisation and retrenchment, attempts were made to fill gaps created in its social service delivery capacity through the extension of financial and other forms of support to civil society groups, especially those that were set up as local NGOs to take on tasks such as the provision of education and health services. Many were the INGOs that also boosted their local presence across Africa to perform a variety of tasks, ranging from the social to the economic. The impression was given in some quarters that civil society could emerge in Africa as an alternative to the state, with the former idealised as open, transparent, efficient, grassroots-oriented and democratic and the latter demonised as corrupt, inefficient, authoritarian and unrepresentative.



While the wild optimism of the 1980s and 1990s that civil society in general and NGOs in particular could be promoted as an alternative to the Africa state was subsequently significantly tempered, it is still important to underscore a core point, namely, that in matters of development not only in Africa but across the world, there can be no by-passing, circumventing or side-stepping the state. Many critics have documented the inefficiencies, poor capacities and even corrupt practices of NGOs to argue their position that they do not constitute an alternative to the state. Some others have pointed to the ironic situation in several countries, where retrenched senior officials of governments, undergoing downsizing/rightsizing, re-emerged as NGO leaders. In government, they were deemed inefficient and corrupt; but finding themselves in NGOs as a survival strategy, they were celebrated as the underwriters of efficiency and transparency. But, the fact remains that nowhere in the world is there any known experience of development having been carried out by civil society and/or NGOs. And Africa will not be an exception to this.

The dialectic of development and underdevelopment

The struggle for development is part of the shared experience of all human societies. But why are some countries more developed than others? This is a question which has exercised minds over the years. Some of the earliest explanations were purely racist and unhelpful and as they failed to stand serious scrutiny they do not deserve to be discussed any further. More considered explanations were hinged on obstacles in the domestic political economy rooted in tradition; the configuration of power; the constraints of geography; the weight of population growth rates and a bias against rural areas. They acted either alone or in combination with other factors to prevent the smooth and rapid transition to modernisation and to progress. Other equally considered arguments focused on external constraints that were linked to patterns of interaction with the international system that undermined autonomous and autochthonous local development. The latter explanation was particularly favoured by the underdevelopment and dependency school that emerged into prominence in the 1970s and which challenged the pillars of theories of modernisation that attributed the 'backwardness' of the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America to among other things; tradition and superstition.

For the underdevelopment and dependency school: underdevelopment is not an original or a prior state but the outcome of the interaction between different regions of the world in which the West developed at the expense of the other countries of the global South. The characteristics and consequences of underdevelopment are many. They centre mainly on the inability of the underdeveloped/dependent countries, which exist on the periphery of the global capitalist system, to engage in self-propelling, autonomous development. Development in the centres of global capitalist accumulation produces underdevelopment and/or dependency in the peripheral countries. There is, therefore, a dialectical inter-connection between development and underdevelopment/dependency. From this point of view, the

other side of development is not non-development but underdevelopment and/or dependency of various kinds. The arguments of the underdevelopment/dependency school were both ground-breaking and very popular in the 1970s into the 1980s but, they were also critiqued on many important grounds, including the fact that their excessive, one-sided focus on the external meant that domestic processes of accumulation and the class relations and struggles built around them were neglected.

Without doubt, the modernisation school deserved the harsh criticism which was levelled against it by the underdevelopment/dependency school. But the critique formulated by the latter, especially at its most dogmatic, also easily became an almost automatic opposite of the core postulates of the former. Thus, where the modernisation theorists located all the problems of underdevelopment at the domestic, their underdevelopment/dependency critics mostly took the exact opposite stance, namely, that underdevelopment and dependency originated from the external. There were many problems inherent with this approach to transcending the limitations of the modernisation school, and these have been extensively discussed in the literature. But, from the point of view of this essay, what is really critical to keep in mind is, that the domestic and external are articulated in complex ways that affect development processes and outcomes. No country develops to the complete exclusion of external factors. By the same token, no country can hope to advance itself solely by relying on external factors. Furthermore, in many instances, the external is woven into the fabric of the domestic and vice versa. What is central, therefore, is an ability to manage the external effectively to serve domestic development objectives and strategies, and to deploy the domestic in ways in which it is able to maximise benefits from the external. It is here that the role of a development-minded state and coherent public policy becomes important.

RETHINKING DEVELOPMENT FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF AFRICA

The historic roots of underdevelopment in Africa from the slave trade to colonialism

From the preceding paragraphs, it is clear that the concept of development is a much contested one – both intellectually and socially. It is also a concept that has never been static, evolving over time as human progress has advanced. And yet, in the African experience, development policy has almost always been extrapolated from *ex-poste facto* readings of the experiences of Europe – and the United States – and then fossilised for presentation as gospel truths to which there are usually no alternatives. A stifling system of *pensee unique* that prevents serious scholarly discussion and the exploration of alternative policy paths have all too frequently enveloped the development debate. This approach resulted in the African continent being reduced to a giant laboratory for a succession of experiments that invariably failed to deliver what they promised as development. A number of commentators have observed that the continent has also served as a graveyard for a succession of development initiatives. In the meantime, the overall performance of the continent



has been generally poor, lagging behind most regions of the world even as social and political problems, flowing from maldevelopment, feed into a vicious cycle of instability, poverty, inequality, insecurity, and underdevelopment. Nothing less than a rethinking of the approaches that have been taken is called for to find ways to promote development on the continent to overcome this state of affairs.

Students of African history have established that during the last 600 years, Africa's contacts and encounters with the outside world have cumulatively undermined its development prospects. Africa has systematically been exposed to patterns of exploitation that have eroded its productive base and capacities since the European slave trade, which depleted whole regions of population and also provoked serious political instability to the so-called legitimate trade that saw the carting away of agricultural raw materials to feed the industries of Europe and the United States. The colonial wars of consequence that flowed out of the era of the legitimate trade were ostensibly waged to achieve a self-imposed European mission of civilisation on the continent. And yet, for most of the colonial period, development policy was hardly a matter for political priority in the imperial metropolises. Instead, the colonies were required to pay their way even as they were locked into an unequal exchange that saw them benefiting little from the primary commodities they produced for export to fuel the industrial development and consumption patterns of the advanced capitalist countries of Europe and North America. It was only in the period after 1945, a phase generally referred to as the period of late colonialism that the colonial administration began to pay attention to the internal development of the colonies to yield cheap raw materials, looking beyond their ability to reorganise economic production. But, as with most colonial reforms introduced to save the system from inevitable collapse in the face of its growing internal contradictions, the measures introduced by in the post-War period were too little and came too late.¹⁷

Various explanations have been adduced in the literature for the interest which the colonial authorities took in the development of the colonies during the late colonial period, not least among them the groundswell of nationalist agitation that gathered momentum after 1945, and challenged both colonial policy and the continuation of colonial rule.¹⁸ Even at that, the development projects that were pursued were few and far between, comprising mainly of a very modest import substitution programme in which light consumer goods were produced locally to replace a range of finished imports, but using imported raw materials to do so. In effect, the import substitution industrial sector that began to emerge was not articulated with the domestic agricultural and minerals sectors, whilst intermediate and capital goods production remained underdeveloped. Economic policy was also not articulated with social policy to address the welfare of the citizenry in an integrated manner. Little wonder then that by the end of the colonial period, African countries were mainly primary commodity producers, occupying the lowest rungs in the international division of labour, and with social indicators that were among the poorest in the world.

¹⁷ Walter Rodney. 1973. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, London: Bogle L' Overture Publications.

¹⁸ Anne Phillips. 1989. *The Enigma of Colonialism*, London: James Currey.

The post-colonial quest for development

It was the broad import substitution policy approach that was introduced in the late colonial period that was carried over into the independence period, only it was pursued with greater determination and intensity. The post-colonial state took a central role in the development process, engaging with small holder agricultural producers through marketing boards, creating parastatals to oversee various projects, partnering with foreign investors to establish joint venture industries, undertaking infrastructure projects and expanding access to education and health care. Across the African continent, governments launched national development plans within which they worked towards various social and economic targets that would enable them to transform their societies. The results which they registered were mixed. While on almost all fronts, the record of post-colonial governments in the period to the end of the 1970s, was superior to what the colonial authorities registered, and most economic and social indicators were generally on an upward trend, they were, however, unable to establish the solid, diversified, and integrated economic base that could enable them to meet both their own development targets and the full range of citizen expectation.¹⁹

The balance of payments and debt crises which African countries suffered in the late 1970s and early 1980s, brought out the fragility of the post-colonial development process and its vulnerability to shocks of various kinds. The crises adversely affected government incomes and national growth rates, compelling the introduction of various home-grown austerity measures that penalised the social sectors in particular. The crises also provided the framework for the entry of the Bretton Woods institutions into the direct management of the economies of African countries. Drawing on co-ordinated bilateral and multilateral donor conditionality clauses that made prior agreement with the IMF and the World Bank on an economic reform programme a condition for support, the Bretton Woods institutions launched stabilisation and structural adjustment programmes which they promised would not only stem the crises but also the decline the African economies were experiencing and restore them to the path of growth.²⁰

The lost decades of stabilisation and structural adjustment

The stabilisation and adjustment programmes, pursued during the 1980s and 1990s and into the new millennium, comprised a set of measures and instruments aimed at deregulating/liberalising prices, trade, interest rates, and exchange rates whilst rolling back the state. The attack on the state was prosecuted with a single-minded determination as the flip side of the market liberalisation project. It entailed a retrenchment of the civil/public service; the dismantling of parastatals; the dissolution of marketing boards; the privatisation/commercialisation/liquidation of public enterprises; an across-the-board imposition of a public sector pay freeze; and drastic reductions in public expenditures to balance budgets. The social sectors, including education and health in particular, which had already been affected adversely

¹⁹ Thandika Mkandawire & Charles Soludo, 1999. *Our Continent, Our Future*, Dakar, Ottawa & Trenton: NJ CODESRIA Books/IDRC/Africa World Press.

²⁰ Mkandawire & Soludo, 1999, *Ibid*.



by the home-grown austerity measures which governments themselves undertook, suffered even more serious and sustained attacks. The overall deflationary thrust of the IMF/World Bank structural adjustment programmes simply further deepened and prolonged the crises in African countries. Most economies recorded negative growth or simply stagnated; the social gains of the post-independence years were virtually wiped out; and political instability associated with the pains of adjustment was commonplace.

The IMF/World Bank stabilisation and adjustment programmes promised much and delivered little. Efforts at saving the market reform model that underpinned the programmes, including the launching of initiatives that were ostensibly designed to mitigate their social costs and the promotion of governance reform; the proclamation of donor commitment to the domestic ownership of reform; and a stated commitment to capacity building did little to improve their efficacy. The attention that was paid to issues of 'good' governance, that also flowed from the same objective of saving the adjustment programmes rather than re-thinking the governance initiatives were, therefore, compromised. It became less about the reform of national-territorial administrative systems and institutions to promote active citizenship, and more about securing private property rights.²¹ From the middle of the 1990s onwards, it became unavoidable to address the core of the problem with the orthodox route that had been favoured for the reform of African economies namely; that the IMF/World Bank adjustment model was essentially a flawed one, ill-adapted to reform the needs of African countries. And it is this fact that also explains why, by the end of the 1990s, after almost two and half decades of experimentation, the model finally lost all credibility even within the World Bank itself. For Africa, these were lost decades.

African development beyond structural adjustment

There may have been a widespread recognition by the dawn of the new millennium that the stabilisation and adjustment programmes promoted by the Bretton Woods institutions were flawed beyond redemption. It is however, equally significant that no serious commitment has been deployed to develop and promote coherent alternative approaches for developing African countries. The World Bank has worked with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to promote Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) officially aimed at reducing poverty. The United Nations has adopted a set of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which, among other things, propose to halve poverty by the target date of 2015. But, however, laudable poverty reduction may be, and while few will doubt that the attainment of the MDGs will represent some significant progress for African countries, it is important to underscore that they do not constitute a development strategy in and of themselves. More than this, the core of macro-economic policy continues to be the very same deflationary structural adjustment framework promoted in the 1980s and 1990s by the IMF and the World Bank. Without a root-

²¹ Adebayo Olukoshi. 1998. *The Elusive Prince of Denmark: Structural Adjustment and the Politics of Governance in Africa*, Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.

and-branch reformulation of the macro-economic strategy of African countries, the calls for the stepping up of development assistance and experiments in setting up so-called millennium villages will do very little to set Africa on the path of sustained and sustainable development. And it is such a strategy that Africa needs urgently. It is a strategy which calls for a democratic developmental state which will pay full attention to the long-term economic development of the continent and to the welfare of Africans.

In Africa, a rich literature is growing on the developmental state and the basic prerequisites for building it. It is noteworthy that most of the discussion also underscores the important place of democracy and citizenship in the African developmental project alongside any other consideration that might be pursued. The democratic development state for which scholars like Mkandawire are calling for is, therefore, one which, politically, institutionally, and ideologically, is committed to the economic development of Africa, including its industrialisation, but which also unambiguously integrates the strengthening of democratic institutions and processes, as well as the promotion of social policy and inclusion, as core elements of its strategy.²² In other words, the democratic developmental state that Africa needs is one which combines the economic, the political, and the socio-cultural in an integrated whole. Read against the backdrop of the range of issues covered in this essay, it is clear that in any project of long-term commitment to development the state must feature in a central driving role; planning will count a great deal; skilled human resources will be required and trade and industrial policy will be critical. In this approach private entrepreneurship is not discouraged, there will be ample room for the deployment of the forces of the market. Regional co-operation and integration will also play a critical role in the overall development strategy.

The vision of an African democratic developmental state in Africa, as a route for overcoming the impact of IMF/World Bank structural adjustment, calls for major investments in higher education on the continent to ensure that both the knowledge that could support long-term development, and the human resources required for the developmental project are available. Elsewhere in the world, developmental universities have historically played important roles in accompanying processes of progressive transformation in the societies in which they are located. African universities are similarly called upon by the difficult realities across Africa to be developmental in the sense of revamping themselves, and with appropriate support from the state and citizens, to be responsive to the challenges of improving human livelihood on the continent. University research constitutes a key area in which major investments need to be made. However, the wholesale revamping of curriculum is also unavoidable, especially as new skill sets will be needed to carry Africa beyond the adverse impact and legacy of the adjustment years.²³ In this connection, development training programmes within and across disciplines will particularly require attention as they were either abandoned or allowed to go into

²² Thandika Mkandawire. 2001. 'Thinking about Developmental States in Africa'. *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, vol. 25(3)

²³ It should be pointed out that the African university was directly attacked during the 1980s and 1990s as part of the neo-liberal assault on the post-colonial model of development. The attacks that were launched included the investment of resources in producing new curricula for the teaching of disciplines like Economics along the lines favoured by the neo-liberals.



decay at the height of the promotion of structural adjustment. Furthermore, a strong need for the re-establishment of the African university as a site for the fostering of civic identities and democratic values has been manifested for a while, and will require attention as part of a renewal strategy. In, re-thinking the role and place of the African university in the national and continental development agenda, innovative approaches to research, course delivery, and capacity development would need to be pursued, including the organisation of joint programmes which, if properly structured, should also flow into and reinforce the momentum for regional cooperation and integration that has gathered pace across the continent in recent years.

GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT: UNIVERSITIES FOR SOCIAL CHANGE IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Relebohile Moletsane¹

INTRODUCTION

Member states and global development agencies, particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa, are facing considerable struggles in their efforts to achieve the 2015 Millennium Development Goal: to improve gender equality and to promote the empowerment of women (Moolman 2005; Saijee 2005; Moletsane 2005). International policy initiatives requiring signatory states to develop legislation and interventions outlawing all forms of discrimination against women have been adopted by United Nations member states, and by the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). In the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development; Heads of States have committed to ensuring the eradication of all gender inequalities in the region, noting that gender equality is a fundamental human right. They have also committed to the 'integration and mainstreaming of gender issues into the SADC Programme of Action and Community Building Initiative, as a strategy towards sustainable development in the region' (SADC 1997).

Over the past decade, significant inroads have been made, in terms of gender parity and equality in most of Africa, particularly in the social and political sphere, allowing greater representation of women in government and other social institutions (Mama 2009). But the positive outcomes of these improvements in political gender inequities often fail to translate into improved quality of life for the majority of women and girls, particularly those living in rural contexts.

Thus, in terms of global gender and development, feminists (and others) have come to accept the notion that development (or under development) impacts differently on women and men. This understanding is based on the assumption that gender inequality and concomitant discrimination against women and girls are a function of the insidious interaction among the many crises facing communities and nations in the region, among which are poverty, gender-based (and sexual) violence, and HIV/AIDS (Terry 2007). Even though, interventions to address these have been numerous and varied there is also a growing recognition that they have failed. This paper addresses the questions: In the context of this fertile international, regional and national policy context, why does gender inequality persist? In particular, why does development remain negatively skewed against women and girls and most importantly, what can/should universities do as agencies for social change to intervene?

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PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

But we must not forget the original goals of the transition – to raise the standard of living and to develop humane and democratic societies. These goals need to be re-affirmed. (Carol Bellamy, Former Executive Director, UNICEF)

Gender and feminist scholars have argued that the failure of global and national gender and development initiatives is a result of the perceptions of gender equality meaning equal numbers of men and women (or boys and girls) in organisations; the interventions that view and treat men and women in the same way (Momsen 2004), and interventions that are devoid of gender as an analytical and activist tool in development agendas. It is also a result of development efforts that ignore the complex interactions among the many crises that face families, communities and nations in the regions, including poverty, gender-based violence, crime, and HIV/AIDS, and the varied impacts they have on women and on men.

Development initiatives have evolved over the years and to understand the evolving perceptions of gender and development in the global macro-economic and social policies, it is necessary to briefly discuss the various approaches to development that have emerged over the years in the international development agenda.

Momsen's (2004) chronology of development approaches begins with the *welfare approach*, concluding that until the 1970s, women only benefitted from macro-economic policies based on their roles as mothers and wives, with the assumption that child welfare grants and macro-economic interventions would benefit women through a trickle-down/trickle-up effect. This approach identified men as development agents and women as dependants.²

According to Momsen (2004), with the promulgation of the International Year for Women (1975) and the International Women's Decade (1976-85), the WID was institutionalised as an approach to development, particularly in western Europe and North America, aiming to 'integrate women into economic development by focusing on income generation projects for [them]' (p.13). WID, which remains popular, has been criticised for its tendency to focus on individuals as agents of change ignoring the differences among them, some of which include their geographic location, their social class, their race, their gender relations and their roles in the families and communities in which they reside and work. Ndimande (2001), states that WID tends to focus exclusively on the productive roles of women, ignoring their reproductive roles and the potential for the negative impacts of the multiple and often conflicting demands on them.³

The Gender and Development (GAD) approach developed as an alternative to WID's, adding women to the development agenda. GAD advocates using a

² see also www.arts.yorku.ca/sosc/.../genderapproachestodevelopment.ppt, Accessed 1 October 2009

³ www.essa.org.za/download/papers/06.pdf, Accessed 3 October 2009

gender lens – focusing on the notion of gender as socially constructed, and on gender relations as the socially scripted patterns of behaviour between men and women in families, communities and societies. This approach is premised on the understanding that unequal power relations between men and women deny the latter access to economic and social resources⁴ and that if power structures in national and international agencies (Aid) take gender equality seriously, women's empowerment would be ensured and their uptake of economically active/productive roles would increase (Momsen 2004).

Momsen also argues that the Women and Development (WAD) approach was reportedly a result of women from the 'global south' rejecting the gender equality notions of feminists from the north as devoid of understanding women in the 'global south'. Ndimande (2001) also contends that proponents of WAD argued for the recognition of women's unpaid domestic work in macro-economic policies, which many women in sub-Saharan Africa are still arguing for, and for employers to recognise their reproductive roles.⁵ The South African Department of Science and Technology's Science, Engineering and Technology for Women (SET4W) recently released a call for proposals for a research study: *'An Assessment of Incentives for Employing Women in the Corporate Environment... to investigate how incentives (with special emphasis to financial incentives) could be used to benefit companies for employing more women, especially women of child bearing age and/or who are raising young families, in a corporate environment – women who are currently perceived by some as presenting a financial risk to companies'* (DST Terms of Reference, September 2009).

Gender mainstreaming, was popularised as a development approach in most sub-Saharan countries (and others) after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action by the Fourth World Conference on Women: *Action for Equality, Development and Peace*, on 15 September 1995. The Beijing Platform for Action committed participating governments to advancing the goals of equality for women, and in particular, to eliminating discrimination against and violation of girl-children in all spheres of life (Moletsane 2005). In response, gender mainstreaming attempts to 'ensure that women's as well as men's concerns and experiences are integral to the design, implementation and, monitoring and evaluation of all projects so that gender inequality is not perpetuated' (Momsen 2004: 15). In recent gender and feminist debates, gender mainstreaming policies and initiatives have been criticised for allowing governments and institutions to focus on increasing the representation of women in government and other social institutions (for example, the increase in the number of parliamentarians in some African countries, e.g., Rwanda, Liberia, South Africa and others) and ignoring the qualitative and unique experiences of these women (and the men) once they are in these positions, as well as of those who remain on the margins of society.

⁴ www.arts.yorku.ca/sosc/.../genderapproachestodevelopment.ppt. Accessed: 1 October 2009

⁵ www.essa.org.za/download/papers/06.pdf. Accessed: 3 October 2009



Other categorises of gender and development approaches are also identified in the available literature. For example, Terry (2007) identifies the human development approach, which she says, aims to increase the choices and freedoms of women and men. This approach has been credited for providing a lens through which the nature of gender inequality and in particular, the gendered nature of poverty, HIV/Aids and other social crises against women can be understood. However, as Terry concludes, this approach only looks at the nature of women's disadvantage and marginalisation, and ignores the reasons for these.

Terry identifies the empowerment approach, also identified by Momsen (2004), as aiming to address this oversight, identifying gender inequalities as being responsible for creating and perpetuating disparities between and among individuals and groups e.g., men and women, rich and poor. This approach advocates development interventions that empower women so that they are able to challenge and change their institutionalised and internalised subordination in families, communities and places of employment. The idea is that women become empowered as agents of social change in their own right, rather than passive recipients of assistance and aid from men, their governments and international agencies. The understanding is that it is only once women are empowered to act on their own (and others') behalf, by identifying the issues that affect them and the solutions for addressing them, that the development initiatives are likely to succeed (Moletsane *et al.* 2009).

Another approach identified by Terry (2007) is the human rights based approach to development. This promotes the integration of women's and girls' human rights with the national and international development agendas as called for by the MDGs. For example, calls abound that education, access to employment and gender equality, among others, are human rights, rather than special privileges that both men and women are entitled to.

PUTTING GENDER EQUALITY AT THE CENTRE OF INSTITUTIONAL PROGRAMMING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Amina Mama writes that, in a globalising context, '[as] universities become less accountable to the local public and more accountable to the global market, longstanding social justice agendas, including those of gender equality, need to be defended anew'⁶ But, behind the backdrop of a globalising world and the development crises that face poor communities and nations in our region, can/should universities play a role as agents of social change?

Among many educationists, scholars, policy-makers and development agents, the theoretical and practical linkages among education, gender and development are often taken for granted. For example, the former Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Anan, is reported to have suggested that 'there is no tool for development more effective than the education of girls'.⁷ Similarly, Carol Bellamy,

⁶ http://www.barnard.edu/sfonline/africana/print_mama.htm, Accessed: 3 October 2009

⁷ <http://uk.oneworld.net/guides/gender>, Accessed: 10 September 2009

former Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is quoted as saying, '[We are] prepared to do what it takes in any country that has not yet realised the value of educating its girls. These girls simply cannot afford to wait any longer.'⁸ The policy context also reinforces these understandings of the significant role of education in development, particularly gender and development.

However, as many gender and feminist scholars have warned, access to education is not enough for true gender equality in families, communities and places of learning and work. This is evident by both the implementation of free and/or universal primary education in many sub-Saharan African countries, and by the continuing gender disparities at various levels and sectors of societies. No where are these disparities more conspicuous than in higher education institutions in the region.

Amina Mama cites the findings of the Gender and Institutional Culture in African Universities (CICAU) project, conducted in five universities on the continent, which 'provide detailed qualitative evidence that no matter what the mission statements may proclaim, universities operate in ways that sustain and reproduce unequal gender relations in both the social and the intellectual life of those inhabiting it'.⁹ This illustrates the conclusion that higher education institutions (HEIs) are not liberal and gender-neutral spaces, nor do they promote equal opportunities for both men and women to pursue the intellectual agenda that the global context mandates. The studies she cites dismiss the notion that these disparities are caused by patriarchal expectations (often said to be internalised by women themselves) for women to drop out to marry and have babies. Instead, they suggest that a combination of socio-cultural factors interact to impact on women's ability and willingness to persist and succeed in universities. Predictably, these include poverty, exacerbated by the economic crisis and scarce resources, as well as the socio-political conditions both in the communities and nations in which they originate and in the institutions in which they enrol. She also states that poverty tends to interact in very insidious ways with other social crises and cultural conditions to impact negatively on gender relations in families, communities and social institutions, and on development in general (Morrell *et al.* 2001; Mbali, 2009).

Other factors that impact on gender equality, in student enrolment and academic employment, include the institutional cultures of the institutions and the experiences of women and men therein (Chisholm *et al.* 2009). Mama concludes that HEIs tend to perpetuate and sustain patriarchal gender regimes and cultures 'through the everyday procedures, practices and values' and that 'by not acting to facilitate some level of redress, they end up perpetuating an unequal status quo'.¹⁰ The curricular and extra-curricular activities and messages about gender equality (both explicit and implicit within these) are significant in determining the persistence or failure and withdrawal of women from universities. For example, how have HEIs in the region responded to the feminisation of agriculture, or to the mechanisation of food production, clothing manufacturing and other industries which have traditionally

⁸ www.betterworld.net/heroes/pages-b/bellamy-quotes.htm. Accessed: 3 October 2009

⁹ http://www.barnard.edu/sfonline/africana/print_mama.htm. Accessed: 3 October 2009

¹⁰ http://www.barnard.edu/sfonline/africana/print_mama.htm. Accessed: 3 October 2009



employed women, in what and how they teach? Do they continue to teach content and use pedagogies that privilege men and marginalise women in terms of accessing the skills needed for the technologies which are used in production in these industries? Who, for example, dominates enrolments in such fields as engineering, information technology and related fields? To what extent and in what ways do the research agendas in these institutions respond to these questions?

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

According to Mama and others, gender justice lies at the heart of development efforts. If, universities are to take their rightful place as agents of social change in contemporary societies, particularly in the context of the ravages of political violence, poverty, gender (and sexual) violence, and HIV/AIDS, they must place gender equality at the centre of institutional planning and programming. However, as Truscott (1994: 4) warns:


...our understanding of what it is to be a woman or a man, the degree of inequality between the sexes (and within the sexes), the degree of oppression, the degree of power each has and the ways society teaches or socialises its members to become women and men is historically [and geographically] specific (i.e., it is not the same in all societies over all historical periods).

Education policy, including higher education, is largely informed by international and regional policies and treaties. Local needs and aspirations tend to play second fiddle. An alternative is for HEIs and other social institutions to imagine and to implement development efforts that take the eradication of gender inequality seriously. However, as Truscott warns, these must of necessity, differ across geographical and societal contexts, and be informed by the local and national contexts in which they are located.

My experience at the European Conference on African Studies conference in June 2009 and Everjoice Win's haunting question: *Who is the woman on the cover of our books*; make it painfully clear that bringing a critical anti-/post-colonial lens to our work as academics is easier said than done. After all, in the context of globalisation and the politics of knowledge production and publishing, can we afford to 'use the master's tools to dismantle his mansion'?

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ALTERNATIVE MODELS TO TRADITIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION: MARKET DEMAND, NETWORKS, AND PRIVATE SECTOR CHALLENGES¹

Ebrima Sall²

INTRODUCTION

Development has been conceptualised as a process that should lead African and other developing societies to the current level of development of Europe and North America. Higher Education in Africa is seen as a developmental issue, in that Education (especially higher education) is both a sector to be developed and an instrument in the development of other sectors. As development paradigms have shifted, so have the conceptions of higher education, its status and its role in the so-called developing countries. Higher education systems have become more complex and more diversified, as globalisation, liberalisation, the development of new technologies, and a number of other changes in the social, economic, and political environment have unfolded. This paper looks at the pluralisation and complexities of the higher education landscape in Africa: highlighting the evolution of the traditional institutions; the development of alternative models; the spread of knowledge networks, and the challenges of private sector involvement in higher education.

THE PROBLEM

A wide range of policy changes has developed in African higher education. Today, knowledge is said to be as important a factor of production as physical capital. In the report *Higher Education in Developing Countries: Peril and Promise*, the Task Force on Higher Education and Society (2009: 9) argues, 'The world economy is changing as knowledge supplants physical capital as the source of present and future wealth'. Knowledge has long been recognised as both a resource and a source of power in local and global relations. The rediscovery of its importance in recent years, including for developing countries, is a result of the information revolution, which is clearly knowledge-based and knowledge-driven.

The growing importance of knowledge makes higher education more important than ever, as a World Bank (2002: 1) report indicates:

The role of education in general and in tertiary education in particular, is now more influential than ever in the construction of knowledge economies and democratic societies. Tertiary education is indeed central to the creation of intellectual capacity on which knowledge production and utilisation depend and to the promotion of the lifelong-learning practices necessary for updating people's knowledge and skills.

In Africa, in the 1960s and 1980s, public universities were almost the only institutions of higher education and research. The university, therefore, became a multi-purpose

institution which has evolved well away from its original design as a liberal arts college: It functioned as a professional education institution and as

an institution for mass undergraduate training, extra-mural studies, graduate education, high level research functions that in more advanced settings are typically handled by a system of separate, but interdependent institutions. Consequently, national higher education systems in sub-Saharan Africa may be stylised as thin and undifferentiated. At their heart lies one or a few institutions expected to discharge a wide range of functions relating to learning and knowledge creation. (Fine 1997: 6–7)

Globalisation, liberalisation, and democratisation brought new modes of higher learning and new kinds of knowledge that were more problem-oriented than the knowledge produced in the traditional higher education and research institutions (Kraak 2000a). There has been a great deal of interest in these new modes, referred to as 'Mode Two' or 'Alternative Models' (Gibbons 2000; Gibbons *et al.* 1994; Kraak 2000a, 2000b; World Bank 2002). As traditional models evolve, adapt, and reinvent themselves, there seems to be a gradual evolution towards more hybrid forms of higher education institutions.

However, in Africa, the traditional forms of higher education and scientific knowledge are likely to continue to be the dominant forms for the foreseeable future. This is partly due to the fact that two key factors in the current transformation of knowledge systems: worldwide access to new information and communications technologies; and the rates of Internet connectivity and enrolment in higher education – are much lower across Africa than in other regions. Moreover, sub-Saharan Africa is characterised by poverty, whereas the capital investments required, and the recurrent costs of the new technologies that are revolutionising the higher education field, are extremely high (World Bank 2002: 39). This is one reason why the discussion on university education reform has centred on ways to address the fiscal challenges. Government funding is largely devoted to establishing the basic infrastructure and covering recurrent costs, and there also is a heavy dependence on external donor funding. Private sector involvement in funding higher education is still marginal, although it is gradually increasing.

To understand these complex relationships and challenges, before making policy recommendations to strengthen the role of higher education in the development enterprise across Africa, we need to ask: (a) What are the driving forces behind the emergence and spread of the alternative models of higher education? (b) How are the various higher education models affecting the capacity of African societies to produce an intelligentsia for themselves, one that is capable of helping Africa think through the current crises and face the challenges of globalisation and development?, and (c) What kinds of impacts are the higher education models having on Africa's overall development process?



The demand for higher education and higher education institutions is extremely high and much more varied than it was in the early 1960s, before we entered the current phase of globalisation and before the information technology (IT) revolution. The demand for higher education is a result of the proliferation of basic education, and the large numbers of students who complete high school and demand higher education institutions that can develop, teach, and certify higher order skills. There is also a demand for post graduates, both highly specialised and generalist. Higher education systems have been responding to the pressures in various ways. In most sub-Saharan countries, government policies in the field of higher education have been far more reactive than proactive. Currently there seems to be an emerging consensus on the need for well thought out and carefully framed state policies to govern the higher education systems in ways that maximise the public good, while enabling institutions to perform both traditional and new roles to respond to public and private demands emanating from a wide range of factors.

The public university remains the dominant feature of the higher education landscape in Africa, although this situation is changing as private, commercial, religious oriented and other kinds of institutions begin to equal and, in some cases, even outnumber the state universities. The dominance of the public university is, however, not only numerical; it is also strategic in terms of the type and quality of teaching and research being offered and in terms of the nature of the relationships linking them to the private institutions. I would, therefore, argue that developing plural and well-managed higher education systems, centred on public flagship universities with adequate resources, is one of the realistic (and most needed) policy options for Africa. There is a need both, for multi-institutional public systems, and for the multi-tasking, multi-level research-cum-teaching university also known as the 'flagship' university.

EVOLUTION OF TRADITIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION

The expansion of traditional higher education in sub-Saharan Africa was part and parcel of the state, nation-building, and development processes in the postcolonial era.³ These processes were interlinked and perceived by the elites of Africa as necessary to mutually reinforce one another (Ajayi *et al*, 1996; Hagan 1994; Samoff & Carrol 2002; Mkandawire 1999; Sawyerr 2002). As Samoff and Carrol (2002: 7) have noted:

Education would not only make [a] new society but would also shape the new people who would inhabit and manage society... As the capstone of the education system, higher education had a special place in that vision. Universities were to educate the thinkers and inventors, the policy and decision-makers, the teachers of the teachers, the leaders of the leaders.

Universities became one of the symbols for independent statehood. 'Along with

a national flag and a national anthem, a national university came to symbolise national independence' (Mamdani 1998: 2). However, more important than the symbolic value of the university were the high hopes that the leaders of the independence movements placed in this institution. Independence was sought and fought for, as a necessary step towards the elimination of poverty, ignorance, and disease. The fight against these ills became a real obsession for many independence leaders. It was assumed that 'poverty and exploitation could be defeated by social action' and that 'such action could only be facilitated by social science knowledge' (Mkandawire 1999: 28).

An effect of the 'one country, one university' syndrome was the fragmentation of the higher education sector. Language and regional barriers made the fragmentation even more critical and inhibited the growth of not only, lively communities of research and publishing, but also access to scholarly works produced in different countries, sub-regions, and languages.

From being a symbol of independent statehood, the university became both an instrument and a site for patronage politics. The postcolonial state was highly centralised with power concentrated in the hands of the head of state and the few people around him. It had a literal aversion to critical thinking. Academic freedom was, therefore, often violated through both state harassment and neglect.

Another great challenge to African higher education and research, however, was the restriction of the institutional autonomy of the universities. According to Ajayi *et al.* (1996: 95)

The governments cared much less about the curricula than about administrative control – the appointment of the Chancellor, members of the Council, Vice-Chancellor and, if possible, deans and Heads of Department. The aim was to ensure political support or, at all events, to eliminate opposition within the university community.

However, with all its problems, the public university did provide the services expected of it. Enrolment rates kept rising, although, they were far below enrolments in the industrialised countries and in other regions of the developing world (World Bank 2001). Even in the worst years of the crises (roughly the mid 1980s), the social value of the university degree remained quite high, judging by the growing numbers of secondary school graduates seeking admission to the university (Sall; Lebeau & Kassimir 2002). But as state funding dwindled, universities were unable to cope with the rising demand for tertiary education. The financial and the governance crises had negative impacts on the infrastructure, the quality of training and research, and on the market value of the university degrees. At the same time, currencies were losing value. Basic commodities and services were becoming less affordable, even for university lecturers.



Responses to the crises took several forms, and in some cases gave rise to new problems. First, the reform of the higher education sector was included in the structural adjustment packages of the 1980s and 1990s. The main criteria for gauging the success of the reforms included funding, diversification of courses, and the subsequent improvement of academic staff salaries. One of the key measures taken to generate revenue was 'the establishment of a quota of fee-paying students over and above the number supported by the government subvention' (Sawyer 2002: 47). This experience was, however, not without its own problems, which included the decline of the quality of courses and degrees, and the quality of the education; and widening the gap between so-called 'achieving' university faculties and departments (i.e., those able to generate revenue by charging fees and expanding student intake or by attracting donor funds) and the 'non-achieving faculties' (e.g., the faculty of medicine, where student intake was strictly controlled to maintain quality).

Second, lecturers remaining at African universities resorted to consultancy, petty trading, teaching extra classes, etc., to supplement their salaries. Others established independent research centres and NGOs and tried to access donor funding. Many of the universities have been trying to regulate the craze for consultancies but have met with limited success. Among the serious consequences of this condition are the further shortening of time for research and the gradual decline of the quality of teaching.

Third, many of the universities have opened satellite campuses and offered courses and degree programmes such as MBAs for fee-paying students; leased out parts of campus premises to private companies and rented out buildings acquired in the earlier period of relative prosperity. However, like the spread of franchise universities and 'off-shore campuses', the establishment of satellite campuses is a practice that one finds in almost all regions of the world (World Bank 2002: 33).

Fourth, regional knowledge networks have taken on some of the graduate training, and set up national and regional research networks among scholars, by field or by issue, to hold workshops on methodology and on how to strengthen the research capacity for more junior scholars. They have sponsored summer institutes and fellowship programmes for more senior scholars; and undertaken scholarly publishing (including textbooks), etc., to support engagement in broader scholarly debates. Alternative models to the traditional higher education system have emerged as a result.

MARKET DEMANDS AND NETWORKS

Market demands for higher education

Higher education institutions are moving toward a model where they are seen as business enterprises. This development is definitely a sign of the time, a manifestation of a major paradigm shift.

Private universities have also entered the supply equation and public universities are confronted with reduced budgets and increasing demands for rationalisation and marketability. The primary roles of the public universities in serving the public good, reproducing elites, producing and disseminating knowledge, and providing services to individuals, groups, and the nation-state and its different constituents, the private sector, and, more recently, the plethora of non-governmental organisations have, however, hardly changed. If this is the case, then what has changed?

When the market is defined as young people in search of higher education opportunities and parents looking for educational opportunities for their children, the demands have not changed in nature. What has changed are the kinds of courses, training, and degrees now in high demand, and the scope and magnitude of the demand for higher education. These changes can be seen as a measure of success for the postcolonial state: The number of secondary school graduates has increased, partly as a result of the spread of basic education. The traditional university's adaptation process has been much slower than the rise in the demand, often resulting in overcrowding and massification (Task Force 2001). The quality of the goods and services provided by the traditional institutions has also become unsatisfactory, except in a few disciplines and branches. In many countries, there are thousands of unemployed degree holders. Amuwo (2001: 19) cites in a World Bank report that 'graduate skills have steadily deteriorated over the past decade yet, most astonishing in this report is the claim that the number of graduates in Nigeria outstrips the absorptive capacity of the economy'.

More important, however, is the challenge of the traditional idea of the university that is implicit in such statements. This challenge is also implicit in the fascination for the so-called 'Mode Two' types of knowledge and higher education institutions. The focus is on graduate unemployment, which is seen as proof of the failure of traditional higher education. The solutions to both graduate unemployment and to the rising demand for higher education are said to be not only in the transformation of the traditional institutions into more entrepreneurial institutions, but also in the promotion and development of alternative models, mainly of the Mode Two kinds. This approach could also be a solution to the problems of access to higher education while preparing Africa for a better position in the global economy. These arguments are certainly pertinent in some respects. What they fail to address, however, are the problems of equity that become more critical when high fees are charged by public or private universities and colleges; the devaluation of basic research that has resulted from the wild craze for marketability in both the public and private institutions; and the fact that higher education is definitely not the only cause of labour market problems.

There is, therefore, room for private sector involvement, and there may well be business opportunities in higher education that the private sector could fill. These opportunities became more important as both the fiscal crises of the state and the subsequent implementation of structural adjustment programmes restricted public spending on higher education. Private sector involvement, leading to the



establishment of private higher education institutions, would be a way of absorbing the excess demand but the consequence could well be the production of larger numbers of graduates than the economy is able to employ; unless there are structural changes leading to the creation of additional employment opportunities. The development of different curricula, or different types of training or levels of degrees, increases the chances of new graduates finding jobs.

In its report, *Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education*, the World Bank (2002) makes similar arguments in favour of continued state support to higher education. Makerere University in Uganda is one of the institutions that took the lead in adopting market principles of management as a way of coping with the financial starvation that it faced in the 1970s and 1980s. According to Mahmood Mamdani's (2001:14) keynote address to the social science faculty at Makerere University:

The tendency was to expand courses for programmes for (which) there was market demand, and shed courses and demands for which demand lagged. In the process, the student body could be differentiated between those who didn't pay fees and those who did, and those with different entrance requirements for each group; just as programmes began to be differentiated between day courses for students on scholarships and evening courses for fee-paying counterparts. The more these trends gathered momentum, the more higher education turned into a contract between the university and the fee-paying student, and less between the university and society.

An entirely demand-driven approach to higher education is difficult to imagine, especially as both the state sector and industry, which are the two main sectors expected to generate the demand in Africa, are bedevilled with problems. The problem, therefore, is not only with the university or the type of higher education being provided, but also with the nature and size of the market. The diversification of higher education institutions and the types of knowledge could be a possible response to market demands.

Networks

Networking is an important part of research, knowledge production and dissemination. In Africa, many of the research networks started in the 1980s and 1990s as a response to the difficulties being encountered by universities. Foreign donors established some of these networks. Others came out of indigenous initiatives. The latter include the Council for the Development of Social Sciences in Africa (CODESRIA), a regional social science network established by African public universities and institutes in 1973.

Networks have gradually developed into institutions that established and co-ordinated several other research networks. They also initiated several research capacity strengthening projects. After benefiting from donor support, the role of

networks has again become the subject of debates, especially as universities appear to be regaining some of the momentum they lost during the crisis years. Donors are currently interested in supporting universities whose role in the production of knowledge and in human capital formation is crucial for the global economy. The role and relevance of the networks is, therefore, being questioned and their links with the universities debated.

Yet, with the possible exceptions of the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) and the Association of African Universities (AAU), not much is known about the actual contribution of regional research councils or the networks to the development of a national research capacity or the uses that have been generated. Besides evaluations conducted for the agencies that fund them, there are few systematic studies on this issue (Prewitt 1998).

Historically, the networks have been very proactive in their attitudes toward the universities, identifying problems and needs and initiating programmes to support them. This characteristic led to the organisation of capacity-building and strengthening workshops, postgraduate master's programmes in certain disciplines, small grants programmes for thesis writing, and research networks at both the national and regional levels. These networks bring together young scholars and senior academics providing opportunities and space for mentoring and for the intergenerational transmission of knowledge. Networks have also been very important in providing space for free inquiry and for the defence of research freedom. Equally important is the fact that some of these networks have worked very hard to support the emergence of strong regional and local scientific communities to be in a position to engage policy-makers and civil society over both local and global issues.

Sustainability is the key challenge facing all the networks. Only a few of the regional networks are making efforts to access funds from African governments or from the African private sector. If African governments were to support indigenous research and autonomous intellectual voices from within the region, they would open more possibilities for obtaining a better knowledge of the range of policy options available to them.

National and civil communities see the demand on the higher education and research institutions as explanations and solutions to the problems of poverty, insecurity, etc. Unrealistic as it may appear, this expectation of higher education is very real. It is a call for the assistance of the intelligentsia and their institutions to help make sense of what is going on in the world around them. A few years ago, the Senegalese press ran a debate on what was called the breakdown of intellectuals (*'la panne des intellectuels'*) who were seen to have failed in providing solutions to the economic and social crises on the continent. Higher education and research institutions are expected to play important public roles. State funding for higher education is mainly based on the understanding that there is public good in higher education (Singh 2001; Jonathan 2001; Subotzky 1999).⁴



The combined effects of globalisation, market demands, and other influences on higher education and the various types of responses to these processes, have produced a new higher education landscape in Africa. It is one that is becoming increasingly diversified, where institutions and scholars of different generations, different kinds of knowledge, different institutional models, and different modes of delivery co-exist. The institutional base of higher education has changed, faculty demographics have changed. And the IT revolution has caused a paradigm shift in higher education, its aspirations, and its real capacities.

PLURALISATION, ALTERNATIVE MODELS, AND MIXED MODES

Nowadays, the very mission of the university is being seriously debated. In the 1960s, the emphasis was on training, mostly in government-owned or controlled institutions. The 1970s and early 1980s witnessed a significant expansion of academic research capacity both within and outside of the universities, particularly with the spread of knowledge networks and organisations that were owned by the academic community itself. However, the research capacity of a number of universities and the university-based institutions and centres was seriously affected by the crises of the 1980s. The networks managed to survive and ease the strain on research budgets by mobilising donor support. The challenge for both the university and the research institutes and centres is not only to maintain but also to rethink their basic or traditional functions, adapt to the new context and to live up to the new challenges.

Issues of governance and sustainable resource bases have become extremely important in the discussions on universities (Carlsson & Wohlgemuth 1996; Wohlgemuth 2002). With the crises and structural adjustment, the universities are faced with the challenges of having to go through deep reforms that may entail the rethinking of their mandate. However, most of the discussion on the need for reform, is losing sight of the traditional role of the university and of the fact that, historically, as providers of the public good, most universities survived on subventions from state grants or from private foundations, or both.

Issues of quality and relevance are at the centre of most of the discussions about universities and the social sciences. These days, in policy debates and in general public discussions, the production of marketable goods, (i.e., works, courses, and graduates) tends to be given priority over academic excellence. In other words, academic excellence is being defined by government policymakers in terms of the marketability of the courses and the outputs (graduates, etc.). If demand in its fullest sense were considered, the market would gauge not only quantity and utility but also research quality through peer review. 'Relevance' today tends to imply what can be of immediate 'use' or can be 'counted'.

The roles assigned to the universities changed with independence and, like the newly established universities of newly independent states, participation in the Africanisation of administrations, nation building, and development was seen as a primary task. The roles changed again with the introduction of structural adjustment policies in the mid 1980s, with the end of the Cold War, and with the political liberalisation of the late 1980s and early 1990s. For the South African universities, the major changes occurred with the official abolition of apartheid and the inauguration of majority rule in 1994. The major differences between historically White universities and historically Black universities are, however, likely to persist for some time. The recent merging of many South African universities is just one of the policies being tried to transform the whole of the South African higher education system and to rid it of the legacy of apartheid.

There has also been a diversification of tertiary education institutions. A World Bank (2001) strategy document discusses the emergence of new kinds of tertiary education institutions. The bank distinguishes the traditional institutions (mainly public universities) from those that emerged in two subsequent waves of institutional development:

Over the last two decades, many countries have experienced a remarkable diversification of their tertiary education sectors [as the first wave]. The appearance of a variety of new institutions alongside the traditional universities – short-duration technical institutes and community colleges, polytechnics, distance education centres, and open universities – has created new opportunities to meet the growing social demand... A second wave of institutional diversification is now discernible with the emergence of new forms of competition in tertiary education that transcend the traditional conceptual, institutional, and geographical boundaries. The new actors in the 'borderless' tertiary education market are: (a) virtual universities, (b) franchise universities, (c) corporate universities (media companies, libraries and museums, and other institutions), and (d) education brokers. On the heels of these new actors are software producers, publishers, entertainment firms, and others seeking to tap the potential of an emerging international market in tertiary education. (World Bank 2002: 32–33)

The 'second wave' of diversification gave birth to a fifth generation of institutions, such as virtual, franchise, and corporate universities. These came well after what have been called (a) colonial universities, (b) independence and development universities, (c) crisis era universities, and (d) entrepreneurial universities (Aina 1998; Mkandawire 1997, 1999; Martin & West 1999; Tadesse 1999). These generations do not entirely replace one another. The birth of new generations has, however, forced the older ones to re-examine their ways and to adapt to the new situations.



With the increasing use of IT in higher education and in academic research, there is also a gradual shift away from the dominant university paradigm that is based on the idea of physical contact between students and teachers, among students themselves, and among scholars on a given campus. These days, a small but growing number of public and private universities are looking towards instituting some form of electronically enhanced education programmes.⁵ This is not really distance learning, because students come to campus for part of the time, or engage in video and teleconferencing. Distance learning is also spreading. Increasingly, therefore, there is what one can call a mixed mode of learning, with a combination of direct contact between teachers and students and some form of distance education, or rather, IT-assisted teaching and learning.

The main obstacles in the development of these mixed modes include the problem of access to IT. Out of the total population of Africa estimated at about 800 million at the beginning of 2002, only 1 million were IT users. Of these, 84 percent are in South Africa!⁶ Although the figures are changing very rapidly, we are still talking about a very small number of users in Africa, compared to other regions of the world. Even in South Africa, where the rates are much higher, the universities that want to make maximum use of new technologies are confronted with problems of bandwidth, and the need for satellites and other technologies to enable the transfer of not only text but also images and sound. Currently, with only a few hundred thousand IT users, who mainly transfer text, the situation is not so critical. However, when there are millions of users, there will be bottlenecks, especially for the transfer of images and sound. The problem is much more critical for the historically disadvantaged institutions of South Africa and for the vast majority of universities of the other countries of sub-Saharan Africa, where levels of connectivity are much lower than they are in South Africa.

Not only has the institutional base been changing, the demographic profile of the scholarly community has also changed. Looking at the institutions where scholars obtained their postgraduate training, where they lived and worked afterwards, and the issues they take up, Mkandawire (1995, 1997) argued that there have been three generations of African scholars. The first generation of scholars obtained postgraduate training outside Africa, but returned to the continent to form the nucleus of an African faculty for the new institutions of tertiary education of the 1960s and 1970s. The second generation also received its research training outside of Africa, mainly in the mid-1970s and 1980s; but unlike those of the first generation, many failed to return to Africa. One explanation was the onset of the crises of the mid- to late-1970s and 1980s. The third generation of the late 1980s and 1990s, involved much larger numbers of scholars than the previous generations, most of whom did their postgraduate training in Africa at a time when the universities were confronted with many more problems (Mkandawire 1995, 1997).

The typology gives a good sense of the generational changes. However, how the concerns, perspectives, and the ways scholars relate with the universities and how the larger communities evolved with the scholars' generational changes must also be examined. It is also important to relate generational changes in the community of scholars to the changing institutional generations to produce a better understanding of what is currently needed.

With the end of apartheid in South Africa, many Eastern and Southern African students and junior faculty now go to South Africa for their postgraduate training (Szanton & Manyika 2002; Kwesiga et al. 2001). The establishment of the University Science, Humanities and Engineering Partnerships in Africa (USHEPIA) and AERC networks, like the joint master's degree programmes developed by the University of Pretoria with the University of Ghana, Makerere, and other universities, are some of the new ways of promoting partnerships and co-operation in the development of postgraduate education in Africa. There is a need for more research on the challenge of establishing joint programmes in postgraduate training and in research at the regional and sub-regional levels.

The Small Grants for Thesis Writing Programmes, sponsored by CODESRIA, share a common desire to support a distressed generation, based in higher education institutions that are themselves often in distress. More fundamentally, the programmes contribute towards the reproduction of the research community by contributing to the training of the younger generations of scholars. The ultimate solution, however, is the strengthening of postgraduate programmes in the African universities. Additional resources in the regional networks and in the institutions could play more significant roles in the regeneration of the universities by strengthening both the links between scholars of the region, and the communication between scholars from different regions.

Changes in the higher education and the broader research landscape are part and parcel of the more general transformation of the African socio-economic and political environments. The 'business' of social science is, precisely to read, name, and try to make sense of social realities as they change. Research priorities and themes have therefore been changing. However, the realities are also changing in the relative importance attached to social research in general, to each of the social science disciplines, and, within disciplines, to each branch. This reclassification has been taking place partly on the basis of the perceived relevance to national development priorities whose very definition has been changing with the shifts in development paradigms and partly on the market value of the disciplines and the branches within them. The market value is seen mainly in terms of the marketability of courses, job opportunities available to graduates in these disciplines, chances of getting donor funding, and possibilities for engaging in commissioned research and in consultancy.



PRIVATE SECTOR CHALLENGES

Until recently private universities were an unknown phenomenon in most African countries. However the proliferation of institutions has provided opportunities for many people who are aspiring to a good tertiary education. For the private sector, which includes the not-for-profit sector, the holders of certificates obtained from these private institutions form a much larger pool of potentially operational graduates from which to recruit. I refer to universities in Senegal, Nigeria and South Africa to illustrate the growth in this sector and to highlight the problems associated with proliferation for both the state and for the private sector.

In Senegal, the proliferation followed the liberalisation of the higher education sector in the early 1990s. Before the reforms, admission to the university was guaranteed to all Senegalese secondary school graduates. However, when the student population reached unmanageable levels compared to the facilities available, a new way of addressing the high levels of politicisation of the student body and faculty had to be found. With the rise in the numbers of unemployed degree holders, the locally obtained university degree was thought to be of a lesser value. Instead, professional certificates and degrees that are said to be more practice-oriented were preferred. The public universities opened private centres for evening classes where fee-paying students, workers, and ordinary students needing extra classes (for instance, students expelled from the main university following a change in the rules on the number of repeats allowed), could acquire some rapid training (*'formation accélérée'*) and enrol for degree courses. This was one way of raising funds for the university and earning additional income for the faculty teaching in these centres and for the special programmes being presented.

In Nigeria, almost all the major universities opened satellite campuses in Lagos and in the other 'viable' cities. These satellite campuses offered degree and certificate granting programmes at a relatively high price. This situation created so many problems that the Nigerian federal government recently decided to close all satellite campuses, after earlier attempts to restrict them to a radius of 200 km from the main university had failed.

In addition to the proliferation of private centres and institutions – some of which are creations of public universities – there are also a number of open universities, distance learning institutions, virtual universities, corporate universities, etc. While there are many benefits associated with an expanding and more vibrant private higher education sector, they are also accompanied by several problems.

The first problem is that the costs are often beyond what many would-be students can afford. Access to quality higher education for the large mass of students leaving high school every year is, therefore, still an issue.

Cost is not, however, the only issue. While authorities of the University of Sierra Leone were unable to raise student fees because both the government and the students opposed the idea, they succeeded in getting the large numbers of secondary school students who had failed their final exams to enrol in an access programme, especially designed for them, to improve their chance of obtaining admission to the university. The fees for participation in the access programme were higher than the fees paid at the university. Another important problem is the poor quality of the training given in some of the new tertiary education institutions. There is a need for some regulation and closer monitoring of the curriculum and the quality of the education given in these institutions (Nyamnjoh 2002).

Accreditation is another problem related to the quality of the programme. Accreditation is one way of ensuring minimum standards in new certificate courses and new degree programmes. Left to themselves, some of the new institutions might not be very rigorous about the standards and the quality of the education they provide. Degree granting ought to be properly regulated. On the other hand, the rapid development of the Internet and the transformation of delivery modes and publishing outlets have, in some instances, taken academic and state authorities by surprise. This situation is even more critical when it comes to electronic journals. Similarly; there is a need for the overall regulation of degree granting institutions and peer review or other quality control mechanisms for journals. Some of these things may be easier if done at a global level, which is what led Mamphela Ramphele (2001) to point out the need for global credit standards.

Only a few of these new institutions have good Ph.D. programmes and are even less engaged in research. Yet without research, most universities run the risk of turning into 'glorified secondary schools'. As Mamdani (2001: 15) said:

Universities cannot function as government departments, just as they cannot function as businesses. It is the very fact that universities are not limited by short term considerations – as governments and businesses are, one to capture votes and the other to make profits – this unique freedom gives universities the capacity for a longer term research orientation. Any higher education [institution] worth the name has to involve [itself] in research. For society, research is an investment in the future. The single most important distinction between universities and secondary schools, even technical colleges, is that only universities carry out research. The reward for research, and the measure of its ability, is not monetary. The real significance of research for society is that it expands our options and thereby secures us an independent future. This is why nowhere in the world is higher education a profitable enterprise, why nowhere is higher education possible without heavy social subsidies.



The new private institutions are, therefore, far from being in a position to replace the traditional universities as knowledge-producing institutions. Instead, the new institutions not only depend on traditional institutions for their teaching staff and for the development course content, but they also take time and human and intellectual resources away from the traditional institutions. In almost all of the recent research studies in Africa (Aina 1998; Allen 1986; Kwesiga *et al.* 2001; Mushi *et al.* 2001), consultancy and various forms of private practice have been identified as major hindrances to research, teaching, and publishing in the universities.

The issue of graduate unemployment is also far from being resolved by the proliferation of private institutions awarding professional certificates. The problem is not always with the kind of disciplinary background or the training acquired. When civil engineers, medical doctors, and accountants remain unemployed for extended periods of time despite prevailing underdevelopment, poverty, and health problems, the issue is certainly not simply one of training. It may well be that the problem is partly in the ways that African developing economies are organised and the absorptive capacity of the economy. The major challenge to the private sector is to increase the possibilities for employment and to enter into creative partnerships with the state and the civil sector in various areas of public interest.

Finally, as the situation in several countries shows, private sector led tertiary education institutions are mainly money-making ventures. The private sector does not have to duplicate the efforts made in the traditional institutions. Instead, it could support the traditional institutions in various ways and benefit both directly and indirectly from the services that the traditional institutions provide.

CONCLUSION

The traditional higher education institutions are still the main providers of higher education in Africa. Private higher education institutions are gradually increasing in numbers. There is, therefore, still a great deal of public interest in higher education, and public support for higher education is still a necessity. Without it, a number of fundamental aspects of higher education will run the risk of withering away. One consequence of such a development would be the serious threat that it would pose to the existence of a strong, indigenous intelligentsia in Africa, one that can really think through the future of the continent.

Many of the new tertiary education institutions, especially the private ones, depend on the traditional institutions for teachers, teaching materials, and a number of other things. In this paper I have argued that, without the traditional higher education institutions, specifically the public university, many of the private institutions that exist in Africa today would not survive. For this reason, I think it would be unrealistic and actually quite risky to leave higher education entirely to the private sector. Instead, because of the social value of the university degree and the high demand

for higher education, it is likely that more complementary relationships will develop between the private sector and the public universities.

The links that exist between the institutions of the traditional model and those of the alternative models are many, and the flows are not entirely unidirectional – from the traditional to the new institutions. The new institutions have actually obliged the traditional ones to adapt and to rationalise their methods and ways. Teachers remain in the public universities partly because they have possibilities for supplementing their incomes and because they can be confronted with intellectual challenges outside of the traditional academy through their involvement in regional networks and projects initiated by independent institutions.

We, however, need to recognise the limitations inherent in current private sector initiatives in the higher education sector in Africa. These initiatives are often ad hoc, sporadic, and geared towards short-term gains with little regard for issues such as basic research, the long-term reproduction of the scholarly community, and academic freedom. The main challenges for higher education development in Africa are closely linked with the global and continental economic and social processes. Responses must therefore be seen in that context. The private sector has the potential of playing a significant complementary role to that of the state sector, but an appropriate regulatory framework is needed. There is currently a consensus on the need for rational, democratic, and accountable management of higher education institutions, both public and private, both of which are working out ways of taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the IT revolution.

In many sub-Saharan Africa countries higher education systems are therefore made up of both traditional institutions, using mixed modes of delivery and learning, and new kinds of institutions and modes of delivery. Furthermore, both the traditional institutions and modes are actually in a constant state of 'reinvention'. The higher education and knowledge systems are, however, both still dominated by more traditional institutions and modes.

Finally, although both the traditional and the new institutions are challenged by the internationalisation of higher education, it is in the public university that basic research is taken more seriously. And it is here that concerns about issues of equity (including gender equity), social accountability, social relevance, and academic freedom are taken up with a significant degree of seriousness. It is also mainly in the public universities that one finds good Ph.D. programmes.

There is, therefore, an extremely solid case for public and donor funding of higher education and research in Africa, precisely when the whole world now seems to recognise the fact that higher education is a vital factor for economic and social development under the conditions of globalisation. The Internet has created unprecedented opportunities for the rapid diffusion of scientific knowledge, but it still matters where this knowledge is produced.



NOTES TO PAGES 42 - 57

1. The author expresses his appreciation to Nancy Ruther for her editorial comments, and to Yaw Nyarko, David Collis, Robert Evenson, Awa Ba, and Sarah Manyika for their comments on earlier drafts of this paper.
2. Dr Ebrima Sall is the Executive Secretary for the Council for the Development of Social Research in Africa (CODESRIA). This paper was originally published in the journal for Higher Education in Africa (2004) vol 2 no. 1, and is reprinted with the kind of permission of CODESRIA.
3. I use 'postcolonial' here in a purely chronological sense, referring to the period following the end of colonialism.
4. On the concept of the 'public good' and its importance in the discussion on higher education transformation, the first issue of Kagisano (published by the Council on Higher Education, South Africa) in which the Singh and Jonathan articles appeared, contains other relevant material: Higher Education Discussion Series, No. 1 (Summer 2001): 'Re-inserting the Public Good into Higher Education Transformation'.
5. These points were made by several professors teaching at the University of Pretoria, South Africa, to a U.N. University for Peace Consultative Mission to South Africa in April 2002 in which I participated.
6. These figures were given to the UPEACE Consultative Mission to South Africa by Dr. Hussain Solomon, Senior Researcher at the Africa Institute of South Africa and Associate Professor at the University of Pretoria, Pretoria, April 2002. There is no agreement as to how to define Internet users and to access the Internet. Should 'users' include people who use only e-mail? Should it include people who send messages through others? Some define users only as people having an account with service providers that do not include such on-line groups as Yahoo, Hotmail, Caramail, and many others. Yet with the spread of cybercenters (often called 'cybercafés', although they rarely have a resemblance to a café), many users open accounts with these online providers and are omitted from surveys and censuses of Internet users. The actual numbers of users in Africa might therefore be much higher than the figures indicate. I am grateful to Jessica Davies of Georgetown University for drawing my attention to this fact.

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CONSTRUCTING DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENTAL STATES IN AFRICA: THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES

Omano Edigheji¹

INTRODUCTION

The idea of democratic developmental states is gaining currency in African academic and policy circles. A number of African students are exploring how states, specifically on the African continent, can become both developmental and democratic. In a limited number of African states, political leaders and administrative officials have also embraced the 'democratic developmental state' concept. In Ethiopia and in South Africa, this concept has risen to prominence and constructing a democratic developmental state has become official government policy. In South Africa, it is also the official policy of the ruling alliance (the African National Congress-led alliance) following a resolution of the ANC's National General Council in 2005. The fascination with the idea of democratic developmental states is premised on the assumption that such states will enable the continent to overcome its governance, institutional, social and economic deficits. Indeed, in this assumption, such states would enable the continent to overcome the crises of underdevelopment, poverty, inequality, unemployment, under-employment, a low industrial base and dependence on mineral resources. It is further assumed that democratic developmental states will create a basis for industrialisation and for the expansion of human capabilities. It is also assumed that they may provide the capacity that will enable the continent to engage in the global political economy in mutually beneficial ways. In effect, developmental states have the potential to end Africa's marginalisation in the world.

In the light of this development, the purpose of this paper is to emphasise just how important it is that the African continent begins to explore the roles that universities should be playing in building democratic developmental states on the continent. The paper begins with a brief definition of a developmental state. It then proceeds to give a background of higher education on the African continent and concludes by setting possible roles universities could play in enabling African countries to become democratic developmental states.

THINKING OF DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENTAL STATES

To think of democratic developmental states is to think, not only about the nature of the developmental goals and the ideology of the government, but also about the nature and character of the political regime; and the nature of the institutional architecture (both the organisational structures and the rules that govern public policy and society) that shapes policy-making and implementation.

In the simplest terms, we can define a developmental state as one in which political authorities possess a developmental ideology and build state capacity to intervene in national development to achieve its developmental goals. Central to this understanding of developmental states is the question of state capacity

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to intervene in shaping national development. It is robust capacity that enables developmental states to engage in long-term strategic development planning. In effect, a developmental state does not only have a developmental ambition, it also has the capacity to intervene to bring that into fruition.

What is development?

The first-generation literature on developmental states focused on the Asian experience, and conceived development in a narrow sense, limiting 'development' to industrialisation and economic growth. It neglected political questions and reduced policy-making and implementation to a technical exercise. State capacity was seen as a product of an administrative or bureaucratic competence and an alliance with capital. The bureaucracy was also supported by 'strong' political leaders. This perspective resulted in the first-generation students of the developmental state, neglecting to question the source of the political power of the leaders. Consequently, questions of political legitimacy and the sustenance of the developmental project were also neglected. I will argue that, in thinking of a developmental state in Africa and its capacities, it is important to think not only of its political capacity but also of the sustainability of the developmental project. If we proceed along this logic, a developmental state in Africa has to be fore grounded on democratic governance – as the legitimacy of the state and the sustainability of its project will be largely dependent on this principle.

It is important to understand development in a holistic manner. Here the work of Amartya Sen (1999) is a useful starting point. He defines development 'as the process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy'.² If freedom is conceived in all spheres, development then includes social freedom, economic freedom, political freedom and environmental sustainability (Edigheji, 2010)³ Therefore, a state that is developmental is one that is able to engender freedom in the economic, social, political and environmental arenas. The contribution of African universities in promoting and advancing these freedoms will, therefore, be a key in building democratic developmental states on the continent. This resonates well with the work of renowned education sociologists: Paulo Freire (1993),⁴ when he talks about the emancipatory power of education; and Iris Marion Young (1990), who believes that higher education institutions (HEIs) must contribute to the dismantling of the structures and the processes of oppressions and domination.

Social and economic freedoms as development

Social freedom and economic freedom occupy a prime spot in our conception of a democratic developmental state. This means that such a state needs to be able to overcome such ills as poverty, inequality, illiteracy, disease, under-employment and unemployment. In effect, a democratic developmental state must be able to

² Sen, A. (1999) *Development as Freedom*, Alfred A. Knopf Inc., New York: at p.3

³ Edigheji, O. (2010), 'Constructing a Democratic Developmental State in South Africa: Challenges and Potentialities' in Edigheji, O. (ed) *Constructing a Democratic Developmental State in South Africa: Potentials and Challenges*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

⁴ Freire, P. (1993 trans) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Continuum, New York

promote social transformation. Towards this end, as Peter Evans (2010)⁵ eloquently argues, the primary task of a democratic developmental state should be the expansion of human capabilities. At the same time, it must be able to engender economic freedom by ensuring industrialisation and by expanding the economic base of a society, transforming economic activities from low value-added to high value-added productive activities. In this conception of a democratic developmental state, the expansion of human capabilities and industrialisation are two of its key objectives. This conception moves beyond conceiving economic development only in terms of growth, it also sees it in terms of the expansion of human capabilities. In this regard, democratic developmental states have to invest massively in education, health and infrastructure.

Political freedom as development

Democratic governance best embodies and engenders political freedom. Governance means

the processes, structures and institutions (formal and informal) through which a community or society distributes and exercises political authority and power, makes decisions, determines its strategic goals, and organises group and individual behaviour by setting rules of conduct and assigning responsibilities (Dobson and Smith, 2003).⁶

Governance is thus 'essentially about authority and the processes of participation and accountability that determine how decisions about human development are made' (Zondi, 2009⁷: 44). Therefore, if we understand development in its holistic sense while acknowledging that economic freedom is an important component of a developmental state; then a state that is developmental must also be able to promote political freedom, and be predicated on democratic governance. As Sen⁸ shows, there is an interconnection between economic freedom and political freedom. Besides the intrinsic value of democratic governance, which makes it worth pursuing in its own right, it also has instrumental value, namely that governance has

a direct bearing on the well-being of individuals and groups in society. The nature of governance may either enhance or hinder social/human development in society. While emphasis is usually on regulatory dimensions of governance, concerned largely with legitimacy (governance as rule-making), it is crucial to note that governance is also about the capabilities (efficient and effective response to social and economic problems and needs), particularly of the state institutions to discharge their duties, including providing services to the people (Zondi, 2009: 44).

Against this background, democracy and development need to be conceived

⁵ Evans, P. (2010) Constructing the 21st century Developmental State: Potentialities and Pitfalls, in Edigheji, O (ed) *Constructing a Democratic Developmental State in South Africa: Potentials and Challenges*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

⁶ Dobson and Smith

⁷ Zondi, (2009)

⁸ At note 2



as integral and constitutive parts of a developmental state. By this logic, one can argue that developmental states need to be inherently democratic. Of course, the Asian developmental states, even though labelled 'developmental', were not democratic. In point of fact a state can achieve economic success in authoritarian contexts. However, in the long-run, economic success is not sustainable in the absence of political freedom. As Africa thinks of building developmental states, it is important that these are predicated on democratic governance. In view of this perception the concept of a democratic developmental state is appropriate. The sustainability of economic development is partly dependent on it being democratic – that is, predicated on democratic principles, including thorough democratic deliberations, transparency and accountability. History bears this out: the Scandinavian states of Sweden and Norway have been relatively stable in terms of their economic development partly because they are predicated on democratic principles – both in terms of liberal democracy as well as in terms of substantive democracy. Citizens do not only choose their leaders, they are also engaged in the governance and in the developmental processes. As a result, public policies and plans are products of democratic deliberations. This in turn gives their developmental projects both social and political legitimacy.

Political freedom and political capacity of a developmental state

This brings to the fore another important element of developmental states namely, the question of political capacity. It is political capacity that enables a democratic developmental state to mobilise society around its developmental goals – be it in effecting industrial transformation, redistributing income and wealth, reducing poverty or addressing historical injustices based on race, ethnicity, gender and class. When a developmental state effectively utilises political capacity, it gives citizens a stake in the developmental project; hence this capacity is a critical source of a developmental state's legitimacy. As an example, a developmental state needs to have the capacity to mobilise local and foreign investors, not only to invest in projects and sectors that advance its developmental goals, but also to seek their inputs and to build consensus around such goals. The same will be true in mobilising teachers and healthcare workers towards the provision of quality education and healthcare. When necessary a developmental state must also have the capacity to discipline capital, labour and civil society groups that act in a manner that would undermine the developmental project, by, amongst other things, withholding supports and incentives.

Administrative capacity of a developmental state

Another critical capacity of a developmental state is the administrative or bureaucratic capacity. A competent bureaucracy is central to developmental

states. The vision of political leaders needs to be translated into implementable policies, plans and programmes, hence the importance of a competent bureaucracy. The capacity to generate and to analyse information and to be able to develop policies, plans and programmes to respond to contextual needs, is largely a function of bureaucratic competence. Universities play a central role in producing graduates with these attributes. If they are unable to produce graduates who are capable of critical thinking, then achieving bureaucratic competence will be near impossible.

Most developmental states have achieved bureaucratic competency through meritocratic recruitment and long-term rewarding career paths for civil servants. In addition, the existence of a central planning agency also plays an important part in building a competent bureaucracy. This is coupled with the fact that the civil service needs to be guided by classical weberian ethos. A combination of these factors will enable a developmental state to act as a coherent and collective entity, and not as a fragmented entity. This does not suggest that there might not be tensions, or that some sections of the state might not act in a manner that negates the national developmental goals, it suggests that the state in general would behave as a united entity.

THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES IN AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT – A BACKGROUND

Universities have occupied a prime place in African development. During the colonial period universities were established to produce the middle-level human resources required by the colonial regimes. One unintended consequence was that they became a hotbed for anti-colonial struggles, as African students either joined or championed the struggle against colonialism. Students, across the continent, have played a central role in the formation of nationalist movements.

In the immediate post-independent period, the role of universities was generally conceived in terms of public scholarship. Heidi Leoning-Voysey expresses the idea of public scholarship as follows:

The purpose of working towards engagement as a university rests in the advancement of citizenship, informed contributions to the solution of real problems, thereby contributing to the development of democracy, whilst addressing the development priorities of the country. The bedrock of any society and its advancement; be it technological, educational, social, political or economic, is embedded in that society's intellectual resources. Universities form the foundation of this bedrock.⁹

During the immediate post-colonial period, universities were, therefore, required

⁹Ms Leoning-Voysey (2002) Concept paper: Engagement as a core value at the University of the Witwatersrand. Unpublished paper. University of the Witwatersrand, 2002



to engage and contribute to the transformation of their societies in becoming inclusive, democratic and just societies, hence humane societies. Secondly, universities were conceived as public goods. Consequently, access to university education was free. Thirdly, universities were to play a crucial role in nation building and in the forging of a national identity. Universities were indeed part of the national symbols and the formation of a national identity as well as the forging of citizenships in the newly independent states. Fourthly, they were to produce the personnel required by the economies and by the public sector in post-colonial African states. Fifthly and most importantly, they were required to encourage critical thinking, including challenging orthodoxy. As a by-product, the social sciences and humanities disciplines were established and actively promoted. Hence in most African universities, departments of history, sociology, political science, philosophy, and languages, were established. The role of universities was conceived in a holistic manner as contributing to the development of, firstly, their society, and more broadly, to the world. Public scholarships were the primary basis for the existence of universities – they were to contribute to the collective well-being of independent African societies.

Because of this holistic view of the role of universities, there was an initial co-operative relationship between the early nationalist leaders and the universities. However, this relationship soon unravelled as academics and students began to question how the new political leaders were governing their respective countries: instead of development engendering freedoms; un-freedoms in the social, economic and political spheres became the norm in most African countries. Many students and academics were harassed, some were arrested and jailed, and their actions were dubbed unpatriotic. Thus, a gulf ensued between the African state and the universities with people who, to this day still treat each other with suspicion. This brought about the shrinkage of the public role of universities.

THE ANTI-DEVELOPMENTALISM OF THE DOMINANT PARADIGM OF AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES AS FROM THE 1980S

During the 1980s, as neo-liberal ideology gained a foothold on the continent, the role of the universities on the African continent was considerably redefined, especially with the introduction of structural adjustment programmes. The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) aptly described the reconfiguration of African universities thus:

Equally interesting is the introduction into the public and private university system of a strong, often narrow market/commercial logic not only in the provision of some services but, more disturbingly, in the design of curriculum and modes of instruction. In one case, there has been the outright privatisation of the university. Knowledge production *qua* knowledge production is increasingly being discarded in favour of a notion of the university as a

training centre narrowly tied to the needs of the 'market'; in such a context, the ideal of the university as a site for concentrated reflection, finds little or no resonance amongst some of the administrators of the higher education system who increasingly see themselves as running business enterprises. These developments are occurring at a time when a culture of consultancies has overtaken the culture of research and participation in local, regional, and international scientific activities.¹⁰

The reconfiguration of the role of universities manifested in a number of ways, and had adverse implications for the continent's ability to advance a developmentalist agenda. Firstly, development became narrowly defined as the promotion of economic growth. As a result, the role of universities was framed, primarily as producers of the personnel and the generators of the knowledge required by the market – economic functions became the dominant role of universities. Instead of advancing knowledge that would lead to social and political development, the role of universities was circumscribed and relegated to the margin. This meant the reconfiguration of university education, in particular, and education, in general, from public goods to economic goods. In this reconfiguration, access to education was no longer a right of citizens; it depended on their ability to pay. This was reinforced by donor recommendations against prioritising higher education. Coupled with the general mal-governance in most African countries, universities were neglected through, amongst other things, underfunding.

This also has other implications for the role of universities in Africa's development. Firstly, their public scholarship thrust has diminished since the 1980s. Secondly, students are engaged by universities, not as citizens with rights who have to be trained to contribute to the collective well-being of their societies, but as clients and customers who are equipped with skills and knowledge for their individual advancement. This customer-oriented and human resource approach has shaped the curriculum since the 1980s. One adverse consequence of this is that students are conceived as subjects of the markets. The public scholarship role of universities is, therefore, subordinated to the imperatives of the global market place and is increasingly being drawn into the commodification and marketisation of their activities. In this conception, the civic role of universities, as a force for political freedom, has changed and access to universities now depends on the ability of the student to pay. This has negative implications for the capacity of states, to engender democratic governance on the continent.

This leads to another implication: in the absence of free education, universities are playing a major role in societal stratification in Africa. The words of Carnoy and Castells (1999) are relevant in this regard:

In a society where education, information and knowledge are the critical

¹⁰ CODESRIA Strategic Plan, 2002 – 2006. http://www.codesria.org/Links/Home/codesria_strategic_plan.htm



sources of wealth and influence, class formation takes place in the classroom. Who gets into the education system determines who gets what capital, communication and political influence (Carnoy and Castells 1999 in Hall, 2001: 224).¹¹

In fact economic individualism has become a major source and a justification of the inequalities and oppressions across the African continent. Inequalities and oppressions manifest in racial, gender and in class terms.

This dominant paradigm that has framed the development of African universities has also changed the way education is viewed. It shifts education from a basic service to an economic infrastructure that serves the needs of the global economy. Hence, today the role of universities is to equip students with the competency and skills to contribute to the economic competitiveness of Africa. The academic curriculum is geared towards narrow professionalism. In some cases, business-related degrees receive greater funding than other departments – especially in the humanities and the social sciences. The emphasis is on career development rather than on the empowerment of students to become critical thinkers. Thus, one of the consequences of market fundamentalism in African universities is to train students as potential employees and employers, but not as citizens who can contribute to society's social and political freedoms. In fact, universities are fostering an individualistic culture and in so doing are contributing to the erosion of the sense of our collective humanity and citizenship. Therefore, both the practice and discourse of universities strip it of its public purpose. Its main products are individual apathy to politics and to public affairs. At best, they promote the politics of liberal democracy, which confines the role of citizens to voting in regular elections but not in participating in the formulation and the implementation of socio-economic policies that will advance their socio-economic welfare. Writing almost a century ago, John Dewey stated that individualism was so ingrained in America that it perpetuated a situation in which corporate financial and industrial power deflected economic consequences away from the advantage of the many to serve the privileged few. Such a view resonates in 21st century Africa.

The general implication of this is that a new form of colonialism and anti-developmentism has emerged in Africa. The market has colonised the universities in particular and the education sector in general. The primary purpose of the universities has changed from public scholarship to that of serving the needs of the market, to ensure their role still broadly fosters economic freedom. They also have the equally important role of promoting scholarships that enhance social and economic freedom.

A hierarchical relationship has also emerged between African universities and their surrounding communities. Universities engage with communities as clients. Academics in particular, are engaged as professionals/experts rather than as

¹¹ Hall, M (2001) "Education and the margins of network society" In Muller, J., Cloete, N., Badat, S (eds) Challenges of Globalisation: South African debates with Manuel Castells. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.

citizens involved in a common project of societal change with their communities. This point highlights a number of issues. Civic engagement by academics has been monetised. The role of academics is thus, narrowly conceived as that of bringing in the business. There is consequently no mutually benefitting or reciprocal engagement and relationship between African universities and their surrounding communities – even their engagement with the government is monetised, as it involves consultancy work for various government ministries.

While African universities have largely been constrained by neo-liberal ideologies, they have failed to adopt a framework that will make them more entrepreneurial. Most African universities rely on subventions from government. Compared to their counterparts in the developed world, they have not been able to establish business units that could be a major stream of funding such as; hotels, co-operatives, or buildings which are leased out to the business sector or even to the government. It is true that such business units are not the major purpose of universities. However, African universities need to think of creative ways of generating independent funding. One of the major failings of African universities is their low capacity for innovation, or for turning innovations into commercial purposes as a way of generating independent revenue. This failing is, in turn, a product of low spending on research and development by African governments. The result is that most African universities have become more teaching than research institutions and are thus lagging behind in terms of cutting-edge research that could lead to technological innovation. Another failing is the limited partnerships that exist between African universities and the business sector. In the developed world, as well as the developmental states of East Asia, there are close relationships between universities and the business sector. The latter not only provides research and development funding, but also funds major programmes which may ultimately have commercial value, and thereby contribute to the competitiveness of their economies.

These failings mean that African universities make a limited contribution to the development of the African continent. As an example, the continent faces huge challenges from diseases such as malaria and from epidemics such as HIV-AIDS. Yet most African universities do not have the research capacity to either seek a cure for malaria or to develop a vaccine against the HIV-AIDS pandemic. They similarly lack the capacity to address the various social crises facing the African continent.

TOWARDS PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP IN AFRICA: THE ROLE OF AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES IN BUILDING DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENTAL STATES

If the democratic developmental state is one that advances economic, social and political freedoms, as well as promoting environmental sustainability, then the



role of African universities, in constructing such states on the continent, is to contribute towards advancing such freedoms and sustainable environments through their research, teaching and civic engagements. Especially in the context of building democratic developmental states on the continent, African universities need to emphasise politics, class, and citizenship in order for them to become relevant to the everyday existence of the people. In effect, for African universities to contribute to the construction of democratic developmental states, they have to bring back their civic and public functions. As noted earlier, the public role of universities is their primary function. This is all the more important if they are addressing crises on the continent such as; the ravaging HIV-AIDS pandemic, poverty, and squalor. This is to say that actions by academics to promote justice, to improve the conditions of life of their fellow human beings, and to participate in the transformation of the world are all a constitutive part of the social dimension of the academy in Africa, as it is elsewhere. This means that HEIs must be responsive to the needs of their immediate communities, their neighbourhoods, localities, nations and the continent at large. This, however, requires more attention, especially now that the continent is trying to overcome its history of deprivation and marginalisation in order to improve the living conditions of the majority of the African people. The point, therefore, is that universities need to place a greater premium on civic engagement or public scholarship for them to undertake their social functions and to become 'engaged universities'. This will require that greater resources are geared towards civic engagement, and also that civic engagement should receive equal importance as research and teaching in the evaluation of academics.

The words of the great American philosopher, John Dewey is apropos for African universities if they are to contribute to the construction of democratic developmental states on the continent. He notes that:

When the school introduces and trains each child of society into membership within a little community, saturating him with the spirit of service, and providing him with the instruments of effective self-direction, we shall have the deepest and best guarantee of a larger society which is worthy, lovely, and harmonious (cited in Dworkin, 1959: 49).¹²

As Penny Enslin, in her writing on education in South Africa, has correctly argued; the task facing progressives

is to counter the dominant discourse, challenging its presuppositions, restoring the political from its position as a forbidden speech, and overthrowing the divisive practice of depicting teachers as expert scientists **who stand aloof from the problems of their immediate environment and society, and primarily serve the interest of a market economy** Enslin, 1990: 89) (emphasis added)¹³

¹² Dworkin, M. S. (1959) *Dewey on Education: Selections. With an Introduction and Notes by Martin S. Dworkin.* Classics in Education No. 3, Columbia University New York: Teachers College Press.

¹³ Enslin, Penny (1990) "Science and Doctrine: Theoretical Discourse in South African Teacher Education" in Nkomo, M., *Pedagogy of Domination: Towards a Democratic Education in South Africa.* Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, Inc.

I have argued elsewhere, that the calls for bringing politics back require a *different kind of politics*. This means the need for African universities to serve

...the need for self-empowerment by individuals, communities, localities and countries so that citizens can claim their rights to develop themselves and society, and by so doing 'roll back the gods of the market' that have been so disempowering and exclusionary, as well as roll-back its pervasive values of individualisation, commodification and monetisation of life... Therefore, rather than treat the people as clients and consumers,... Africans must first and foremost be treated as citizens for whom politics should primarily be aimed at enhancing their human welfare. This would thus move away from the politics of exclusion and elitism to the politics of active citizenship and popular participation.¹⁴

The major argument here is that the fundamental task that confronts academics (students and lecturers alike) is to make themselves and their work relevant to the everyday life of the African people.

If such an ethos of collective well-being becomes the dominant paradigm of African universities, their graduates who will join the public service – either as political leaders or as bureaucrats – will work toward the advancement of African people and countries, rather than using the state as a means of private accumulation as is currently being done today. In this regard, African universities should produce graduates who promote the principles of democratic governance, and who are able to build and to run efficient and effective states as well as institutions in both the private sector and in the civil society. At the same time, they must produce graduate citizens who will contribute to building and expanding social networks at the community level, because democratic non-state actors are essential for the sustainability of democracy and development.

If African states are to become developmental, then one of the immediate tasks of the universities on the continent is to restore the ethos of civic culture in lecturers and in students. This point is important because policy in any state, including developmental states, by its very nature is political. Therefore, there is a need for African HEIs to produce political and administrative leaders who will formulate public policy that will enable the continent to industrialise and to expand the human capabilities of African people. Needless to stress, the political system and the administrative apparatus respectively, are crucial determinants for the political capacity and for the administrative capacity of the state. African universities, therefore, have a crucial role to play not only in building new administrative and political institutions, but also in strengthening existing ones that will enable the continent to address its developmental challenges. In this regard, universities on the continent need to proactively engage with the state.

¹⁴ Edigheji, Omano (2003) "State-Society Relations in Post-Apartheid South Africa: The Challenges of Globalisation on Cooperative Governance", in Mhone, G and Edigheji, O., *Governance in the New South Africa: The Challenges of Globalisation*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press.



It is equally important that universities see their role as the expansion of the human capabilities of the African people if, they are to contribute to the construction of democratic developmental states on the continent.

Lastly, African universities need to become entrepreneurial by establishing independent revenue streams and undertaking research that can lead to innovations, which in turn can be converted to commercial value. Similarly, African universities need to forge strong relationships with African businesses particularly to obtain research funding from the latter. In this regard, they could learn important lessons from the developmental states of Asia and from the Western world where universities have strong relationships with businesses that in turn, make huge financial investments in research and development.

These are some of the ways in which African universities can contribute to building democratic developmental states on the continent as a *sine qua non* for overcoming Africa's social, economic, political and institutional deficits.



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