



SARUA Leadership Dialogue Series – Vol 1 Number 2 2009

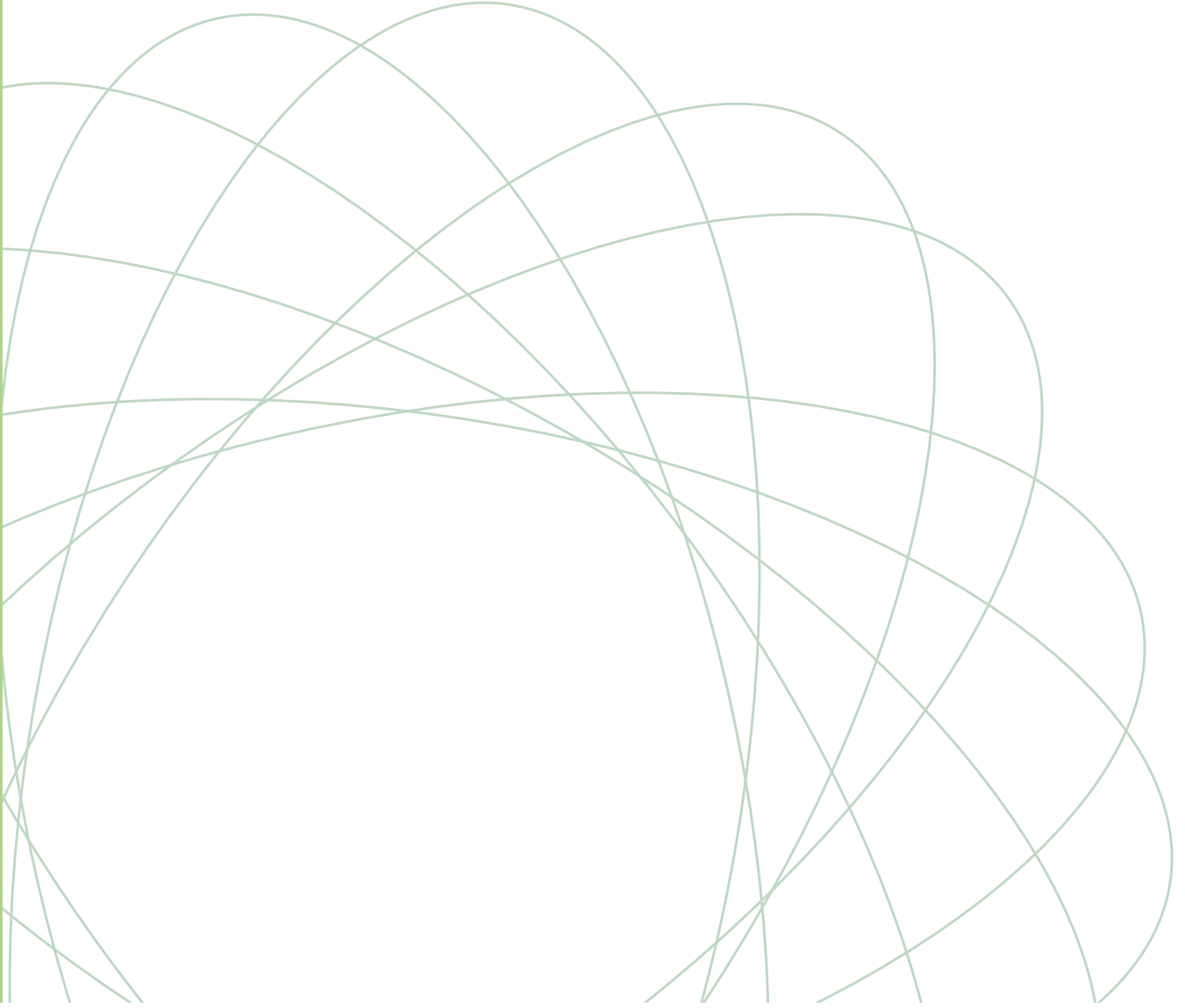
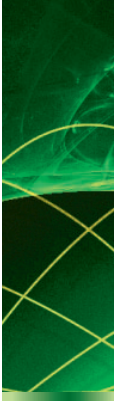
The Challenges of
REGIONAL INTEGRATION
and its Implications for Higher Education



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REGIONAL INTEGRATION
and its Implications for Higher Education

Series Editor: Piyushi Kotecha



FOREWORD

HIGHER EDUCATION IN REGIONAL INTEGRATION

The focus of the second publication in SARUA's Leadership Dialogue Series for 2009 is on 'Regional Integration', an issue that is clearly of great importance to higher education in Africa. Before we enunciate the several reasons why this is so, we need to be clear regarding the concept. What is meant by regional integration?

In the broadest terms, it is the formation of economic blocs intended to bring added strength and stability to nations in geographic proximity. Perhaps the European Union is one of the clearest examples of such a regionally integrated bloc. Following on from the basic economic imperative have come other integration developments, most notably a European parliament signifying a degree of political unity, and a common European currency. Only through this process of regional integration have the countries of Europe been able successfully to compete with other powerful blocs that have been established, for example, in North America and the Far East. In Africa, regional integration has most certainly begun, but it is not as far advanced as in other parts of the world. The Southern African region provides a good example of what has been achieved so far on the continent. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) was born out of political necessity as the so-called frontline states joined in an alliance that attempted to counteract the negative effects of apartheid South Africa's economic and ideological power. Today, the 15-member SADC is committed to economic and political co-operation and integration. A 'free trade area' has already been established, and the region is looking tentatively towards the creation of a regional customs union, and a SADC common market with a single currency.

The question that concerns us here is not so much how such ambitious plans will be achieved in this often fractious region, but what the process of regionalisation will mean to the nearly 70 publicly-funded higher education institutions operating in SADC. How will Southern African universities be affected, and what can they contribute to a process that is as inevitable as it is complex?

There can be no doubt that they will be affected. There is considerable interest already at African Union level in the harmonisation of higher education, a process that is accelerated by renewed international donor interest in Africa's generally uneven and under-developed university systems, and in the efforts of organisations like SARUA to strengthen and rationalise these systems. As important is the impact that a revitalised higher education system will have on the political and economic transformations overtaking Africa in general and the SADC region in particular. Obviously, the production of relevant skills and research will be of paramount importance.

But what, in practical and immediate terms, should universities be doing about the whole question of regional integration? Intentionally, this document offers no clear answers. Rather, the document is intended to provide background information for further discussion on this important topic. What does seem certain at this early stage, however, is that the improved health and stability of higher education is a central priority. A vigorous, interconnected university sector will be essential if higher education is to take its rightful place in the complex process of designing and implementing the sort of regionalisation that will lift Southern Africa from the chronic fragmentation, under-development and marginalisation that currently characterises too many of its member countries.

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Published by SARUA 2009-09-24
P O Box 662
WITS
2050
SOUTH AFRICA

ISBN: **978-0-9814099-7-9**

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, national and regional socio-economic and cultural development, and for the eradication of poverty.

The research and production of this publication has been funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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DESIGN and LAYOUT : Ryan Morris: Activism Brand Communication
PRINTING : Colorpress (pty) Ltd

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ABBREVIATIONS

AEC	– African Economic Community
AIDS	– Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
AMIS	– African Union Mission in the Sudan
AMU	– ArabMaghreb Union
APEC	– Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation
APRM	– African Peer Review Mechanism
ASEAN	– Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU	– African Union
AUC	– African Union Commission
AUST	– African University of Science and Technology
CAADP	– Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme
CENSAD	– Economic Community of Sahelo-Saharan States
COMESA	– Common Market for East and Southern Africa
DRC	– Democratic Republic of the Congo
EAC	– East African Community
ECCAS	– Economic Community of Central African States
ECOSOCC	– Economic, Social and Cultural Council
ECOWAS	– Economic Community of West African States
EPA	– Economic Partnership Agreement
FANR	– Food, Agriculture and National Resources
FTA	– Free Trade Area
GLOBELICS	– Global Network for Economics of Learning, Innovation and Competence Building Systems
I&S	– Infrastructure and Services
IDRC	– International Development Research Centre
IGAD	– Inter-Governmental Authority for Development
IMF	– International Monetary Fund
ISDSC	– Frontline States Inter-State Defence and Security Committee
NEPAD	– New Partnership for Africa’s Development
NGO	– Non-Governmental Organisation
NIC	– National Intelligence Council
OAU	– Organisation of African Unity
OCAM	– Organisation Conlmun d’Afrique et Malgache
ORGAN	– SADC Organ on Polittics, Defence and Security
PAP	– Pan-African Parliament
PSC	– Peace and Security Council
REC	– Regional Economic Community
RIAS	– Regional Integration Assistance Strategy
RISDP	– Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan
RPA	– Regional Parliamentary Assembly
SACU	– Southern African Customs Union
SADC	– Southern African Development Community
SADCC	– Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference
SAPS	– Structural Adjustment Policies
SARUA	– Southern African Regional Universities Association
SHD&SP	– Social and Human Development and Special Programmes
SIPO	– SADC Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ on Polittics, Defence and Security Co-operation
SNC	– SADC National Committees
SPA	– SADC Programme of Action
TIFI	– Trade, Industry, Finance and Investments
UAM	– Union Africaine et Malgache
UNECA	– United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

INTRODUCTION

The articles in this book were chosen to provide a conceptual framework for discussion on the question of regional integration. Although the issue is not a new one, there has been a renewed emphasis on it following the formation of the African Union (AU). More importantly for our purposes, recently there has been a strong political interest in regional co-operation in higher education. This is evident from the AU's Harmonisation of Higher Education policy, as well as renewed donor interest in higher education.

The issue of regional integration (or regionalisation as it is sometimes referred to) is thus an important one for higher education in the Southern African region to engage with. What are the implications of the political and economic models driving the region? What would be the impact on higher education of the success, or lack thereof, of political or economic regionalisation? Higher education, by its nature, is international in leaning. So what is the current focus on 'regionalisation' requiring of higher education that would not be the case otherwise? We cannot, and do not, attempt to address these issues in this publication. Rather, the purpose of this reader is to set the background for engagement around these critical questions.

In the Southern African region, the question of regional integration is integrally connected to conceptions about the development of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Both of these issues – regional integration and development – are complex and need fuller exploration. While the question of development will be canvassed more fully by SARUA in the coming months, including in the seminar to take place in October 2009, the issue of regional integration affects not only the relationship between the region and the global environment but also inter and intra-regional relationships.

According to the perspective of the Yearbook *Monitoring Regional Integration in Southern Africa* (Volume 8, 2008)

Regional integration has been considered an important and successful tool of economic growth and development. In Southern Africa in particular, with its comparatively small economies, regional integration was meant to play a crucial role in pursuing common strategic interests for the successful economic development of the countries involved. (p.i)

Yet the Yearbook concedes that, for a variety of reasons, such as the economic partnership agreements with the European Union and the global economic crisis, regional integration is 'significantly challenged' as an approach to the sustainable development of economies. In reality the question of regional integration is also related to an extraordinary variety of economic, political and socio-cultural issues. That is not unexpected since the region comprises an array of historically developed systems each facing complexities of their own.

Any conception of regional integration must therefore 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.

In this publication therefore ideas about regional integration are explored more fully. There is a large body of literature on the subject and it is not intended here to reproduce the range of issues canvassed in that literature. Here the intention is simply to provide some outlines of what might be regarded to be a set of important questions that arise from any discussion about regional integration.

Only a few articles have been chosen for the purpose. In the first of these titled *Regional Integration – Contested Approaches*, Enver Motala sets out to illustrate the greatly divergent focuses adopted by analysts and commentators regarding the issue of regional integration. Some analysts approach this issue from the perspective of the important elements necessary to make regional integration a reality – to ensure that the countries of Southern Africa develop the policies, institutions, mechanisms and processes to advance the goal of regional integration. These approaches refer primarily to the importance of markets, trade, export, the costs of production, infrastructure and other economic issues and seek to relate these to the global economic conditions. Others are interested primarily in the question of governance, arguing that the rationalisation of the RECs is critical to regional integration. Yet others refer to the idea of 'mainstreaming' – the need for the integration of the legal protocols and strategic plans to achieve the goal of regional integration.

In the second paper, titled *Regional Economic Communities as Building Blocks of African Regionalism: Institutional Perspectives on SADC*, Ogochukwu Nzewi explores the role of Regional Economic Communities (RECs), with a particular focus on SADC. The aim of the article is to familiarise the reader with the governance, policy and institutional frameworks that govern and manage the relationships between RECs and the African Union. In particular it examines how RECs like SADC align their programmes to the AU goal of achieving deeper integration and political unity on the continent. The paper provides a conceptual background to the use of the term 'regionalism', contrasting it with other related terms used in international political economic studies. The paper also provides a brief historical study of the relationship between the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and sub-regional groupings (RECs) in Africa, which is useful for exploring the building-block role of RECs within the larger African regional system. She also examines the obstacles to achieving this role, especially as it relates to the history, structure and organisational make-up of SADC and the AU.

The third paper is *The Prospects for Regional Innovation System(s) within Sub Saharan Africa* by Mario Scerri. It argues that the history and 'current shaping' of the world economy make the development of national innovation systems in Sub-Saharan Africa 'virtually impossible and that consequently the only feasible analytical and planning context is a regional one' (p. 171). In developing this argument he explores the concept of national innovation systems for the purposes of regional innovation and examines how countries in the region might migrate to such a regional system.

Mammo Muchie's piece, entitled *Higher Education, Research and Knowledge for African Integration*, argues the case for historical and contextual analysis in understanding the challenges of higher education and regional development. It sketches the historical evolution of the higher education system, the 'imperial' influences affecting its development and points to the considerable difficulties encountered by universities, especially in the post-colonial period consequent upon the imposition of structural adjustment programmes on the independent states of Africa. The author is sceptical about the possibilities for a meaningful response to the challenges of African development led by the universities in the region because of the complex and difficult issues facing them. He argues that the idea of achieving the status of 'world-class universities' in the context of these intractable challenges is unrealistic.

For him the idea of building a Pan-African Higher Education, Research and Knowledge Area is predicated on several conditions, including the need to build the capacity of existing universities in relation to their research and knowledge capabilities, fostering the conditions that facilitate the creation of innovative curricula, mobility of staff and students, the recognition of indigenous knowledge systems and the removal of the impediments and inefficiencies that presently characterise higher education in the continent.

This publication, it is hoped, will be useful in building SARUA's orientation to the broadest objectives of 'revitalising' and enhancing the capabilities of the institutions in the region, together with the leadership of institutions and the academics who work in them; and hopefully to similarly provide a better understanding among policy-makers and analysts of the purposes and possibilities for higher education's role.

Doubtless many of the issues raised in these papers are contestable and can provide the basis for thoughtful disputation and debate. Indeed, that is what the publication aims at.

31 August 2009

REGIONAL INTEGRATION - CONTESTED APPROACHES

Enver Motala

INTRODUCTION

The perspectives highlighted in the Introduction to this publication regarding the importance of markets and trade, the question of governance within Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the idea of mainstreaming, cannot be viewed in isolation.

Alternative perspectives regard these approaches as inadequate because they bear little or no reference to history and context. These latter perspectives insist that the question of regional integration cannot be considered outside an examination of the history of colonial conquest and the specific state forms bequeathed to the countries of Africa. They also suggest that the specific responses of post-colonial states and the perspective adopted by nationalist leaders must be factored into any conception of the possibilities for regional integration. In particular, the impact of the structural adjustment policies imposed on African states as a result of the Washington Consensus could not be ignored. We turn now to a discussion of these perspectives.

In reviewing its Regional Integration Assistance Strategy (RIAS) for Sub-Saharan Africa, the World Bank sets out a number of reasons why regional integration is important. It begins by asserting that the requirement of integration arises from global trends in economic, trade, political and social relations which 'remain an important engine of economic growth throughout much of the world'.¹

According to the perspective of the Yearbook *Monitoring Regional Integration in Southern Africa* (Volume 8, 2008)

Regional integration can contribute strongly to key aspects of Africa's development: it can improve market integration, facilitate economies of scale and economic diversification, and, crucially, stimulate intra-regional and continental trade to strengthen growth. Regional integration can also assist management of the continent's shared natural resources and help improve human development outcomes.²

The review argues that regional integration is even more urgent for Africa's development because Africa is characterised by economies which are small relative to other economies, and are affected by adverse terms of trade, 'conflict and the legacy of colonialism', factors which have limited the leverage of these economies to the international economy and affected their growth. The marginalisation of African economies is attributed to changes in the nature of its exports, its restricted market access to major markets and a 'cluster of supply-side constraints'. While the costs of production are comparable to that of countries like India and China, Africa suffers adverse conditions for business and for the facilitation of trade, affecting its comparative advantage. Until now very little regional economic integration has taken place and consequently little diversification of production or economies of scale. The region is also characterised by limited transport and communication infrastructure and an unreliable power supply despite the existence of an abundance of energy resources. Its road infrastructure is also low having a 'density' of under 7 kilometres per

¹ Regional Integration in Africa: Stakeholder Consultations on Key Elements of a World Bank Assistance Strategy, October 20, 2007 (page 1)

² *ibid*

100 square kilometres of land as compared with Latin America and Asia which have densities of 12 and 18 kilometres respectively, a situation exacerbated by the fact that many African countries are land-locked. These constraints are compounded by the weakness of Africa's financial markets and 'complex and lengthy procedures regulating private business activity, high and unpredictable trade tariffs, complex customs arrangements and limited harmonisation at a regional level of policies, regulations and procedures in each of these areas'.³ Despite the existence of regional bodies, their effectiveness is questionable because they are constrained by lack of capacity and overlapping memberships which imply contradictory obligations for member countries. Even with the formation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) under the auspices of the African Union, little progress has been made towards effective regional integration. The Bank's review also refers to the slow progress in regard to agreements concerning multilateral trade through the Doha Round as contributing to these difficulties. And in its view,

Africa does not have readily available the considerable resources needed to simultaneously lead technical and financial preparation of a large number of regional projects.⁴

As a result, projects are slow to develop and this has led to pressures on regional economic bodies requiring them to reallocate the project development roles usually undertaken by 'associations of technical bodies' such as power utilities. The Bank identifies four critical institutional issues for the progress of regional integration. These are:

- A clarification of the roles and responsibilities of each of the regional institutions established for the purpose.
- Enhancing the professional capabilities of the bodies set up to deal with regional integration to achieve 'policy harmonisation' in priority areas.
- Strengthening national planning to support regional initiatives. National plans, in the Bank's view, have limited focus on regional priorities and countries have been uneasy about ceding their sovereignty to regional initiatives.
- Strengthening mechanisms that are necessary for the delivery of regional initiatives such as regional infrastructure.

The Bank's strategy focuses on three areas: i) engagement in infrastructure development across national borders, ii) trade, investment and finance and iii) what it refers to as 'regional public goods'. This last refers to 'the foundations of growth' necessary to support the reduction of poverty and vulnerability to diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria and their impact on the 'labour force productivity'. It also refers to the impact of migratory pests such as locusts. These vulnerabilities are compounded by the shortage of water and other essential services for the poor. The Bank also calls for 'macroeconomic convergence and monetary unification' as necessary to stability and growth and for poverty reduction.

³ Ibid: page 3

⁴ Ibid: page 4

OTHER PERSPECTIVES

There is a wide body of literature on the subject of Africa's regional integration and some of it echoes the approach contained in the Bank's perspective even though it might deal with specific issues more comprehensively. Some writings are concerned more with issues of governance. For instance, Francis Kornegay, writing in *Synopsis*⁵ provides a summary of the presentations delivered at a conference on the subject of governance held in June 2008 and which 'provided the jumping-off point' for a discussion of issues affecting continental and regional governance following the Accra Declaration of July 2007. The declaration

reiterated the priority of rationalising and strengthening Regional Economic Communities (RECs), given that they are considered to be the regional pillars of the AU and the mechanisms for regional roll out of projects facilitated by NEPAD.⁶

Its perspective is informed by the inherited legacy of African fragmentation and the consequent claims of sovereignty which have meant that African states have not been able to meet challenges such as cross-border migration, energy and food security, water resources, infectious disease, cross-border conservation, security and conflict, and the power of external trading blocs and countries pursuing their own growth imperatives using the mineral and energy resources available in Africa.

Kornegay refers to the colonial partitioning of Africa and the entrenchment of its division into 53 states and argues that

The failure of Western-style 'bourgeois democracy' with its emphasis on popular sovereignty, has reinforced the view that the fragmentation of the continent is, perhaps, the most fundamental inter-African governance challenge to be overcome... that of rising above national state sovereignty sufficiently to enable Africa, at a continental and a regional level, to co-ordinate development towards deeper levels of economic and political integration.

His critique is consequently directed at the reliance on 'imperial presidencies' and the 'elite sovereignty' of heads of state as the instrument of regional co-operation. In his view the task remains that of counteracting 'an institutional and political culture of neo-patrimonialism' in the nation states because of its pervasive effects on regional and other institutions. This reality places questions on the possibilities for achieving the goals of regional integration through the African Union (AU) and the RECs, in the context of globalisation and the existence of strong regional blocs in the developed and developing regions of the world which present the continuing threat of marginalisation for African states racked by their 'current pattern of fragmented inter-African governance'.⁷

⁵ Synopsis: Policy Studies Bulletin of the CPS, Volume 9 Number 2, November 2008

⁶ Synopsis: page 3

⁷ Ibid: 4

In this regard he also examines the passage of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to the AU and the emergence of regionalism through regional economic communities such as the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS), East African Community (EAC), and the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC, later SADC), and the problem of forming an African Parliament. For him the challenges of regional integration also raise questions about regional citizenship and identity in the context of the struggle for a post-colonial identity 'and a plethora of intra-state national and sub-national questions'⁸. He suggests, for instance, that South Africa's post-apartheid transition must countenance the idea of a 'federated republic' which encompasses states in eastern and Southern Africa, but also avers that the issue of

Continental and regional governance cannot ignore the 'national question' and considerations of national integration in navigating higher levels of Pan-African allegiance in the quest to build a larger African identity.⁹

MAINSTREAMING

Alfred Latigo and Daniel Tanoe of the Economic Commission for Africa, for their part, focus on the question of mainstreaming regional integration into the plans of national states in the SADC region in particular. They concentrate on the *legal instruments* and *strategic plans* that are intended to provide the framework for regional integration, referring in particular to a number of treaties, protocols, regulations, guidelines and such like on the one hand, and to strategic documents such as the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and the Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation (SIPO), on the other. They argue that the process of mainstreaming is necessary for the

Systematic integrating of the objectives and related initiatives of regional integration as well as the process of *creating the ownership* of the agenda *into the overall national development plans, poverty reduction strategies* and in the society in order to attain the '*popular legitimacy*' necessary for the success of regional integration. (their italics)¹⁰

According to them mainstreaming has two components which are interrelated. Regarding the role of institutions, it concerns the ratification of protocols that have been agreed more widely, the establishment of the relevant regional institutions and the integration of goals into national plans and their implementation through programmes for the purpose. They regard the harmonisation of legal systems and 'unification of national legal systems' as intrinsic to this process.

The second component of the idea of mainstreaming concerns the 'domestication of the regional integration agendas' requiring conceptual change and the integration of such a conceptualisation into the activities and programmes of national

⁸ Ibid: 6

⁹ Ibid: 7

¹⁰ Alfred Latigo and Daniel A Tanoe, Mainstreaming Regional Integration in National Development Plans, Paper presented at ECA-UAM Forum on Mainstreaming Regional Integration in National Development Plans in Southern Africa, Maputo, Mozambique, 28-29 May 2009 (page 1)

institutions and its translation into the concerns of society as a whole – not only of high level committees. They identify, in addition to the governance challenges for mainstreaming regional integration, other challenges too. For example, in the case of Mozambique these include

economic and social stability in the country, and on the other side, on the resolution of the structural problems that slow down the full potential of the productive sector.¹¹

They also refer to the incidence of poverty, which is affected by economic growth, the 'stabilisation of the domestic budget balance through the mobilisation of domestic revenues' and the increase in tax collection, the development of the financial systems, the need to diversify the economy and the export sector and a strong 'government commitment to adhere to its reform programme'.¹² For them mainstreaming is also dependent on good statistical data without which serious analysis of the economy and society is not possible.

TRADE RELATED ISSUES

For its part the Trade Law Centre for Southern Africa (tralac), based in Stellenbosch, South Africa, produces an annual Yearbook titled *Monitoring Regional Integration in Southern Africa*.¹³ In its *Introduction* to the Yearbook 2008¹⁴ it refers to SADC's launch of its Free Trade Area (FTA) and the proposed target of a customs union for the region by 2010, and the intention by two other regional blocs, the EAC and COMESA, to join SADC in developing a path towards the establishment of an FTA 'stretching from South Africa in the south to Egypt in the north'. The FTA, it notes, is a trade-in-goods agenda affecting tariffs and other non-tariff related matters such as rules of origin, standards, customs management and trade facilitation. It points to the complexity of this because of the different perspectives about these issues in the region where, for instance, import is an important source of revenue for some countries (with consequent fiscal challenges), while it is not so for others. For the authors this implies the need for discussion and compromise between national interests and that of the region.

In reviewing the situation as it existed, the tralac authors refer to the 'growing internal dissent' in the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), arising from two causes. The first refers to the transfers made by South Africa to the other SACU members via the 'revenue pool' in the context of adverse global conditions and the second refers to the conflict arising from negotiations with the European Union (EU) to conclude the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). They claim that the divergent approaches used in concluding this agreement, based on the fact that members of this group had affiliations to other regional communities whose interests conflicted with those of SACU, was a case in point. Indeed, these issues have led to threats by South Africa in particular to withdraw from SACU.

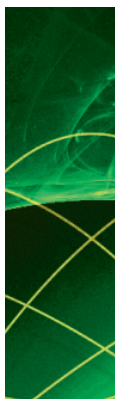
The *Introduction* also refers to the impact on the region of the global economic slowdown. It affects a wide range of indicators such as employment, incomes and

¹¹ Ibid: page 5

¹² Ibid: page 6

¹³ <http://www.tralac.org>

¹⁴ *Monitoring the Process of Regional Integration in Southern Africa in 2007*, Edited by Anton Bosi, W Breytenbach, Trudi Hartzberg, Colin McCarthy and Klaus Schade



exchange rates. The slowdown also leads to a rise of protectionist approaches affecting not only 'the regional integration agenda but also the implementation of the liberalisation commitments'.¹⁵ Then there is the rise of reactive and inward looking policies. Very little progress, the authors argue, has been made in regard to security and political issues and even less on institutional arrangements, made more complex by the appointment of President Gaddafi of Libya as head of the African Union. This refers ostensibly to his opposition to NEPAD and his orientation to partnerships with the West. They also point to the potential impact of the developments in South Africa following the ousting of President Mbeki and the developments in Zimbabwe in which he was active. There are concerns about the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the inability of SADC and the AU to 'enforce' peace, but the authors highlight developments in Zambia. They refer particularly to capacity, political will and funding as barriers to integration and the reluctance to 'compromise sovereignty' is seen as a singularly pervasive constraint on regional plans.

Combined, these accounts of the problematic of regional integration seem to suggest a number of challenges for SADC's membership which relate *inter alia* to: the duplication of membership in other regional communities; the lack of clear commitments to the merger of RECs; the need for 'harmonisation' of standards, regulations and practices; issues internal to the national states such as poor health and education, corruption, food and water security and the widespread shortage of skills; the relative strengths of some economies against others; poor information and data systems; the external challenges arising from the global slowdown and its impact across a range of economic and social areas; and the maintenance of peace and security in the area coupled with the problems of governance.

In some ways the assumptions that inform these perspectives are shared in the discussions engaged in by participants at a conference organised by the National Intelligence Council (NIC) of the United States of America.¹⁶ The conclusions the conference arrived at are not only contentious and judgmental but also singularly ignorant of the role of developed economies in African development. The view was that 'local factors will determine Africa's fate'. The NIC's discussion was about the likely scenarios for Sub-Saharan Africa considering the political and economic effects of globalisation and its effects on conflict patterns, 'terrorism, democratisation, AIDS, evolving foreign influences, and religion'.¹⁷ The local factors it refers to include government decisions, the availability of professionals, and the strength of civil society as also geography and security capabilities. Those at the conference shared the perspective that Africa will continue to be 'increasingly marginalised as many states struggle to overcome sub-par economic performance, weak state structures, and poor governance'¹⁸ and the effects of globalisation will increase differentiation in African economies. It was argued that outside South Africa, some oil producing states and a 'handful' of other states which have some possibilities of attracting foreign investment,

other African countries – including some failed states – plagued by poor leadership, divisive ethnic politics, decayed government institutions, geographic constraints, and a brain drain may be unable to engage the international economy sufficiently to reverse their downward trajectory¹⁹.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*: page 3

¹⁶ This paper summarizes a one-day conference of US experts on Africa convened in January 2005 and sponsored by the National Intelligence Council to discuss likely trends in Sub-Saharan Africa over the next 15 years. It was prepared under the auspices of the National Intelligence Officer for Africa. CR 2005-02 March 2005. It contains an explicit disclaimer that the 'Discussion Paper' does not represent the views of the US Government.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*: page 1

¹⁸ *Ibid.*: page 1

¹⁹ *Ibid.*: page 1

ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

Several African scholars (in particular) have subjected the contemporary discourse about regional integration and development to acerbic criticism. They regard this discourse as both truncated and unhelpful. Moreover, they regard it as highly generalised since it often seeks to speak about the continent as a whole without differentiation and to encompass every conceivable 'developmental' issue, including the very concept of development, regionalism, political and economic systems, scientific production and technological innovation, skills and competencies and the knowledge system itself. It is a discourse that is unabashed about the nature of its limitations or the prescriptions it seeks to foist on the countries and regions of the continent.

This criticism requires analysts and policy-makers to re-think the importance of analysing questions of power, global economic regimes and the role of strategic geographic interest in the evolution of the present African conjuncture. In their view, without such analysis, no serious understanding can be derived about the conditions facing the continent or of the potential pathways out of its predicament. They regard analyses which are devoid of history, or seek to sanitise its impact on the developing world, as serving little other purpose than to solidify the reach and power of existing global arrangements on African society. The assumptions that such a-historical analyses bring to the problematic of regional integration are therefore hardly shared by these African scholars and social analysts since they are critical of the foundational premises on which the idea of integration is based. In particular their analysis goes beyond the symptomatic description of the phenomenon of globalisation and its effects and seeks to understand it more fundamentally. Their disaffection arises from the absence of any historical reckoning with the processes which have led to the forms and discourse of integration required of African economies to enter the dominant framework of the global economy, on terms that are largely pre-ordained and prescriptive. Consequently, a great deal is written by such scholars about the power of the discursive and knowledge constructs that inform any perspective about the continent.

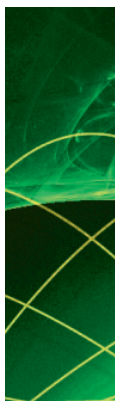
For instance, Odora-Hoppers²⁰ decries the violence not only of colonial conquest but also the violence inflicted on the knowledge systems of the indigenous peoples of Africa and the consequences of that for post-colonial reconstruction, for the role of universities and the validating of knowledge claims.

One of the consequences of colonialism for indigenous knowledge systems was the fundamental cognitive triage and erasure that was imposed on the rich knowledge heritages of non-Western people. By declaring non-Western lands to be 'empty' (that is, devoid of people or ideas), and the diverse sciences and innovations that steered and maintained those societies as 'non-science', the cultural and intellectual contributions of non-Western knowledge systems were systematically erased.

For her

it becomes unavoidable to revisit much of what is taken for granted: the role and ideo-logical use of science in such a construction, and the manner

²⁰ Odora-Hoppers, C.A. 2005. Culture, Indigenous Knowledge and Development: The Role of the University, Occasional Paper 5, CEPD, Braamfontein, Johannesburg (page 16)



in which the resulting framework for the definition of knowledge ended up privileging, consistently, the essentially provincial, and itself an ethnic, western system, and extrapolating this wide in the context of colonial subjugation, as the UNIVERSAL knowledge.²¹

Nabudere, who is also critical of the disciplinary fissures that exist in the science system, talks of 'transdisciplinarity' as essential to understanding the 'glocal' problematic²². He is critical also of the academic centres established in the West to study Africa and regards these 'models' as inappropriate for the idea of an African 'renaissance' intended to recover African historical memory as the basis of its regeneration. He asserts the right of African experiences as essential to the idea of 'African studies' regarding that as a 'part of our resistance movement' and from which lessons might be drawn.²³

Later he argues that

What has therefore to happen is the emergence of an African intelligentsia that carries with it the aspirations of the African people and make it a basis for developing an epistemology of knowledge inspired by the African peoples' Ways of Being (their ontology), their Ways of Knowing (their epistemology), and their Ways of Doing (their theorising and practices). Until this intellectual break is made and African intellectuals actually do carry out a metaphysical 'suicide', as Cabral asked of us, there will be no successful creation of African Universities let alone 'Centres of African Studies'.²⁴

Mkandawire²⁵ has made strident criticisms of the a-historicism pervasive in much of the writing about the continent of Africa. He points to the impact of the policies of adjustment pursued in the 1980s and 1990s which promised 'accelerated development' and the end of Africa's marginalisation by relying on the ostensible benefits of foreign direct investment and the stimulation of exports. Yet in both these areas (investment and exports) African economies were no better in the 1980s than they had been previously. Explanations of this 'failure' have emanated largely from the very policy sources relied upon by African governments and have been both obstructive and disingenuous. Mkandawire argues that

it is the deflationary policies under the structural adjustment policies (SAPs) that have placed African economies on a 'low growth path' which has discouraged investments, trade expansion and diversification, by undermining the investment-growth-trade nexus. Indeed, as a result of this, African economies have been so maladjusted that they responded poorly to a wide range of economic stimuli.²⁶

Among the most trenchant of these scholarly critiques is that by Issa Shivji²⁷ who has written about these historical considerations in a number of articles over the years. He contests, for instance, how the concept of globalisation is understood, explores its origins in political economy and historically and traces the genesis of the hegemonic hold of what has come to be known as 'neo-liberalism' in the processes of

²¹ Odora-Hoppers, C.A. 2001. Decolonising the Curriculum, Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Globalisation, Pretoria South Africa (page 3)

²² Nabudere, D.W. 2005. Towards An Africology Of Knowledge Production And African Regeneration, The Marcus-Garvey Pan-African Institute, Mbale, Uganda Email: mpai2005@yahoo.co.uk

²³ Nabudere, D. W. 2006. African Universities Must Be Anchored In The African Peoples' Historical And Cultural Experiences. A paper developed from that presented at the National Conference on the Strengthening of Centres of African Studies in Africa and South Africa in Particular, held at the Centre for African Renaissance Studies, Pretoria, South Africa on 26th-28th February, 2006, under the title: *Anchoring Centres of African Studies*. (page 2)

²⁴ *Ibid*; page 6

²⁵ Mkandawire, T. 2005. Maladjusted African Economies and Globalisation *Africa Development*, Vol. XXX, Nos. 1 & 2, 2005, pp. 1-33 and © Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, 2005

²⁶ Mkandawire, T. 2005. Pp. 1

²⁷ See in particular Shivji, I.G. July 2005. Revisiting the Debate on National Autonomous Development, University of Dar es Salaam Tanzania issashivji@cats-net.com July 2005. (Paper prepared at its request for the Nelson Mandela Foundation's Unit for Rural Schooling and Development at the University of Fort Hare).

colonisation and 'imperialism'. In his view a proper understanding of the present conjuncture requires a proper understanding of the period of 'nationalist history' since without such a understanding analysis is likely to be largely eclectic. He sets out in some details the period of the transition from 'nationalism to neo-liberalism'.

He commences his analysis by reference to the centuries of slavery and domination endured by Africans, the process of 're-Africanisation' and the great expectations this process unleashed and the realisation by African leaders like Nyerere of the importance of both political and economic change. The weakness in conceptions of independence, he argues, arose from prioritising the state relative to the 'nation'. According to Shivji, in Africa the state 'preceded the nation, rather than the other way round. Thus, the national project was from the start, top-down, and statist'.²⁸

This conception of the state was developed in the attempt to unscramble the effects of colonialism but continued to maintain the divisions imposed by colonial powers which simply ignored 'cultural, ethnic, and economic affinities'. Post-colonial economies moreover continued to suffer the forms of exploitation as nation states peripheral to the developed economies and were largely structured as extractive economies for the supply of resources and raw materials to these countries. This, moreover, was compounded by the forms of control over agricultural production, the alienation of land from indigenous populations and forced labour. In his view the structure and form of colonial administration remained largely unaffected by the construction of post-colonial nation states which continue to be no more than 'colonial constructs'. In effect,

These initial conditions on the eve of independence show that the nationalist project faced a formidable task on the morrow of independence. What is more, the state, which was supposed to carry out the twin tasks of nation-building and economic development, was itself a colonial heritage. The colonial state was a despotic state, a metropolitan police and military outpost, in which powers were concentrated and centralised, and where law was an unmediated instrument of force and where administrative fiat was more a rule, than the rule of law.²⁹

It was in this context that Africa's post-independence economic programmes were designed largely at the behest of the World Bank and the effect was to increase the dependence of African states on global regimes of trade and economic activity. As Shivji avers

In effect, it involved intensification of the monoculture agriculture for export; some enclaves of import substitution, industrialisation and throwing open of the extractive and resource based industries to transnational corporations. ... Nationalism thus resolved itself into various ideologies of developmentalism. 'We should run while others walk', politicians declared. The academia was dominated from the North. Modernisation, based on Parsonian pattern variables and Rostow's 'stages of economic growth', was the theoretical norm.

²⁸ Shivji, I.G. 2005:pp. 2

²⁹ Ibid. page 3



These 'gurus' argued that post-independence economies were typically dual eco-nomies. There was the traditional sector, rural, unproductive, backward, lacking entrepreneurial spirit and governed by ascription or the 'economy of affection'. Development consisted in modernising the traditional society, or, as Goran Hyden would have it, capturing the uncaptured peasantry (Hyden 1980). Political scientists thus looked for modernising elites, from modernising chiefs to modernising soldiers as political expediency dictated.³⁰

And despite the challenges to the modernisation paradigm, approaches to development have remained largely untrammelled by them especially because often these conceptions of modernisation coincided with the interests of the new African elite and bureaucratic caste. The problematic of independent state formation was compounded by the period of sustained borrowing that took place throughout the 1970s. This, in particular, increased the debt burden to foreign lender institutions and created dependence on externally set agendas for change. The effect of this was that

By this time, the limits of the early growth were also reached and the economic shocks of the late seventies plunged African economies into deep crisis. Numbers fell, growth rates became negative, debt repayments became unsustainable, fiscal imbalances went out of control, and so did inflation. Social services declined, infrastructure deteriorated and one after another, African governments found themselves at the door of IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the Paris Club pleading for mercy.³¹

It was in this context that the World Bank's report of 1981, *Accelerated Development for Africa: an Agenda for Africa*, was published. It was an agenda set by the Bretton Woods institutions and supported by Western countries, but, Shivji argues, it had little to do with development, 'accelerated or otherwise'. The history of the resulting structural adjustments programmes is now well known and especially their effect on the support for higher education institutions in Africa. Governments were now required to adopt a wide range of policy measures to get the economic fundamentals right – especially through measures that restricted public expenditure, cut subsidies to agriculture and social programmes, replacing market mechanisms for protective policies and so nullifying even some of the modest achievements of the nationalist period. It is in this context that the policy prescriptions for marketisation, privatisation, and liberalisation came to be hegemonic for the continent, policy-making became increasingly dependent on Western-financed policy consultants and the idea of integration into the global economic system was born driven by the fear of African marginalisation – 'you are either with globalisation or doomed!'³²

For Shivji these developments represent the 'defeat of the national project and the resurrection of the imperial onslaught' which is itself now under severe scrutiny with many scholars beginning once more to re-examine the 'national project'. Shivji reminds us of the strong debate around the project of national autonomous development.

While not providing facile solutions to the problematic he poses, Shivji suggests the need to 'restart a conversation on alternative paths of development as neo-liberalism begins to wear down' and to consider alternative approaches to development

³⁰ Ibid: page 4 - 5

³¹ Ibid: page 7

³² Ibid: page 9

along the lines he suggests. These refer to a firmer analysis of the relationship between state and politics, and a re-examination of the conceptions of the Pan-Africanism of the immediate pre-independence period to bring it back to the centre stage of the African discourse.³³

The Pan-Africanism that we need to resurrect therefore is political Pan-Africanism at the continental level, which transcends regionalism, whether economic or political. Only thus can Africa resist present-day imperialism called globalisation. In short, the nationalism of the present era is Pan-Africanism.³⁴

He calls finally for a disengagement from the project of 'imperialism which regards the present time as propitious for this purpose since there are signs of this disengagement from other developing regions of the world and Latin America in particular'. And he calls for a rethinking of the role of African intellectuals in regard to these issues. This is how he puts it:

Are we going to be politician-intellectuals or neutral scholars serving the state and imperialism, in one case consciously, in the other ignorantly? Or are we going to be public intellectuals, political enough to give expression to the hopes and fears of the masses, but intellectual enough to keep distance from power-mongering?³⁵

CONCLUSION

The import of Shivji's (and other similar) analysis is that it makes it clear that any discussion of the issues of regional integration is inseparable from the trajectory of African history in relation to both its colonial/apartheid and post-colonial and 'nationalist' phases. This history provides a proper contextualisation for understanding the challenges now faced by the continent, and lends a framework for thinking about the efficacy of particular approaches for the developmental challenges which face the continent. It also provides interested parties with the qualitative tools to evaluate the 'solutions' being proposed for Africa's progress locally and in the global arena. What and whose knowledge is brought to bear on any discussion of African development or integration appears to be central to this challenge, since Shivji and others suggest that the very construction of knowledge is implicated in this project – the analysis and resolution of the difficulties facing the continent. Moreover, they would argue that issues of power and interest can hardly be ignored in that regard.

The question that confronts any analyst (or policy-maker) regarding these issues is therefore simultaneously about the knowledge construction system and its associated system of innovation. It is whether the standpoints represented by African scholars like Nabudere, Mkandawire, Hoppers and others can be set aside or have to be seriously considered. If they cannot be ignored, what then are the implications of their approaches and arguments for the production of knowledge through research, teaching and the forms of engagement which are indispensable to the life of universities everywhere?

³³ See in particular Shivji, I. G. 2005b, Pan-Africanism or Imperialism? Unity and Struggle Towards a New Democratic Africa, Billy Dudley Memorial Lecture Series No. 2 (Nigerian Political Science Association)

³⁴ *Ibid*: page 22

³⁵ *Ibid*: page 22

REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES AS BUILDING-BLOCKS OF AFRICAN REGIONALISM – INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON SADC

Ogochukwu Nzewi³⁶

INTRODUCTION

At the January 2009 African Union (AU) summit in Ethiopia, the debate on a United States of Africa culminated in a decision by the Assembly of Heads of States to establish an African Union Government. Towards this end the role of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as the building blocks of African regionalism gains greater significance. This paper explores this role with a particular focus on the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The AU views RECs as steps towards achieving a Union Government based on the provisions of the Abuja Treaty.³⁷ The aim of the paper will be to familiarise the reader with the governance, policy and institutional frameworks that govern and manage the relationships between RECs and the AU. In particular the paper will investigate how RECs like SADC align their programmes to the AU goal of achieving deeper integration and political unity on the continent.

The paper will begin by conceptualising the term 'regionalism' in contrast to other related terms used in international political economic studies. The next section will take a brief historical journey into the nature of the relationship between the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and sub-regional groupings (RECs) in Africa. This will establish a historical context in the exploration of the building-block role of RECs within the larger African regional system. Next, the paper will examine RECs as defined by and constituted in the AU. In doing so, the paper will argue that RECs play two contrasting yet important roles in the African regional system: as building blocks and as variable geometry tools.³⁸ Discussions will on the one hand focus on understanding RECs' perceived role by the AU as building blocks and on the other argue that the autonomy of RECs to a large extent provide them the space to act as variable geometry tools³⁹ within the larger regional system. Once this contextual framework is established, the paper will then focus on how SADC historically and institutionally is playing this building-block role. The paper will also look at the obstacles to achieving this goal, especially as they relate to the history, structure and organisational make-up of SADC and the AU.

CLARIFYING CONCEPTS: REGIONALISM AND REGIONALISATION

Regionalism is such an ambiguous concept that it warrants careful navigation. For instance, regionalism is sometimes perceived as a largely economic phenomenon and sometimes as encompassing both political and economic integration. It has been used in describing models of regional integration like the European Union (EU), Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Regionalism has also been used interchangeably in the literature with certain region-focused concepts such as regionalisation, regional integration, regional co-operation and economic integration. Perhaps this is why Ernst Hass⁴⁰ once described regionalism as 'a political slogan... ideological data that the student of integration must use'. Analytical investigation⁴¹ of all these terms in relation to regionalism reveals some differences, although some writers may choose to interchange the terms for the purposes of analysis. In this case, regional integration, regional co-operation and economic-integration can be seen as different but equally important

³⁶ Dr Ogochukwu Nzewi is a Senior Researcher at the Centre For Policy Studies (CPS), Johannesburg

³⁷ See Accra Declaration on Union Government 2007

³⁸ From the EU website: 'Variable-geometry' is the term used to describe the idea of a method of differentiated integration which acknowledges that there are irreconcilable differences within the integration structure and therefore allows for a permanent separation between a group of member states and a number of less developed integration units within the larger regional group http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/variable_geometry_europe_en.htm

³⁹ See subsequent discussions on RECs as variable geometric tools

⁴⁰ Haas, E. B. 1970. 'The study of regional integration: reflections on the joy and anguish of pretheorising', *International Organisation*, Vol. 24 No. 4 (Autumn 1970), pp. 607-646

⁴¹ Bouronane, N. 1997. 'Theoretical and strategic approaches' in R. Laverne (ed) *Regional integration and co-operation in West Africa: a multidimensional perspective* Africa World Press, Trenton N.J. Hurrell, A. 1995. 'Regionalism in theoretical perspective' in L. Fawcett & A. Hurrell (eds) *Regionalism in World Politics: regional organisations and international order*, Oxford University Press, New York

analytical components of regionalism, because regional co-operation, economic integration and regional integration, as will be seen subsequently, are largely state driven.

Some authors⁴² argue that there can be no logical analysis of regionalism without clarifying the difference between regionalism and regionalisation. Wyatt-Walter⁴³ points out that regionalism is a conscious policy of states or sub-state regions to co-ordinate activities and arrangements in a greater region. Within this framework, one sees the emergence of two broad approaches in literature to regionalism, the institutional and the intergovernmental, where both approaches are characterised by a purposive, top-down attempt by nation states to manage the regional system. In contrast, regionalisation has been defined as a historical and emergent structure of complex social interactions and institutions and rules between non-state actors.⁴⁴ In this case regionalisation is not necessarily a state project but it recognises and responds to historical structures and institutions while embracing change. The result is an inevitable move towards social, economic and even ideological restructuring. Like globalisation therefore, regionalisation escapes the state. While some argue that regionalisation by its very nature drives regionalism, others contend that regionalism may in fact drive regionalisation. Either way, for this paper, regionalism will be used as an expression of state action within the region in response to and in recognition of both historical and emergent global structural changes.

CONTEXTUALISING THE REC DISCOURSE: HISTORICAL DIVERGENCES AND COMPETING AFRICAN REGIONALISMS

The African experience of regionalism over the years consists of wider regional (OAU) and sub-regional (RECs) efforts, hence the use of the term 'regionalisms'. The African regionalism system is fossilised in the competing notions of nationalism and Pan-Africanism. In other words, enthusiasm for a united Africa was characterised by the reluctance of newly independent states to champion movements that would entail a level of surrender of national sovereignty. This engendered rigorous debates on the right approach to African regionalism, resulting in a tug of war between 'gradualist' and 'federalists', in which nationalist and sovereignty sentiments clashed with the idea of delegation of sovereignty, a view which Nkrumah's concept of African regionalism entailed. Nkrumah's thesis was largely guided by a vision of an African state united against the powers of neo-colonialists, and it stressed that Africa's development can be met only through 'cohesive and integrated planning' (Nkrumah 1965:11). This resulted in an isolation of differing positions made up of the radicals, moderates and conservatives. These groupings of nations came to be known as the Casablanca, Monrovia and Brazzaville groups respectively.⁴⁵ The Casablanca group advocated for a total revolution against ex-colonialist states and the abnegation of state sovereignty to a centralised African government, while the conservatives made up mostly of Francophone Africa argued for the maintenance of old colonial ties and insisted on the tenets of sovereignty. The Monrovia moderates served more as the rallying point between the two extreme view points. Nevertheless, the May 1963 meeting of African Independent States in Addis Ababa united the various groups into the OAU under the tenet of state sovereignty, which was carried through as part of the principles of the charter establishing the OAU. More than 40 years later, the historical debates in terms of the regionalism ideology in Africa are still ongoing.⁴⁶

⁴² Gamble, A. & Payne, A. 1996. 'Introduction: the Political Economy of regionalism and World Order' in A. Gamble and A. Payne (eds) *Regionalism and World Order*. New York, St Martin's Press

⁴³ Wyatt-Walter, A. 1997. 'Regionalism, Globalisation and World Economic Order' in L. Fawcett & A. Hurrell (eds) *Regionalism in World Politics: regional organisations and international order*. Oxford University Press, New York

⁴⁴ Gamble, A. & Payne, A. 1996. *op cit*

⁴⁵ Van Wairaven, K. 1999. *Dreams of Power (the role of the Organisation of African Unity in the politics of Africa 1963-1993)*. Ashgate Publishing Limited, England pp. 103-109

⁴⁶ The manifestations of these arguments are found in the ensuing debates about the United States of Africa with states such as Nigeria and South Africa advocating the gradualism principle and Libya championing the idea of a central African government or authority.

These divergences expressed in the differences of opinion on the pace of and approach to African regionalism also contributed to the mushrooming of many sub-regional groupings or RECs from the early independence years. This proliferation was viewed as a 'self-reliant strategy'⁴⁷ for smaller states aimed at levelling the playing field with the more powerfully perceived nations in Africa. These groupings also served to accommodate the different interests and opinions on the pace and approach towards regionalism, sometimes bringing countries together on the basis of common ideology, history and geography. To this end, some African countries preferred to enter into agreements where there was likelihood of speedy benefits, bound by common interests like historical colonial boundaries and the advantage of low risks in terms of distribution of benefits.

The relationship between the OAU and sub-regional groupings over the years has been largely detached. This detachment can be attributed to historical and institutional factors. Take, for example, the 1960s friction between the OAU and peripheral regional bodies like the conservative Union Africaine et Malgache (UAM) and the Organisation Conlmun d'Afrique et Malgache (OCAM).⁴⁸ This relationship exemplified the strategic considerations behind forming sub-regional alliances, especially where they serve a political purpose as leverage for bargaining at the continental level. Moreover, the lack of legal provisions in the OAU Charter and the lack of institutional mechanisms to support the relationship between the OAU and the mushrooming regional groupings meant that the OAU could not manage the rifts between it and its members effectively.

Thus Africa's regionalism landscape became highly fragmented, resulting in the mushrooming of many sub-regional bodies like the Mano River Basin, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and others. However from the 1980s into the 1990s, the Lagos Plan of Action and the Abuja Treaty, respectively, recognised the need for a co-ordinated and harmonised effort towards the goal of a united Africa, setting certain standards for regional and sub-regional relationships. This has resulted in the recognition and restructuring of many REC groupings. Nevertheless, the many RECs with multiple memberships, present one of the biggest challenges in forging an effective and efficient African regionalism system.

THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES (RECSs)

The Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are recognised in the Abuja Treaty as the building blocks towards an African Economic Community (AEC). The AU Constitutive Act takes precedent over the Abuja Treaty. However, rather than supersede the ideals of the AEC (the expected final outcome of the Abuja Treaty), the new Act reinforces it by committing to the implementation of the AEC and by making the co-ordination and harmonisation of RECs one of the objectives of the new body.⁴⁹ Even so, there are certain concerns about how the RECs will fit into the AU integration agenda.⁵⁰ This concern is justified based on the previous history of competition, fragmentation and complexities that had characterised the relationships between the OAU and RECs as well as the level of autonomy of RECs.

⁴⁶ The manifestations of these arguments are found in the ensuing debates about the United States of Africa with states such as Nigeria and South Africa advocating the gradualism principle and Libya championing the idea of a central African government or authority.

⁴⁷ Mytelka, L.K. 1984. 'Competition, conflict and decline in the Union Douanière et Economique del l'Afrique Centrale (UDEAC)' in D Mazzeo (ed) *African Regional Organisations*. Cambridge, University of Cambridge, New York, Melbourne

⁴⁸ Thompson, S. W. & Bissell, R. E. 1973. 'Development of the African Subsystem: Legitimacy & Authority in the OAU'. *Polity*, Vol. 5 No 3 (Spring) pp. 335-361

⁴⁹ OAU 2000 Constitutive Act of the African Union

⁵⁰ Asante, S.K.B. 2001. 'Towards an African Economic Community', in S.K.B. Asante & F.O.C. Nwonwu Towards an African Economic Community. Pretoria, Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA) p. 9

The AU has so far approached RECs in two broad ways. First is through a rationalising process. To this end, at the 7th AU summit in 2006, in Bangul Gambia, themed 'rationalisation of RECs and regional integration', the AU put into motion the process of rationalising and harmonising of RECs and the harmonisation of various policy issues⁵¹ (AU 2006b). This has resulted in the AU recognising only eight RECs out of the numerous multilateral and bilateral co-operation blocs.

1. Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
2. Common Market of East and Southern Africa (COMESA)
3. Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)
4. Southern African Development Community (SADC)
5. Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD)
6. Arab Maghreb Union (AMU)
7. Economic Community of Sahelo-Saharan States (CENSAD)
8. East African Community (EAC)

Second is as the fundamental components (building blocks) of African regionalism. To this end the AU has adopted the *Protocol on Relations between the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities*⁵² and has also incorporated RECs into the implementation of various AU plans like NEPAD where the role of RECs is succinctly spelt out in terms of the development and implementation of NEPAD programmes.

Thus, it seemed that for the first time there was a plan to allocate a distinctive and strategic role for Regional Economic Communities in line with the overall goals of the continental body. Nevertheless, the role of the RECs can be critically assessed from two angles. The first has to do with the viability of the building-block role in terms of the relationship between the micro (RECs) and macro (African Union) institutional structures. The second is the potential of the RECs as variable geometry tools where regional groupings can move ahead on different areas of policies and member states do not have to take part in every AU decision.

RECs AS BUILDING BLOCKS OF AFRICAN INTEGRATION

There is a need to explore the building-block role of RECs to better understand the RECs' role within the greater integration plan. The Lagos Plan of Action subscribed to the idea of a horizontal approach to regional integration in terms of the importance accorded to RECs in the implementation of its action plan.⁵³ This involved an implementation strategy for regional integration which entailed the establishment, strengthening, co-ordination and harmonisation of the Regional Economic Communities. Five RECs, including the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC), were consequently established during this period. The Abuja Treaty of 1991 went further to institute the RECs as the principal route to an African Economic Community (AEC). According to articles 6 and 88 of the Treaty, the RECs are expected to work towards the ultimate objective of establishing the African Economic Community, and thus contribute to deepening African integration. It provides a six-staged plan in article 6, and included as part of this process is the gradual removal of tariff barriers and non-tariff barriers to intra-community trade. The six stages are:

⁵¹ African Union, 2006b. 'Decision on the Moratorium on the Recognition of Regional Economic Communities (RECs)', *Decisions and Declarations*, Assembly of the African Union, Seventh Ordinary Session, African Union, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, viewed 25th June 2009 http://www.africaunion.org/root/au/Conferences/Past/2006/July/summit/doc/Decisions_and_Declarations/Assembly-AU-Dec.pdf

⁵² NEPAD 2002. NEPAD: *Towards Claiming the 21st Century, Annual Report 2002*. NEPAD Secretariat South Africa (page, 34)

⁵³ Organisation of African Unity, 1980. *Lagos Plan of Action for the Economic Development of Africa 1980-2000*. African Union, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia p. 99

1. Strengthening existing and establishing new RECs.
2. Stabilising and quantifying existing trade, non-trade barriers, customs duties and taxes in all RECs; and strengthening, harmonising sectoral integration.
3. Establishment of Free Trade Area at the level of RECs; Customs Union (common external tariff).
4. Co-ordinating and harmonising all Tariff systems among RECs en route to establishing a continental Customs Union.
5. African Common Market: adopt common sectoral policies; harmonise monetary policies, and immigration.
6. African Common Market, African Monetary Union, Integration of sectoral policies, a fully functioning Pan-African Parliament; other structures of the community.

Based on the Abuja Treaty, the role of RECs include trade liberalisation/economic integration, sectoral integration and harmonisation of policies, adopting measures towards a common migration policy on free movement of persons, as well as a common peace and security framework. Rationalisation is relevant considering the general view that the proliferation of RECs did little to improve intra-regional trade or development.⁵⁴ This means the establishment of guidelines and institutional frameworks aimed at moderating RECs' integration actions, legislation and behaviour. The provisions and the objectives of the 2007 *Protocol on Relations between the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities* spell out these various guidelines.

RECs AS VARIABLE GEOMETRY TOOLS

It has been suggested that the phenomenon of RECs in the larger African integration picture can be viewed as a 'variable geometry solution or approach' to integration.⁵⁵ A variable geometry solution is a largely European Union phenomenon which constitutes the formation of multiple groups within the larger group focused on different policy issues, programmes and projects, an example being the launching of the Euro and Schengen areas which were limited to a few states. The approach has been utilised as a decision-making tool in co-ordinating national policies which are of particular significance to a group of countries, but not to others. Thus, a variable geometric approach is seen as a resource for expedited decision-making, in multi-membership groups. RECs may be considered in this light, especially if one considers that some of these regional groupings emerged to manage the diversity of opinions in terms of policy directions within the larger continental body. However, it is debatable whether it is possible to consider the present African regionalism structure (REC/AU relationship) as a variable geometric approach and RECs as variable geometric tools. This is because unlike in the EU experience, early African regionalism efforts tended more towards sub-continental regionalism. Most of these RECs, like the EAC and ECOWAS, developed independently of and prior to continental (OAU) instruments and also because the idea of RECs in African integration is to harmonise policies, programmes and projects, not departmentalise the AU programmes and policies for regional convenience.

Still, the differing goals and tempo of integration of RECs imply a fundamental variable geometric component which may work in competition to the building-block role. According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) report on the assessment of regional integration in Africa, RECs can play a building-block role only if there is complementarity across RECs, a commitment by slow integrators to

⁵⁴ Shaw, T. M. 1985. 'Towards a Political Economy of Regionalism in Africa' in R. I. Onwuka & A. Sesay (eds) *The future of Regionalism in Africa*. St. Martin's Press New York; Kennes, W. 1999. 'African regional economic integration and the European union' in D. C. Bach (ed) *Regionalisation in Africa: Integration and Disintegration* J. Curry, Oxford U.K. Indiana University Press, Bloomington; United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2004: 'Accelerating Africa's Integration' in *Assessing Regional Integration in Africa (ARIA series)*, Policy research report UNECA, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

⁵⁵ Kennes 1999:27 ibid

ratify protocols, faster implementation, reduction in length of negotiations and political will.⁵⁶ This is a difficult task especially considering that not all the RECs have the same integration goals and performance levels. For instance, while the EAC has an objective of full political union,⁵⁷ RECs like ECOWAS and SADC have the goal of an economic union,⁵⁸ with COMESA having the goal of a customs union. These varying goals require that countries push ahead on particular policy areas and interests. Hence, there is a challenge in terms of accommodating the differences within the broader African regional structure without compromising the AU's strategy of RECs as key components of African regional integration. This will be examined in closer detail by examining the building-block characteristics of SADC in its relationship with the AU.

KEY INSTITUTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS IN THE BUILDING-BLOCK APPROACH

Institutions have been described as formal and informal establishments and the conventions, norms and symbols embedded in them. Institutions have also been characterised as policy instruments and procedures. However, institutions go beyond the idea of norms and procedures, incorporating policy connectedness and networks as well as policy actors. Institutions, therefore, are conceptualised in this paper as actors in the development and progress of the state or, in this case, the regional state, thus having a significant role to play, both in the overall nature and in the process of regionalism. Therefore in looking at institutional considerations, the focus is on how the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has aligned itself in terms of the complementarity of its legal framework, political decision-making structure and policies to the AU. The next section discusses some considerations for this process to be effective.

SADC AND THE AU RELATIONSHIP

SADC developed from the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC), which was established in 1980 by the Frontline States of Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe (with Malawi and Swaziland joining the SADCC later). Its initial goal was the conglomeration of efforts to end white minority rule in Southern Africa. Despite early ideological disagreements, the OAU was committed to ending all vestiges of colonialism, pledging at inception to liberate African countries with white minority rule – from Portuguese Africa to countries like South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe. The OAU's support at the height of the Zimbabwean, South African and Namibian armed struggles against minority rule led to the declaration that 'an attack by the racist regimes against any frontline state shall be deemed to be an attack on independent Africa as a whole'.⁵⁹ This unity of efforts was further institutionalised in the formation of the OAU's African Liberation Committee⁶⁰ head-quartered in Dar es Salaam and the Frontline States' Inter-State Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC).⁶¹ Thus, early relationships between the OAU and SADCC coalesced around common political and security concerns. Later, the Lagos Plan of Action provided the impetus for the establishment of the SADCC in line with the economic and social co-operation and integration principles of the 1980 Lagos⁶² Plan of Action. In 1992, hinged on the objectives and principles of the Abuja Treaty of 1991 and following the independence of Namibia and South Africa in 1990 and 1994 respectively, the SADCC transformed into SADC. The new body was more focused on socio-economic integration as well as political and security co-operation.

⁵⁶ United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2004: 'Accelerating Africa's Integration' in Assessing Regional Integration in Africa (ARIA series). Policy research report UNECA, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

⁵⁷ African Union Website <http://www.africa-union.org/root/AU/recs/eac.htm> viewed 26th June 2009

⁵⁸ UNECA 2004 *op cit*

⁵⁹ OAU 1976. 'Resolution on the security of countries nearest to the South African Battlefield'. Assembly of Heads of State and Government. 13th ordinary session, Port Louis, Mauritius, 2-6 July 1976

⁶⁰ Legum, C. 1965. *Pan-Africanism: a Short Political Guide*. Revised edition, Praeger, New York

⁶¹ Van Nieuwkerk, A. 2001 *Regionalism into Globalism? War into Peace? SADC and ECOWAS compared*. African Security Review Vol. 10 No 2, 2001

⁶² SADC website <http://www.sadc.int/index/browse/page/107> viewed 27th June 2009

Evidently, South Africa's emergence in regional governance grew the prominence of SADC in regional affairs which was hereto dominated by North, West and Central African countries. In recent years SADC has played a role in the transformation of the OAU to the AU in 2000, in regional developments such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and in the establishment of the Peace and Security Council (PSC). In 2006, at the 7th Ordinary Session of the African Union, SADC became one of the eight RECs recognised as part of the AU/ REC rationalisation process.

It must be noted, however, that RECs are not necessarily a part of a continental-conceived process. Therefore it can be argued that although RECs like the SADC emerged in response to the broader developments in the African regionalism system, the strong driver of REC emergence was the pursuit of common interests based on geographical, political, historical and socio-cultural affinities. RECs as a result are independent, organic entities largely governed by their own treaties, and function on the basis of agreed priority areas of co-operation. Consequently, one observes that not all RECs are geared towards the same long-term integration goals, making the rationalisation of RECs a challenging one.

SADC LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The SADC treaty in putting forward its objectives, principles and institutions, takes into account OAU frameworks such as the Lagos Plan of Action, the Abuja Treaty and the AU Constitutive Act. Between SADC and the AU, one observes certain shared principles and objectives: the principles of sovereignty and respect of territorial integrity as well as a noted commitment to human rights and peace and security.⁶³ Moreover, the SADC treaty and the AU Constitutive Act both lay an emphasis on the harmonisation and co-ordination of policies as a strategy towards deeper integration.

By the late 1990s, SADC was moving towards deeper socio-economic integration and the regional transformation of the OAU into the AU as well as the establishment of NEPAD represented a continental transition towards economic liberalisation, democracy and good governance. These developments along with other developments necessitated a reassessment of SADC as a regional body with a growing priority within the region to focus on peace and security and the consolidation of democracy evidenced in the peace initiatives in Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The 2001 amendment of the SADC treaty, the SADC Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation, as well as the SADC Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ (SIPO) on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation of 2004 were driven by objectives that entailed the implementation of the AU treaty provisions on peaceful relations between states, disarmament, as well as the establishment of democratic institutions. Additionally, the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan of SADC which was introduced in the amended treaty of 2001, while targeted at the economic, political and development priorities of the region, is also planned as an effort towards building the broader Continental Agenda.⁶⁴

Finally, in principle, SADC has effectively aligned itself to the strategic focus areas of African regionalism. Nevertheless, the administration of the treaty provisions will require careful coordination and administration of the African regional system as well as a commitment by African leaders to implement treaty provisions.

⁶³ See SADC Treaty at <http://www.sadc.int> and AU Constitutive Act at www.africa-union.org

⁶⁴ SADC 2001 *Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan*. SADC Secretariat Gaborone, Botswana

POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

SADC's decision-making structure is highly intergovernmental and top heavy. SADC executive decision-makers (Heads of States and Council of Ministers) are also members of the AU executive decision-making body. The 2007 Protocol on AU/REC relations provides for the attendance and participation of the AU in SADC meetings albeit without voting rights.⁶⁵ In this way, there is a connectedness between policy decisions in AU and at the SADC, as intergovernmental decision-making rests within the same political centres at the continental and sub-regional level.

Like the African Union, SADC decision-making is located in the nexus of the Heads of States of Governments and the Council of Ministers made up largely of Foreign Ministers. The apex decision-making structure of the SADC, however, has a slight variation, consisting of a decision-making nucleus called the Troika, which is made up of the Chairperson of SADC; the Incoming Chairperson of SADC who is the Deputy Chairperson of SADC; and the Outgoing Chairperson of SADC. In this case the apex decision-making bodies of SADC are the Summit of Heads of State or Government; the troika of the Summit and the troika of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation. However like in the AU, these structures consist of Heads of State and Governments and have the role of macro policy-making (treaties), institution designing, delegation of power and financial decision-making. The Council of Ministers is directly responsible to the Heads of States and Government and is in charge of implementation of grand treaties. Decisions within Africa's macro (AU) and micro (REC) regional framework is largely by consensus.

PEACE AND SECURITY

The AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) mechanism (i.e. the African Union Non-Aggression and Common Defence Pact of 2005) represents a continental advancement towards integration in defence and security matters.⁶⁶ The pact provides for a common African defence and security policy and an African Standby Force. It also establishes the role of the African Court of Justice as an instrument for dispute settlement in African regionalism. Moreover, the 2007 Protocol on Relations between the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities which builds on the 1998 AEC/REC Protocol emphasises the harmonisation of AU/REC activities in the area of peace and security and incorporates some of the provisions of the AU Peace and Security Protocol.⁶⁷

The peace and security architecture of SADC expressed in the Indicative Priorities on the ORGAN specifically aligns its objectives to the AU Constitutive Act and PSC instruments on peaceful relations between states, peacekeeping and the co-ordination of efforts in regional peacekeeping operations. For instance, apart from the DRC and Seychelles, all SADC countries have signed, ratified and acceded to the AU Protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council. The African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS) deploys troops from as far afield as Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Senegal, Gambia and Kenya.⁶⁸ However, the implementation mechanism which will require the operationalisation of the African Standby Force, the harmonisation of defence and security policies as well as the development of security evaluation and monitoring systems such as an early warning system, will be laborious, requiring effective co-ordination and capacity requirements. These functional requirements have been a huge stumbling block in African regionalism so far.

⁶⁵ African Union 2007a, *op cit*

⁶⁶ AU, 2005. African Union Non-Aggression and Common Defence <http://www.africa-union.org/root/AU/Documents/Treaties/text/Non%20Aggression%20Common%20Defence%20Pact.pdf>

⁶⁷ African Union *op cit*: African Union 2007b *Study on an African Union Government towards the United States of Africa*. AU, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

⁶⁸ AU website <http://amis-sudan.org/MilitaryComponent.html> viewed 30th June 2009

GOOD GOVERNANCE INSTITUTIONS

Going into the 21st century, good governance prerequisites seem to have become priorities for the OAU, as evidenced in the 1996 Yaoundé and 1999 Algiers summit declarations of the African heads of state on the need for reform.⁶⁹ The move towards reform resulted in the formation of a Peace and Security Council with a new AU security mandate, and the setting up of an economic recovery plan (NEPAD), and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). It also offered the opportunity for civil participation, responsiveness and accountability over AU governance in the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC). The many AU conventions on Human Rights and the establishment of the African Court of Justice and Human Rights were seen as moves in the right direction.

SADC also began to undergo transformation in terms of its regional governance and institutional framework. In 1997, the SADC Parliamentary Forum was established aimed at bringing representativeness to SADC governance. By 2001 the SADC treaty was amended, introducing two key institutions aimed at building democracy and good governance, the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation and the SADC National Committee, thus rationalising the peace, security and participatory framework of SADC in concert with priority developments in Africa.

The continental framework on the role of parliaments provides for inter-parliamentary relations between the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) and Regional Parliamentary Assemblies (RPAs). Article 18 of the PAP Protocol stipulates that the Parliament shall work in close co-operation with the parliaments of the RECs and the national parliaments or other deliberative organs of member states, to ensure the harmonisation of regional policies.⁷⁰ As such, the PAP is expected to convene annual consultative forums with the parliaments of the RECs and the national parliaments or equivalent bodies. In practice, there have been challenges in the co-ordination of this relationship, which if effective could serve to expedite the signing and ratification of regional protocols and the harmonisation of regional policies. Besides, there is the common experience of the executives snubbing of RPAs' and PAP's proposals, the lack of formal reporting relationships with the executive and the exclusivity of executive policy-making powers. Without legislative mandate, the SADC-PF like the PAP remains ineffective.

There has been a noted shift in African regional governance through regional institutions which are focused on creating accountable and transparent leadership based on the broad participation of civil society in African regional policy-making. These institutions include civil society representative forums (like the Economic and Social Council as constituted in the AU and ECOWAS and the SADC National Committees (SNC) and the SADC Coalition of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) as constituted in the SADC). Like the ECOSOCC, the SNCs provide an opportunity for a cross section of civil society – including business, labour and community-based organisations – to participate in regional decision-making. However, the democratisation of SADC decision-making has been difficult. Despite the statutory provision for civil society participation in SADC through the SNCs, SADC has lacked the capacity and political will to effectively champion these initiatives.

⁶⁹ Organisation of African Unity, 1996 'Yaoundé declaration (Africa: preparing for the 21st century)', *Declarations, resolutions and decisions adopted by the 32nd ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government*. African Union, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, viewed 30th June 2009 <http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/Documents/Decisions/hog/6HoGAssembly1996.pdf>;

Organisation of African Unity, 1999, 'Algiers declaration', *Declarations and decisions adopted by the thirty-fifth assembly of Heads of State and Government Heads of Government Decision*. African Union, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, <http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/Documents/Decisions/decisions.htm> viewed 30th June 2009

⁷⁰ Organisation of African Unity, 2001, *Protocol to the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community Relating to the Pan African Parliament*. African Union, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, <http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/Documents/Treaties/Text/Protocol-panafrican-parliament.pdf> viewed 30th June 2009

ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

It is evident that in spite of the debates on the best approach to the pace and nature of African regionalism, Africa has followed a largely gradualist path towards integration. This gradualist/functionalist approach focuses on all other matters (social, technology, economic and even human rights) as an unobtrusive route to the political integration endpoint. In this case, economic integration allows for what can be termed a functionalism continuum; preferential trade agreement, free trade areas, common custom unions, common markets, economic union, monetary union and then political union. The Abuja Treaty largely espouses this view by setting a long-term 37-year plan and by spelling out the steps and requirements towards an African Economic Community. Largely, the aim of economic integration in Africa is to increase intra-regional trade and investment and thus reduce dependence on foreign aid. Economic integration is thus dependent on a lifting of trade barriers and stringent migration/immigration policies to facilitate the unencumbered movement of goods and services between regions in Africa. Additionally, the aim of RECs as building blocks also entails the development of common positions in international multilateral negotiations.⁷¹

However, the question that one needs to answer here is whether SADC has a road map towards this African Economic Community? SADC's goal is an economic union. The SADC Trade Protocol was signed in 1996 and in 2000 SADC began implementation of the SADC Free Trade Area. The SADC RISDP timetable is to have a FTA by 2008, a Customs Union by 2010, a Common Market by 2015, a monetary union by 2016 and a single currency by 2018. However, one observes some problems. There is the dominance of South Africa which as the biggest economy commands about 65 percent of the SADC market. The presence of a perceived hegemony presents a problem because for members of regional groupings, the rationality of pay-offs or benefits are integral in the game with different sized regional players. Directly linked to this problem is one which is endemic in Africa, the issue of multiple memberships. Members of SADC thus straddle memberships in regional communities like COMESA and SACU, usually to maximise benefits. This puts a lot of pressure on member states in terms of co-ordinating these various memberships. An example is the recent South African and Namibian reluctance to sign the SACU EPA 2007 negotiations with the EU⁷² and how the internal divisions between these members, who also make up SADC membership, will affect the SADC/EU negotiations.

Finally, while SADC has taken a step towards the formation of an African Economic Community by establishing a Free Trade Area in 2008, real challenges still lie ahead in dealing with regional transactions in a complex political landscape.

SECTORAL POLICIES

AU and SADC policies are broken down into specific sectors like trade, energy, industry and mineral resources, food and agriculture, transport and communication and education, culture, health and human resources development. The SADC treaty of 1992 made provisions for a decentralised institutional arrangement with each of the member states given responsibility for one of the 13 identified SADC Programme of Action (SPA) priority areas through national co-ordinating units. Nevertheless, in 2001, based on the recommendation of the SADC Council of Ministers, SADC was

⁷¹ African Union 2007a op cit

⁷² SACU, 2008. 'SACU's participation in the SADC EU EPA Negotiations' SACU Quarterly January-July 2008 http://www.sacu.int/newsletters/2008/july_sept.pdf. Cloete, R. 2008. 'SADC's free trade moves hindered by customs union split.' *Engineering News*, 6th June 2008 <http://www.engineeringnews.co.za/article/sadcs-quot-free-trade-moves-hindered-by-customs-union-split-2008-06-06>

restructured and the sectoral nodes have been rationalised into five sectoral clusters called directorates: units such as the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security (ORGAN); Trade, Industry, Finance and Investments (TIF); Social and Human Development and Special Programmes (SHD&SP); Infrastructure and Services (I&S); and Food, Agriculture and National Resources (FANR). In addition to the directorates there are other sectoral units like the Information and Technology Unit and cross-cutting programmes on gender, combating HIV/AIDS, the environment, poverty eradication and statistics.

Broadly, SADC policy sectoral nodes mirror those of the AU and consist of responsible ministers from member states acting on sectoral policy. The AU's tentative road map of the Union Government is designed to concentrate attention on key strategic areas of focus. Already economic integration and migration, peace and security have been priority integration areas within the regional system. However at the end of the July 2009 AU Summit there also seemed to be a movement towards the adoption of a common foreign and defence policy.⁷³ This decision delegates greater responsibility to the African Union Commission (soon to become the African Union Authority) over defence, diplomatic and international trade matters.

The REC building-block approach is equally re-enforced by its tie in to key AU regional protocols and programmes like NEPAD's implementation strategies (NEPAD 2002:51). NEPAD as a specialised institution of the AU⁷⁴ has identified RECs as key implementation partners. This strategically ties into the building-block role that RECs are seen to play in African regionalism efforts. For instance, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) has a common framework, aimed at guiding and facilitating agricultural investment programmes through the alignment and harmonisation of development efforts at the national level, with the support and leadership of RECs.⁷⁵ Thus, RECs are expected to develop their own agricultural priorities based on CAADP's four pillars (land and water management, market access, food supply and hunger, and agricultural research). In this way, NEPAD exhibits the AU principle of harmonisation and co-ordination of continental policies at REC and national levels, an integral prerequisite towards building the African Economic Community goals of the AU.

THE BUILDING BLOCK ROLE: CHALLENGES GOING FORWARD

The implementation of the African Union goal of deeper integration will require an efficient and effective management of already poorly capacitated sub-regional institutions. Moreover, given an environment steeped in numerous political, social, developmental and financial challenges, there is little evidence that RECs have the capacity to expedite policy harmonisation and economic integration at a uniform pace. There are three major challenges that African regional institutions and the regional system as a whole have to overcome if RECs are to effectively fulfil their building-block roles. These challenges are examined under the next three headings.

Ceding Sovereignty and Building Institutions

The decision to move towards an African Union Government – and towards a United States of Africa – will entail African countries ceding a part of their sovereignty to a central authority. In this case it will be the African Union Commission (AUC). However, the central challenge to implementing any regional agenda is managing the

⁷³ There were two proposals put up by Libya towards this end, one for the establishment of the African Defence Council and the other for an African Agency for the Protection of Territorial and Economic Waters of African countries. Botswana was opposed to this move as it felt the issues were not debated at the Summit. See African Union, 2009. Decision on the Establishment of the African Agency for the Protection of Territorial and Economic Waters of African Countries, 13th ordinary session 1–3 July 2009. Sirte, Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya African News website, www.africanews.com/site/Botswana...decisions/.../25882/Botswana+roars+at+Gaddafi+over+AU+decisions by Wene Owino

⁷⁴ African Union 2006 Study on an African Union Government towards the United States of Africa. AU Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

⁷⁵ Kariuki, s. 2009. Do regional initiatives integrate land reform and rural development? A Case of New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD), Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the East African Community (EAC). Centre for Policy Studies, Policy Brief No. 60, April 2009

dichotomy between the principle of state sovereignty and the goal of regional integration. In this case sovereignty connotes political will and regional integration connotes institutional competence. To this end, intergovernmentalists⁷⁶ have argued that the European Union is a playground for government-centred policy bargaining, gaming and differing long-term interests through the Council of Ministers. Neo-functionalists / institutionalists⁷⁷, on the other hand, by examining the role of the elite or technocrats through the EU Commission, hold a different view where regional institutions are seen as methodically growing a life of their own by taking advantage of expanding tasks and thus influencing regional outcomes.

Indeed, institutional studies have shown that as tasks expand at the intergovernmental bargaining level, institutions can increase their powers by taking advantage of conflicts and the spill over of tasks. There is no doubt, however, that African regional institutions (e.g. the AUC, REC secretariats, regional parliaments and the different organs of these regional groups) have not managed to take advantage of expanding tasks and disagreements to convince member states to delegate more responsibility to regional institutions. Of course, reasons for this range from the intergovernmental design of the African regional system to the dearth in technical know-how and capacity within these regional institutions themselves.

For many years, the AU Commission (AUC) like most REC secretariats has been viewed as a glorified secretariat: weak and politically marginalised with little influence on decisions. Yet there appears to be a noted delegation of powers by the Assembly of the AU to the AUC as seen in recent decisions. First, was the January 2009 AU Summit decision (Assembly/AU/Dec.233(XII)⁷⁸ to elevate the AUC to the new status of an Authority, and second was the decision at the July 2009 Summit to give the new Authority a central role in developing a common AU foreign policy. Nevertheless, the difference between the AUC acquisition of power and that of the EU is that EU institutions seemed to grow into their powers as their competences matured and were thus ready to deal with the challenges of expanding tasks. It remains to be seen how the AU Commission's new role will be practically applied and politically tested. Also important will be whether or not these changes are reflected at the level of RECs with similar developments in the REC secretariats.

Harmonisation and Co-ordination of Policies

Another challenge is the mammoth task required in the harmonisation and co-ordination of sectoral and trade policies in the region. The 2007 AU Protocol on the relationship between the AU and RECs is the instrument that manages the relationships between the AU and the RECs.⁷⁹ The Protocol provides that this task be managed through a Committee on Co-ordination and a Committee of Secretariat Officials (of the RECs). This is seen as an effort to avoid duplication of policies, activities and programmes in the RECs and the African Union.

Even so, one of the biggest challenges to the strategy of RECs as building blocks is the question of how willing the RECs are to submit themselves to the legal imperatives of this Protocol. Although article 22 of the 2007 AU/REC Protocol makes provision for the AU to take measures against lagging RECs, the nature of these measures is not prescribed or articulated. Although article 22 attempts to bind Union decisions on RECs, RECs' challenges go beyond the willingness to submit themselves to the Protocol.

⁷⁶ Moravcsik, A. 1995. 'Liberal Intergovernmentalism and Integration: A Rejoinder', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 33(4): 611-28

⁷⁷ Miller, G. 2000. 'Rational Choice and Dysfunctional Institutions', *Governance: an International Journal of Policy and Administration*, 13(4) pp. 535-547.

⁷⁸ Schmitter, PC 2002. 'Neo-neo-functionalism: déjà vu, all over again?' *European University Institute* July 2002 viewed July 4th 2009, <http://www.eui.eu/SPS/People/Faculty/CurrentProfessors/PDFfiles/SchmitterPDFfiles/NeoNeoFunctionalismRev.pdf>.

⁷⁹ See AU website for January 2009 decisions

⁸⁰ African Union 2007a op cit

Some of these are financial constraints and the sometimes prolonged process of changing and ratifying of laws at the national level.

Additionally, according to the UNECA report⁸⁰, so far, there is weak co-ordination and as a result many of the RECs are yet to align their policies, programmes and treaty provisions with that of the AEC treaty. With the United States of Africa proposal, there is need for a full commitment to the issue of harmonising and co-ordinating of policies. Conferring legislative powers to the Regional Parliamentary Assemblies and the Pan-African Parliament can help in accelerating the process of policy harmonisation at the sub-regional and national levels.

Managing Multiple Memberships and Proliferation of Regional Groups

The independence, history and political evolution of most RECs has resulted in many (some recognised and others unrecognised by the AU) having multiple memberships, different integration goals and varying paces of integration. Multiple memberships bring with them a disadvantage in the sense that commitment to signing and implementing multiple protocol agreements is low. There are ineffective enforcement mechanisms and the AU can do little in expediting the process. Multiple memberships also raise concern over duplication of sectoral and trade policy agreements with the possibility of governments signing comparable agreements across the various RECs. Also, with little complementarity in the trade and policy preferences of the different RECs, there is a likelihood of varying economic and trade priorities, which retard the AU process of harmonising regional policies.

Finally, article 88 of the Abuja Treaty states that the 'community shall be established mainly through the co-ordination, harmonisation and progressive integration of the activities of regional economic communities'. Nevertheless, the above are salient issues to consider if this symbiosis can be achieved.

CONCLUSION

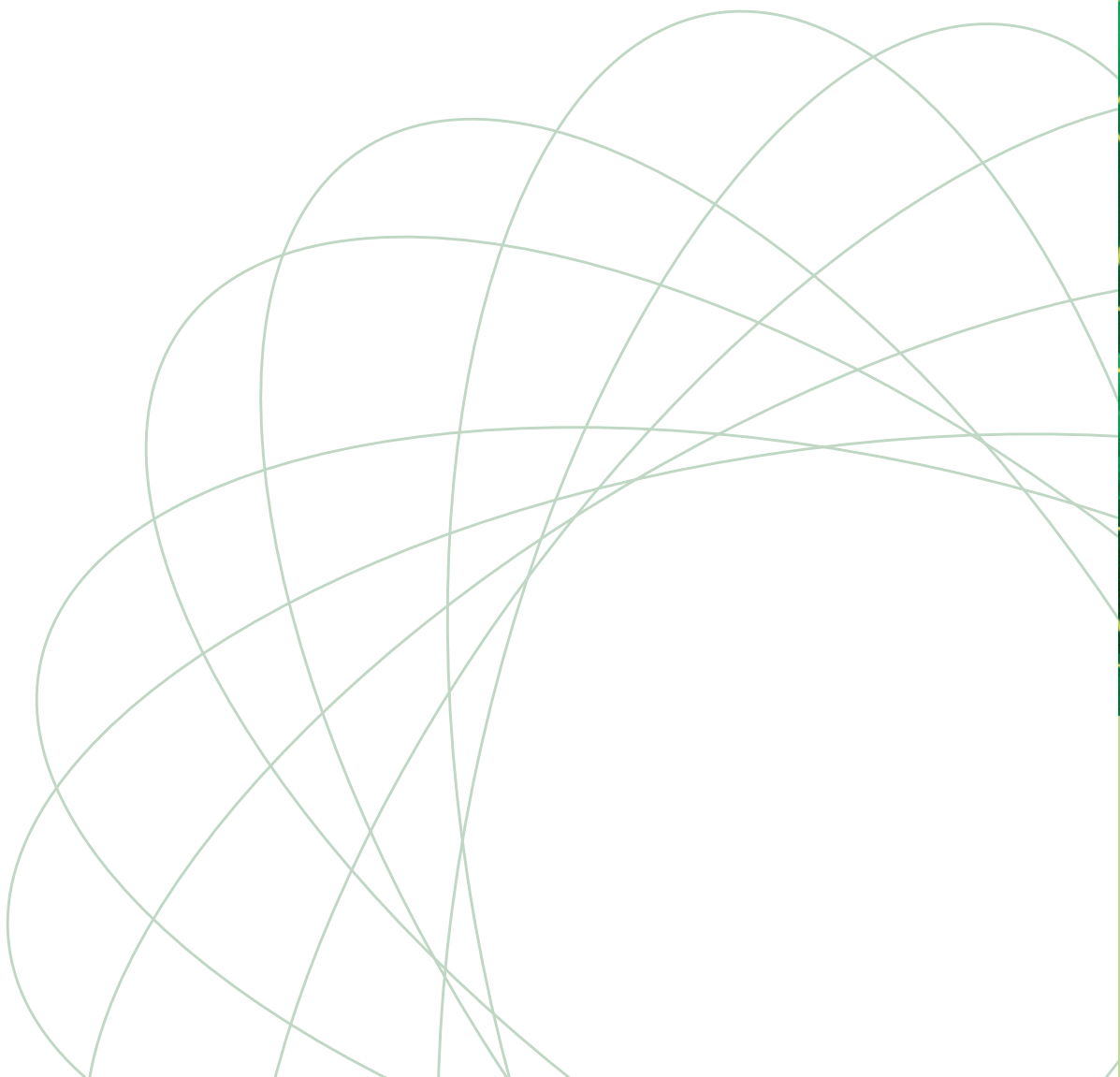
This paper has taken a general approach in looking at the building-block role of RECs in African regionalism but there has been a special focus on SADC as a Regional Economic Community. What is clear is that the African Union is committed to the role of RECs in achieving its overall objective of an African Economic Community. However, the human, physical, financial and technical capacities required to achieve this goal make it a colossal challenge. This is compounded by the historical and socio-political characteristics of RECs, as well as the struggle of African regional institutions (e.g. secretariats and parliaments) for relevance in a highly competitive intergovernmental space. The recent move to vest more powers in the African Union Commission (AUC) and the integration of NEPAD into the AU will hopefully increase the powers of the AUC in the realisation of the AU's goals.

However, alongside these powers, the AUC must endeavour to increase its capacity in managing the co-ordination and harmonisation of AU's priority integration goals. In this sense, the AUC, which is to become an Authority, will surely be tested.

⁸⁰ UNECA 2004:42. op cit

This is because, while an incremental delegation of power for regional institutions is not new (as the EU has shown), the difference for African integration lies in its historical and political legacy of premature politicisation of regional integration issues and the high premium placed on non-interference in the affairs of member states.

Moreover, given the OAU's history of struggling and failed institutions, the decision to increase the powers of the AUC will require a commitment from African leaders to give all necessary support to the commission and for the AUC to show that it is technically competent to perform this new role without political interference.



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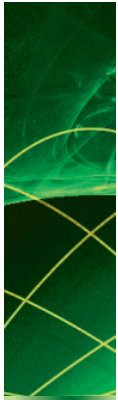
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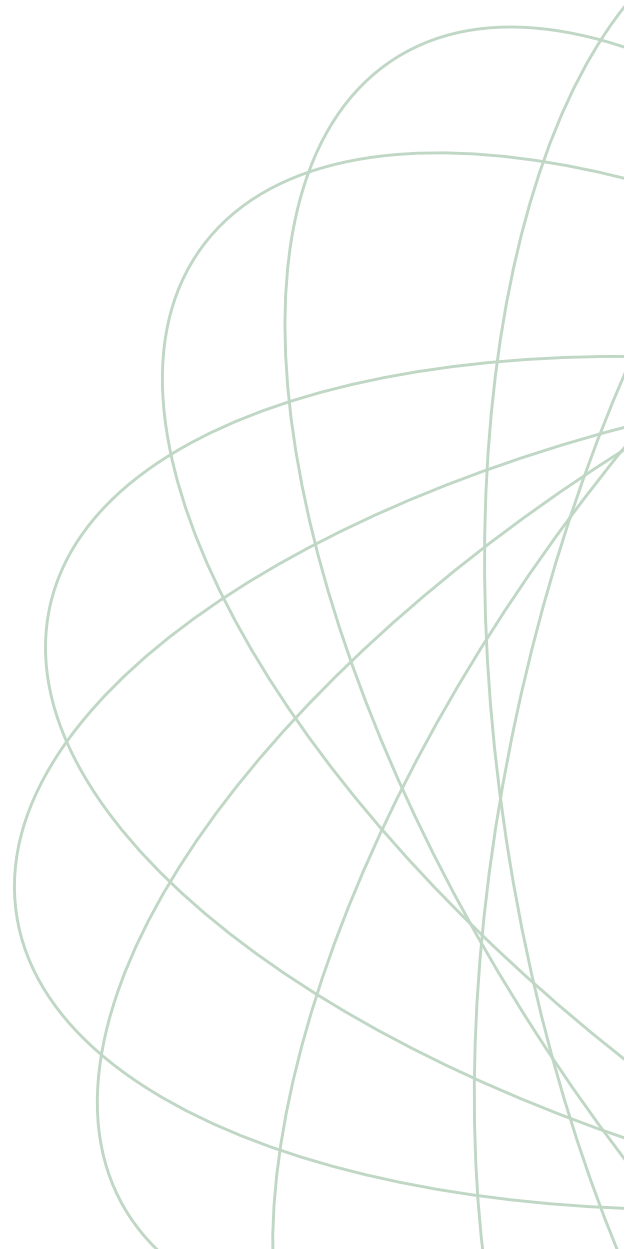
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THE PROSPECTS FOR REGIONAL INNOVATION SYSTEM(S) WITHIN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Mario Scerri⁸¹

THE ARGUMENT

In this chapter I propose that history and the current reshaping of the global economy render the formation of viable national innovation systems in most of Sub-Saharan Africa virtually impossible and that consequently the only feasible analytical and planning context is a regional one. I will first explore the theoretical legitimacy of extending the national innovation system concept to that of a regional innovation system. In the process the conditions for the integrity of the regional innovation system concept will be examined. The chapter will then proceed to analyse the possibility for and the implications of a transition from a national to a regional innovation system in countries within Sub-Saharan Africa.

THE CONDITIONS OF VIABILITY OF NATIONAL INNOVATION SYSTEMS

The viability of innovation systems can be defined in terms of their potential for their own reproduction, growth and evolution.⁸² Viable innovation systems often have lacunae, whether spatial or sectoral, that may place pressure on their positioning relative to other innovation systems.⁸³ They may also periodically fall back in the international ranking order of successful systems but their long-term survival is rarely in doubt.⁸⁴ The viability of successful systems derives from established levels of complexity, diversity and complementarities which yield a high degree of flexibility within established and emerging techno-economic paradigms. Overall, successful systems do not tend to exhibit long-term supply-side bottlenecks. There are also numerous innovation systems, most of them in Africa, which are not viable and which have not, for various reasons, mostly historical, attained the threshold levels of the complex sets of preconditions for self-perpetuation.

In order to approach, however tentatively, a specification of the preconditions for the viability of innovation systems, we have to examine the foundations of the national innovation systems concept. Proceeding from a specific examination of the objective of developing systems, i.e. the enhancement of the capability to innovate, to the contextual conditions that determine the limits of this potential, we can explore the contingency of the innovation systems concept. In the process we can identify those cases where the prospects for the attainment of the feasibility of specific national innovation systems are poor.

The definition of innovation has been extended and enlarged to incorporate any introduction of a product or production technique, which is new within a specific context. Again, the context matters. Current usage limits the definition to technical or technological innovations. However, following Schumpeter (1954), the concept of innovation can be extended to institutional change. This extension is especially relevant

⁸¹ Reproduced with permission from Muchie, M., Gammeltoft, P. and Lundvall, B.A. (eds) (2003) *Putting Africa First: The Making of African Innovation Systems*. Aalborg : Aalborg University Press

⁸² These three terms are used distinctly and specifically. 'Reproduction' refers to the replication of existing systems, 'growth' implies the expansion of systems, and 'evolution' indicates the process of mutation of systems.

⁸³ Within the constraints of this chapter I will not deal specifically with the temporal aspect of the evolution of innovation systems, of the streams of events, accidental or necessary depending on the particular historiographic approach that is adopted, that determine present states.

⁸⁴ The language that I use in referring to innovation systems carries implications of anthropomorphising, of endowing institutional formations with human (or at least organic) characteristics. This biological metaphor, deriving from the evolutionary account of technological change, is diametrically opposite to what Mittermaier (1986) refers to as the 'mechanomorphism' implicit in neoclassical economics.

to developing economies where the fundamental assumption is that development requires structural transformation. So basic is this tenet that development is occasionally equated to structural transformation. In the case of first-world economics, which can, from an evolutionary perspective, be defined as viable innovation systems, there is little scope to incorporate structural transformation in the analysis of innovation. In fact, the Eurostat Community Innovation Survey explicitly excludes organisational change, excepting those cases where it is the handmaiden of technical change, from the definition of innovation. Innovation therefore can represent radically different processes depending on the context in which the phenomenon is being studied.

Innovation, technological capabilities and core competencies emerge from an institutional basis and it is the complex institutional web, which forms a specific system.⁸⁵ Institutions can again be defined in a variety of ways. At the more specific level they can be defined as formal organisations charged with the implementation of policies which have a bearing on the development of some aspect of the specific innovation system. On a broader level, institutions can be defined so as to incorporate both explicit and implicit sets of relationships among economic agents.⁸⁶ Again the relevance of alternative definitions differs according to the context. In the case of viable innovation systems the focus of national policy is usually on formal institutions which implement science and technology policy. The implicit institutions which govern underlying economic relationships are rarely the concern of policy since they are well established and are seen to provide the underpinnings of the specific innovation system. The accord between state and market, labour relations, managerial cultures and specific work ethics, whatever form they take, are assumed as given in viable innovation systems and explicit public policy takes these institutions as given. In those cases where these particular institutions are brought to the fore in the public planners' concern (the one notable example is the shift to Thatcherism and then to the New Labour economics under Blair), the implication is that of a deep-rooted malaise in the specific innovation system. These occurrences are however rare in industrialised economies. On the other hand, in the case of innovation systems which are yet to attain viability it is specifically the deficiency of these necessary underlying economic relationships which is one of the main constraints on development. It is in this area that the issue of the appropriateness of institutions is most problematic for public policy.

Discourses on institutions and their development are indissolubly bound with discourses on power.⁸⁷ In the absence of some egalitarian utopia institutions are the embodiment of asymmetrical distributions of power and are designed to reinforce or to challenge existing power asymmetries and thus to act as the vehicle for the expansion of the power base that they represent, often at the expense of other existing or potential ones. An inter-institutional framework is therefore marked by a tension between the imperative of stability and the drive of specific institutions to augment the power base on which their members can draw. Stability is assured by a multiplicity of means ranging from a widespread acceptance of a social contract, due to effective socialisation processes and a real or perceived ability to exercise an effective voting right,

⁸⁵ Nelson (1993: 4-5) defines an innovation system as '... a set of institutions whose interactions determine the innovative performance ... a set of institutional aspects that, together, play the major role in influencing innovative performance'.

⁸⁶ Johnson (1988:280) defines institutions in broad terms as the '... sets of routines, rules, norms and laws, which by reducing the amount of information necessary for individual and collective action make society, and the reproduction of society, possible.

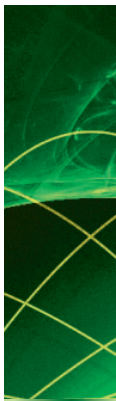
⁸⁷ 'In exercising power, individuals employ the resources available to them ... by accumulating resources of various kinds, individuals can augment their power ... While resources can be built up personally, that are also commonly accumulated within the framework of institutions, which are important bases for the exercise of power' (Thompson, 1995:13)

to an overt and effective coercive dominance by one power base, or a conglomeration of such bases, over others. Of course, the means that are used to attain stability affect the nature of the stability that is attained. It is often the case that the more overt the exercise of power, the less stable is the resulting power base. The production of knowledge and the choice of technology paths, both of which we now locate within an analysis of institutional development, are consequently transformed into a discourse on power; they become a narrative of the manifestation of power, a tale of reinforcement and conflict, of victories and defeats, where defeat often results in the eradication of the loser from the accepted strictures of the prevailing accepted rationality and ultimately from history. This discourse is obviously applicable to inter-system relationships and provides the theoretical base for the debates on appropriate technology.

Thus, a national innovation system encompasses the concentrations, dispersions and the interrelatedness of diverse 'knowledge stocks'. The determinants, and measures, of these stocks include scientists and engineers who generate and adapt technological change as well as the skills contents of the non-homogenous labour force which determines the economy's capacity to implement innovations in the processes of production. The system is defined by the nature of interrelationships within the institutional web which contains and generates these stocks. The distribution of knowledge stocks is considered across economic sectors and across institutions, be they public or private. Thus the prime goal of the analysis of these systems is to understand the complex interactions among the various institutions within a specific system and among the different stocks of knowledge but this task necessarily has to account for history.

The most problematic aspect of the national innovation system concept is that its specificity is bound to the nation state. However, the modern international mosaic of nation states, as sovereign political units, is quite recent, with components of different vintages and in many parts of the world, not limited to third world countries, liable to often violent attempts at redefinition. Consequently there are two perspectives, the intra-statal and the supra-statal, from which the proposition of the nation state as the boundary defining unit of an integral and distinct innovation system can be questioned. While the introduction of specificity in the analysis of technological and economic development is a virtually undisputed breakthrough in the analysis of innovation, the identification of the nation state as the defining unit of containment of specificity has been quite a contentious issue.

At the intra-statal level Cooke, Uranga and Etxebarria (1997) point out, following Gellner (1983) and others, that a state can be and often is composed of several nations, each with its own ethnic specificities, however these may be defined, often exhibiting distinctly different institutional networks, and even different economic and industrial development paths. Cooke et al examine different possible configurations of institutional relationships between specific regions within a country and the state apparatus. It is this relationship that determines the relative autonomy of different localised



innovation systems within the borders of the nation state. This critique obviously opens up the analysis of innovation systems to a higher degree of specificity than that accounted for by the national innovation system concept. It also makes the specific characteristics of intra-statal innovation systems contingent on the legal and implicit relations of power between the local and the central political authority.

Critiques that are based on a consideration of the supra-statal economy, on the other hand, tend to erode the significance of specificities in innovation systems. The relatively recent phenomenon of accelerating globalisation, arising from a combination of the rapidly growing ease of the transnational co-ordination of production processes and the increasing incidence of systemic technological programmes, has inadvertently posed a significant source of critique for analyses which emphasise a localised contextual determinateness.⁸⁸ This phenomenon has revitalised neoclassical approaches through the positing of a convergence of the diverse technological paths taken by nations towards some general mode which represents 'best practice' regardless of setting.⁸⁹ The adoption and, indeed, the appropriation of 'Western' technology by the successful Asian economies and the collapse of the Soviet Union are cited as evidence of this apparently indelible principle of an overriding rationality.

In his rebuttal of this critique Nelson proposes that national borders still impart a specificity to the nature of technological capabilities, i.e. that there is a range of 'factors' that enter into the generation and absorption of innovations which are, at best, imperfectly mobile, and at worst perfectly immobile, across national boundaries. This premise is a necessary implication of the assumption of tacit knowledge and its corollary of core capabilities. Kozul-Wright (1995) reinforces this proposition by arguing that the fact that the concentration of the seats of transnational corporations still lies in first world economies attests to the continuing grounding of core competencies in specific locations due to the significant role played by the non-transferable determinants of their underlying capability sets. Maskell and Malmberg (1999) reinforce this proposition by arguing that in a global context where competitive advantage is increasingly being located in knowledge,⁹⁰ context-specific core capabilities are rapidly becoming the main determinant of firm and country differentiation.⁹¹ This also forms the basis of the refutation of the positive welfare implications that have been attached to globalisation by the neo-liberal agenda. Given the inability, and disinterest, of private corporations in respect of altering the structural underpinnings of the various countries over which their operations are spread, the globalisation phenomenon can easily, if unaccompanied by targeted initiatives by host countries, act as a reinforcing mechanism *vis-à-vis* current international inequalities.⁹² In fact, as Miyoshi

⁸⁸... the globalising tendencies of modern social life have rendered territorial delimitation increasingly problematic. Particular nation-states are increasingly embedded in networks of power ... which extend well beyond their boundaries and which limit, to an extent which varies greatly from one country to another, the room to manoeuvre of ... national governments ... there are a range of issues concerning, for instance, the activities of transnational corporations, problems of pollution and environmental degradation, the resolution of armed conflict and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction which cannot be satisfactorily addressed within the political framework of the nation-state" (Thompson, 1995: 253)

⁸⁹... a new best-practice set of global rules for designers, engineers, entrepreneurs, managers and marketing agents is emerging ... The resulting product (of transnational corporations) is ... a complicated bundle of inputs, produced in a variety of locations, assembled in home or host countries for sale in those countries or anywhere in the world" (Kozul-Wright, 1995: 152, parenthesis added).

⁹⁰... the knowledge-based economy is characterized by three elements: the growing importance of economic transactions focused on knowledge itself; rapid qualitative changes in goods and services; and the incorporation of the creation and implementation of change itself into the mission of economic agents" (Maskell and Malmberg, 1999: 167).

⁹¹... knowledge creation of even the most globally oriented firms or sectors is, at least to some extent, influenced by differences in the economic properties of their place of location. Firms are progressively stimulated by and dependent on localised technological capabilities in order to maintain and increase their competitiveness precisely because of the drive towards globalisation and the resulting homogenisation of formerly critical factors of production" (Ibid.: 168, emphasis added).

⁹²... a logical and interesting consequence of the present development towards a global economy is that the more easily codifiable (tradable) knowledge can be accessed, the more crucial does tacit knowledge become for sustaining or enhancing the competitive position of the firm. If all factors of production, all organizational blueprints, all market information, and all production technologies were readily available in all parts of the world at (more or less) the same price, the market process of competition between firms would dwindle" (Ibid.: 172).

Kozul-Wright offers the following sound rebuttal to the neo-liberal prescriptive non sequitur that the emergence of the trans-national corporation and the weakening of the nation-state in the era of globalisation will lead to the attainment of Pareto efficiency across national borders: "The presence of these firms, in itself, is testament to discontinuities in the economic environment and there is no a priori reason for assuming that the activities of TNCs, any more than international trade, will by themselves remove inequalities between and within regions ... weak states are more likely to establish weak, and ultimately unsustainable, growth paths and reinforce global segmentation" (Kozul-Wright, 1995: 159-160).

(1997) argues, global investment patterns in developing economies are often contingent on sets of conditions which lock host economies into specific structures which limit the possibilities for development.⁹³ From this follows Kozul-Wright's second argument that national policies still have a significant role in determining the context, the set of rules, explicit or implicit, within which transnational corporations operate. This leads to his apparently perverse proposition that the removal of national differences in the operational setting may actually increase the uncertainties which corporations face, thus leading to a reduction in cross-border investment. Finally, Kozul-Wright argues that unless the appropriate global regulatory regime to ensure convergence is established, the costs of globalisation for the weaker economies, or for sections within them (the erosion of the bargaining power of trade unions is the most obvious example), will continue to escalate. The negotiation of a global regulatory framework which assures a modicum of equality in development prospects will occur only through the strong lobbying of individual nation states or groupings of states which belong to similar development categories.

The reading of the implications of the formation of economic blocs for the enduring relevance of nation states is contentious. On the one hand this phenomenon may be seen as an intermediate phase towards a fully integrated global economy, since within these blocs the barriers posed by national frontiers to trade and to resource mobility are eroded. The counter-argument points to the difficulties experienced by the most successful bloc, the European Union (EU), along its tortuous path to unification as testimony to the fact that generally this phenomenon is still in its early stages. The obstacles encountered in the attempts to integrate former Soviet satellite countries into the EU strengthen this assessment. These difficulties have reinforced the argument that effective economic unification requires a high degree of similarity in the development levels of the member countries in order to offer reasonable prospects for convergence. From this flows the implication of the likelihood that economic blocs will actually intensify the North-South division of power. There will be an elimination of rivalries among the member countries in the industrial centres, but without a corresponding increase in the power wielded by blocs representing weaker nations. There are therefore strong asymmetries at a global level in the nature and power of economic blocs that are emerging which will further reinforce the global imbalance of economic power.

The conditions for viability thus emerge from an understanding of the core components of the national innovation system concept. The particular definition of innovation that is adopted as relevant immediately identifies, through its emphasis on specific aspects, the context within which it is being applied. The less viable the innovation system the more all-embracing the definition of innovation has to be. This relationship between the broadness of definition and the stage of development of innovation systems also applies to institutions. In less-developed systems the implicit institutions which govern economic relationships cannot be assumed as given and suitable for the attainment of viability. Finally, the foundation on which the integrity of the national innovation concept is premised is the effectively uncontested nation state.

⁹³ Capital can move freely in time and space as long as the target area guarantees: (1) a stable political structure (often meaning dictatorship); (2) viable labour conditions (that is, cheaply trained or trainable labour plus the absence of unionism, feminism, and human rights); (3) reasonable infra structure; (4) lower tax rates (favoured treatment by the host governments); and (5) indifference to the environment (Miyoshi, 1997: 50).

THE PROSPECTS FOR NATIONAL INNOVATION SYSTEMS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

When we come to Sub-Saharan Africa, we find that in most cases the basic requirements for the establishment of viable innovation systems are absent in most of the countries in this region. In the first instance, and perhaps it's the *primum causa* of the economic woes, there is the history of the development of nation states within the region. Most of the modern African states were an ersatz colonial creation whose subsequent independence was mostly bought at the cost of devastating wars of liberation. The first decades of the post-colonial period saw this part of the world turn into a cold war arena, with competing models of economic and civil governance imposed on ill-suited settings and with often extremely authoritarian regimes propped up by one or the other of the cold war superpowers. It is a region which is still devastated by major areas of armed conflict and of countries whose economic structure is still ravaged by recent wars. South Africa, which stands alone as satisfying most of the preconditions for the attainment of viability, is still burdened by the economic structure inherited from apartheid.⁹⁴ Even where the legal legitimacy of particular African states is well established and stable the ability of governments to devise and implement economic policy is severely circumscribed by crippling foreign debt burdens and the strictures of structural adjustment programmes imposed by international financial institutions. The end result is the current situation of a subcontinent composed of too large a number of nation states whose internal legitimacy is still being contested and the implications of this instability for individual innovation systems are ominous.⁹⁵

A fluid national context obviously inhibits the development of an appropriate institutional framework within which technological capabilities can grow. In most cases the economic power relations which are now established as the foundation on which those formal institutions that affect the generation of human capabilities are built are still unsettled in most economies in the region. The relationship between labour and capital in most Sub-Saharan economies is often skewed with high unemployment rates, weakened labour unions and the labour cost requirements of foreign investors depleting workers of any bargaining power within the market.

In fact, if one were to identify the principal bottleneck in an institutional framework in most economies it would be human capital formation. In a number of countries current wars and the devastation of past wars have caused an impoverishment and a degradation of the human capital base. Human capital development has been further inhibited by a combination of the crippling effects of foreign debt and the imposition of structural adjustment programmes on the fiscus. The fiscal constraints imposed by these programmes severely limit the ability of the state to provide the set of basic needs and safety nets which are essential for a long-term human capital formation process. The International Development Research Centre (IDRC, 1999) study on measures to promote co-operation in science and technology within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) provides a number of crucial

⁹⁴ It can be argued that South Africa's liberation from apartheid came at least a decade too late to allow its first democratic government sufficient manoeuvring space in policy formulation. After the collapse of the Soviet Union most forms of government intervention in the market, apart from facilitation, became relegated, through a logical *non sequitur*, to a universally discredited model. This has severely limited the perceived set of policy options for the reconstruction and transformation of the country.

⁹⁵ Gellner (1983, 1996) argues that the coherence of a nation state requires a sort of forced amnesia of ethnic alliances and of nationality. The carving up of Africa among the imperial powers without regard to most of the considerations that determine national borders seriously impairs the possibility of fulfilling this condition. However, even the notion of ethnicity and nationhood tends to be blurred in the region. If a nation is, *a la* Anderson (1983), an imagined community, there are few areas where the underlying imagination is more evanescent than in Sub-Saharan Africa. These factors certainly pose serious obstacles for the development of the stable nation state.

insights into the possibilities for the development of regional innovation system(s) within Sub-Saharan Africa. The findings of an earlier report⁹⁶ noted in this study identify the three main sectoral research characteristics among SADC countries as: '1. (T)he commercial sector undertakes substantial research through institutes owned by specific agricultural industries often funded through producer levies. 2. The mining sector is dominated by multinationals whose research is pursued offshore and whose local geological exploration activities frequently bypass the existing state geological surveys. 3. Industry, on the other hand, tends to be an importer of technology and generally operates at the lower end of value addition' (IDRC 1999: 13, numbers added). The spread of HIV/AIDS and other diseases such as TB, malaria and cholera, all of which are strongly correlated to poverty, have intensified the erosion of the skills base of the regional labour force. Wars and economic conditions have generated massive refugee flows and a high rate of migration across national borders. All these factors have obviously considerably shortened the planning time horizon for human capital investment.

Given these fundamental obstacles, the prognosis for the establishment of viable national innovation systems is, in most cases, extremely poor. Indeed, the entire region shows all the signs of being subject to a 'low-level equilibrium trap' where the development of specific innovation systems is often constrained by factors which are exogenous to the specific economy in question. These factors can be regional, such as wars and other forms of armed conflict as well as economic catastrophes which spill over across borders generating migrations of political and economic refugees. They can be extra-regional as in the case of foreign debt servicing and the crippling effects of structural adjustment programmes on the ability of governments to establish the conditions for human capital formation. It is, in fact, useful to focus on human capital formation as the nexus of the symptoms of ailing innovation systems within the region and consequently as the prime yardstick of the effectiveness of policies which affect the prospects for systems. There is within the region a recognition that the obstacles to the development of innovation systems require a direct and overt direction by the state. Thus the recommendations of a report quoted in the IDRC (1999: 16) study points to a '... need for the state to display a more interventionist role in the underdeveloped countries than in the industrialised ones.⁹⁷ Implicitly what is being argued for is a set of national systems of innovation with the state actively laying down the regulatory, physical, human and social infrastructure.' Emphasis is placed on an overt interventionist role of governments in the fostering of broad based human capital development in order to increase absorptive capacity.

THE RATIONALE FOR A REGIONAL APPROACH TO INNOVATION

The arguments which have been outlined in the previous section against the possibility of establishing viable innovation systems in most Sub-Saharan countries can cut both ways when arguing the case for a regional innovation system. On the one hand it can be argued that the formidable constraints on attaining viability can be seen as

⁹⁶ Mshigeni (1994)

⁹⁷ Ogbu, Oyeyinka, and Mlawu (1995).

truly insurmountable impediments to the formation of an integrated regional innovation system. Moreover, the history of the numerous economic integration initiatives in the region does not really augur well for regional approaches to the region's development. Overall, the effects of regional associations within Sub-Saharan Africa on economic upliftment have been minimal.⁹⁸ One of the main obstacles to integration is what may be termed the reversed north-south phenomenon within the region where all countries except South Africa are mainly primary sector exporters. South Africa occupies the position of the single regional economic superpower, potentially the new economic coloniser of countries that cannot trade with one another due to the low degree of complementarity in their production bases. This situation obviously reduces significantly the scope for mutual benefit which is usually the main motive power for economic integration. There are, of course, specific initiatives which have been successful. In the case of science and technology there are co-operative programmes within SADC that are in operation and planned projects which have every chance of being successful. However, these are specific cases which, from an innovation system perspective, are symptomatic of a fragmented approach to the development of innovation capability.⁹⁹

On the other hand the overall improbability of most countries' innovation system attaining viability raises the urgent need for an alternative approach. In spite of the impediments facing any integration initiatives there is still a clearly recognised need for economic cooperation and even integration within the Sub-Saharan region. The era of rapid globalisation has rendered regional co-operation necessary as a means for individual countries and regions to retain a voice and a degree of power in the emerging global economic order. It is thus rapidly becoming clear that, whatever the prospects, the integration of innovation systems is the only policy option for the development of viability as it has been defined in this chapter.

Of course, empirical necessity does not of itself constitute a sufficiently valid theoretical case for the concept of a regional innovation system. Such a case can, however, be made. As discussed earlier, the paradigmatic breakthrough of the national innovation system concept lay in its introduction of specificity and localised knowledge into the analysis of innovation. The choice of the nation state as the unit of analysis was empirically determined and hence contingent and essentially peripheral to the theoretical core. An emphasis on the nation state is therefore tenable only with respect to specific historical contexts. The emergence of a European innovation system is testimony to that.

There is a unique feature of the progression towards a regional innovation system that is being proposed here for Sub-Saharan Africa. In the case of Europe the regional system evolved from already viable national innovation systems. In the case of the Sub-Saharan region the creation of a viable regional innovation system would have to leapfrog the preliminary stage of viable national innovation systems. Again, on a theoretical level, given the provision for historical contingencies, there is no contradiction that arises in the inversion of the progression towards a regional innovation system.

⁹⁸ There are currently ten economic blocs within Sub-Saharan Africa. They range from small three-country units such as the East African Community to the large groupings such as ECOWAS, COMESA and SADC. Individual countries often belong to a number of blocs.

⁹⁹ It is relevant in this case to look at the economic indicators for those SADC countries that show the highest GNP per capita figures (IDRC, 1999: Table 1). These are the Seychelles, Mauritius, Botswana and South Africa, in that order. If we compare the first three countries with South Africa, which lies at the bottom of this range, we find little immediate evidence for the relevance of formal S&T policy to the development process.

The rationale for co-operation is well established. There is the promise of a regional market with its implications for economies of scale and division of labour. There is the enhanced potential for developing sound indigenous technology bases and for exploiting economies of scale and complementarities in innovation activities. There are the obvious benefits that can accrue from the free movement of capital, expertise, technology and, although this is a controversial issue, of labour across the region. Sub-Saharan Africa is a potential economic powerhouse, with vast untapped reserves of mineral resources and populations which have often been forced, through the very conditions which inhibit planned human capital development, to develop a high degree of entrepreneurship. The question that then emerges is what distinguishes a regional innovation system as a planning and negotiating context from the economic integration framework.

There are obviously large overlapping areas between the two frameworks. However, the distinctions both theoretical and pragmatic (from an implementation perspective) are quite clear. Within a single innovation system supply-side bottlenecks of all sorts can be addressed through complementary markets with a greater probability of success than could be achieved within the planning framework of a number of individual impoverished national innovation systems. The current initiatives in co-operation in science and technology activities would be placed within a broader innovation context in order to increase the probability that the outcomes of these initiatives would translate into a higher level of technological absorptive capacity across the region. The process of integration of innovation systems would over time engender a reordering of relative core competencies within the region. Obviously there would be an element of attrition with specific nodes of competencies disappearing. If the integration process is to be feasible, this must be more than offset by the gains from the emergence of a sounder, and more diversified regional core competency base which over the long term is less needful of protection. The benefits of this process must obviously be spread across the region so that no country is a net loser through the transition. The potential gains from the integration of innovation systems will emerge from two complementary processes. The first is where new technological complementarity matrices emerge within the regional innovation context. The second would be the exploitation of economies of scale in innovation within the larger internal factor and commodity markets.

CONCLUSION: THE POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR THE INTEGRATION OF INNOVATION SYSTEMS WITHIN AFRICA

The current policy framework for economic integration and development within Africa is the *New Partnership for Africa's Development* (NEPAD) document issued in 2001. This is the first comprehensive approach to the emergence of a regional innovation across the continent. This policy is itself set within the broader context of the newly formed *African Union*. The NEPAD document (October 2001) makes a rather startling statement in its introduction (item 6) when it says



The resources, including capital, technology and human skills, that are required to launch a global war on poverty exist in abundance, and are within our reach. What is required to mobilise these resources and to use them properly, is bold and imaginative leadership.

Whatever the empirical basis for the statement about the availability of resources, this statement is remarkable in that, in a manner that recalls Hirschman, it identifies political will and decision-making capacity as the crucial scarce resource in the development process. Further on in the introduction the basic requirement for the resolution of this restraint is seen as democracy and a civil society. This shortcoming is referred to in a number of instances but is captured succinctly in item 23, again in the introduction, where it is stated categorically that '(t)oday, the weak state remains a major constraint to sustainable development in a number of countries'. In the discourse on policy this statement opens up a hitherto unexplored theoretical space in the approach to integration in Africa. It addresses for the first time the fundamental judicial, political and social preconditions for the establishment of a viable regional innovation system. Beyond that, this policy initiative is broad enough to form the type of integrated policy framework that is required to draw together what have up to now been fragmented, and hence largely ineffective, policies for a long-term sustainable growth path.

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HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE FOR AFRICAN INTEGRATION

Mammo Muchie¹⁰⁰

INSPIRATION

'When you say someone is an educated African, you mean that he is conscious of his people's problems, that he knows his culture well enough to be able to discriminate between its drawbacks and its advantages, that he can take the land his people have, the livestock his people keep, the wisdom that his elders teach, and the customs that his people follow, and, integrating all these with his western knowledge and techniques, help to construct progressive African communities'.¹⁰¹

'It is better that we face the problems of Africa as Africa. For our history of being pushed around is an African history, and our strength to stop this is an African strength.'¹⁰²

INTRODUCTION

Central to the peculiarities of the evolution of modern higher education, research and knowledge in Africa is the lack of indigenous authenticity and identity. This is in spite of historical records which show that, before Africa's subjection to the colonial technology of rule, there were recorded histories of indigenous higher learning in Timbuktu and other parts of Africa. This higher learning from the pre-colonial and pre-slavery period was historically ruptured and disrupted by the colonial-imperial project in Africa that also took the form of enslaving whole communities and forcibly evicting them for the purposes of slave labour in the New World of the Americas. The contributions of this pre-15th century knowledge have not been acknowledged or recognised. In fact, they have been bypassed, ignored, and suppressed rather than being used to serve as building blocks for contemporary higher education development in Africa. Thus, instead of continuity, what has taken place is discontinuity in research, knowledge, higher education and learning. This historical rupture and the erasure of pre-existing knowledge remain issues that cannot be ignored. It has been suggested that the longer one looks back to history, the further ahead one can be inspired into the future. For Africa, its contribution to knowledge before the 15th century has not been explored and its contemporary relevance for revitalising higher education, research and knowledge has not been appreciated.

In 20th century Africa, modern higher education institutions were established when colonialism began to concede political defeat. European powers sent their armies and missionaries when colonising Africa. Later, when the colonial powers recognised that they may have to relinquish direct control, they realised that they had to 'export' a form of their universities to help train civil servants who would be necessary to discharge the administrative burden of running the state in the post-colonial period. They began to establish universities in their African colonies, though these largely took the form of setting up one university to serve a number of their colonies. Thus, three years after the fifth historic Pan-African Congress meeting in Manchester in 1945 at

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¹⁰¹ Julius Gikonyo wa Kiano, 'East Africa: The Tug of War Continues,' 1952 quoted in Bryan G. McLeod, *Whither Africa?* Richmond, Virginia, John Knox Press, 1961, p. 146

¹⁰² Speech on August 21 1972 by Julius Nyerere in Stewart's Quotable Africa, Penguin Books, 2004, pp. 301-302

which the congress passed a resolution and declared to the world the need to liberate Africa by any means necessary, Makerere University was set up as the East African University – not as the Ugandan University as it later (in 1963) became known. In Nigeria, in 1949, Ibadan and Legon were set up as sites for universities. In the French-ruled part of Africa, closer links between the University of Dakar and the University of Bordeaux were established, and Belgium established a link between Université Lovanium in Congo (now University of Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo) and the Université Catholique de Louvain.¹⁰³

The problem is that the modern higher education system in Africa is an export from the former colonisers of Africa and their allies. From its inception, higher education has not been an African home-grown institution designed to serve the needs, aspirations, well-being and development of the African people. Just as the post-colonial state became largely a legacy of colonialism, the universities also became part of the institutions transmitted through the colonial channel.

The real question relates to the problem of how to make African higher education serve the needs and aspirations of the people of Africa. That colonial powers built universities and left them behind in African countries may not be a problem in and of itself. The wholesale acceptance of the universities made uncritically in the image of the colonial world is without interrogating the need to match them to the transformation challenges of African economies. There has been little or no systematic criticism of the impact the 'export' of universities to Africa has had on the knowledge base, research and higher education of relevance to African development and values. This situation is analogous to that of African economies. That Africa has to modernise has meant that it has to catch up with the former colonial powers. In education, it has meant that universities are expected to 'catch up' to those in the former colonies. The expectation was that the universities in Africa would evolve and join the ranks of leading universities like London University, which continued to control accrediting the curricula and supplying staff for the early African colleges until the 1960s.¹⁰⁴

THE BROADER HISTORICAL CONTEXT FOR AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE

In taking a historical perspective on how higher education, research and knowledge evolved in Africa, four distinct phases can be discerned:

The first is the pre-15th century phase of learning, knowledge and education that remained ignored and rejected largely through the arrogance of the colonial-imperial project that degraded not only learning from indigenous sources but also the very human beings who were the source of such learning. It made them no more than commodities.

The second phase is the colonial period, during which higher education was established as an instrument of the colonial-imperial project for maintaining its influence over the colonies through the creation of elites to maintain and run the state machinery bequeathed by the colonial system.

¹⁰³ Lebeau, Y. and Mills, D., *From 'Crisis' to 'Transformation'? Shifting Orthodoxies of African Higher Education Policy and Research*, 2009

¹⁰⁴ See note 103

The third phase represents the period after decolonisation when the newly politically independent states built upon the concept of universities that the colonial powers had set up on the eve of their retreat. The idea of developmental higher education, knowledge and research for nation building took hold with the support European and United States donors. The phase of the 'developmental university'¹⁰⁵ began.

The fourth phase is characterised by the crisis of higher education, research and knowledge arising from the imposition of structural adjustment by the Bretton Woods financial institutions. These structural adjustment policies resulted in the decline of university systems because they were regarded as providing little or no social return.

It is now recognised that higher education, research and knowledge is necessary for African development and transformation, but this recognition has not been fully translated into finding ways to organise, strengthen and expand the higher education system in Africa systematically.

Higher education plays a strategic role and that role is dependent on its type, the values in which it is rooted, the cultures and authentic identities of the communities in which it is embedded, and its ability to combine indigenous knowledge, learning and research with the external, the global and the universal. As Mamdani put it:

Higher education is where teachers are trained; it is where curricula are developed; more than likely, it is also where the range of leadership of an independent country is cultivated; finally, because it is where research is located, higher education is where we develop the range of choices which make democracy meaningful in different spheres of life. If your objective is to transform general education, you have to begin with higher education. For higher education is the strategic heart of education.¹⁰⁶

How can Africa create an African higher education system and develop African-centred knowledge? And at the same time promote African-rooted research? These questions remain unanswered largely because the Pan-African vision that should inspire African-rooted higher education, research and knowledge is lacking. In addition, the historical practice and dynamics that should have delivered lessons that can neither be ignored nor bypassed, has not done so. The expectation that individual African universities will attain world-class distinction is unrealistic; assuming aiming for world-class quality is what the existing fragmented states in Africa wish to develop. Until now, there have been no universities in Africa that have managed to reach the status of world-class research universities. The expectation that they would evolve in this way assumes that there is a level playing field where African universities can determine their higher education policy, strategy and agenda with free agency. However, universities did not develop this policy agency, since their resources relied heavily on donors, their research and teaching staff took time to develop as indigenous and national, and the administration, management and governance technologies were often tied to states that saw the universities as symbols of national self-assertion (as was the case with national airlines set up in the post-independence period), regardless of whether these were useful for the development of a national economy.

¹⁰⁵ Coleman, J.S. 1994. The Idea of the Developmental University, in Coleman, J.S., *Nationalism and Development in Africa: Selected Essays*, Sklair, R.L.(ed.), Berkeley: University of California Press (UCP)

¹⁰⁶ Mamdani, M., Higher Education, the State and the Market Place, Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, *Journal of Higher Education in Africa*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2008, pp. 1–10 Mamdani, M., Higher Education, the State and the Market Place, Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, *Journal of Higher Education in Africa*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2008, pp. 1–10

What makes world-class universities is the achievement of an international reputation in the following areas: research, teaching, staff that are leading in their fields, recognition by the world leaders and those outside higher education, leading departments, leading subject areas, leadership in innovative ideas, groundbreaking research that attains prizes, the best students and graduates, the ability to attract staff and retain them, a higher proportion of postgraduates, large numbers of students from abroad, strong research and teaching networks, a strong financial base with large endowments and income from diversified sources, a supportive research and teaching environment, a strong management, a long history of superior achievement, graduates that become movers and shakers in the real world of politics and economics, contributions to community and society, rankings alongside the best universities, and the confidence to set their own agenda.¹⁰⁷

No African country, including South Africa, has universities which have these characteristics. What Africa has are universities that are ordinary. Arguably, if there had been world-class universities in Africa, external agencies like the Bretton Woods would not have been able to dismiss African higher education, research and knowledge as they did in the 1980s. This lack of distinguished universities was in part seized upon by the international financial institutions to suggest that universities and higher education are not of benefit to African countries. Their recommendation was to concentrate on primary and vocational education and ignore higher education and universities. The very forces that helped to establish universities to meet the needs of a post-colonial civil service, paradoxically, found these universities of little value. Far from making the universities relevant to promote African development, they used rates-of-return arguments to undermine these institutions.

Universities in Africa are emerging from this assault. What is essential now is to address questions such as what would it take to make higher education, research and knowledge an integrated part of the African educational and developmental enterprise, and how can higher education, research and knowledge be made relevant to Africa?

THE IMPORTANCE OF BUILDING A PAN-AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE AREA

As discussed above, African higher education has evolved largely through a process of external penetration by the colonial powers. The effect of this penetration has been to create weak universities that are notable only for their absence in any of the international rankings.¹⁰⁸ Although some South African universities are regarded as relatively successful in comparison to universities in other African states, they are not so regarded in relation to those of other countries in the world.¹⁰⁹

What can be done to change the situation for the better? There is a real need for a multi-pronged and at the same time simultaneous approach to motivate development in higher education, research and knowledge. The approach should:

¹⁰⁷ Salmi, J., *The Challenge of Establishing World-Class Universities*, The World Bank, 2009, Washington DC., pp 81-82, see also see Alden, J. and Lin, G. 2004, *Benchmarking the Characteristics of a World-Class University: Developing an International Strategy at University Level*, Leadership Foundation for Higher Education, London

¹⁰⁸ In the Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJTU) 2008 ARWU Country Ranking, only South Africa has been mentioned within the lower end 201-302 rank. No other African state has been included in this ranking at all. (SJTU 2008) cited in Jamil Salim, *op.cit.* p.77

¹⁰⁹ Similarly in The Times Higher Education Supplement (THES) 2008 Country Ranking, only South Africa has been ranked as 179 when the lowest in Europe is Greece at 200 and the first is the United States of America with the top rank 1. (See THES 2008) in Jamil, Salim, *ibid.*, pp. 79-80

1. Create, along with the efforts for Pan-African Union, New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and other initiatives, a Pan-African open higher education, research and knowledge area.
2. Build on the existing universities' research, higher education and knowledge capacity.
3. Foster the conditions that facilitate the creation of innovative curricula, mobility of staff, students and training by opening the free movement of knowledge, research and higher education.
4. Create free movement without borders in higher education, research and knowledge in Africa.
5. Include a vision to create a few strong institutions in Africa that can be ranked as world-class universities.

The obstacles to achieving these goals and building a knowledge, research and higher education area in Africa remain formidable. The first, and critical, obstacle is the lack of African political will to open a higher education, research and knowledge area. The second is the fear of losing state sovereignty over education, research and knowledge if borders permit a free movement of knowledge, research and higher education along with the free movement of economic activities, labour and capital. The third is the problem related to internal and external resistance to a Pan-African framing of the higher education, knowledge and research area.

A fourth problem is that external actors treat South Africa differently from other parts of Africa, North Africa differently from Sub-Saharan Africa, Lusophone Africa different from Francophone Africa and all differently from Anglophone Africa. There is not yet an Africa-phone Africa. As long as in practice this divisive approach reigns, a Pan-African research, knowledge and higher education vision that inspires the resolution of the higher education crisis is very unlikely to take hold.

Fifth, states in the different countries may wish to build universities for status and prestige rather than education and development for their people. When such hubris prevails over the much needed solidarity or ubuntu to employ research, knowledge and higher education for development and education, the interest to combine relative strength on an African scale and scope is likely to fail.

The other obstacles are connected to a number of factors that are related mainly to the inability of the existing states to create a strong higher education, research and knowledge area. Some of the prevailing problems that hinder development in higher education, research and knowledge are enumerated below:

- Weak investment from national governments to promote continental knowledge infrastructure.
- Weak mobility of knowledge, research, researchers, curriculum and innovation horizontally.

- Continued movement of knowledge and trained people is largely vertical with the Northern hemisphere.
- Obstacles and lack of incentives to stimulate inter-African knowledge communication.
- Brain migration is a real problem given lack of brain circulation within the continent.¹¹⁰
- Poor or no representation in national development plans and bi-lateral donor support.
- Continuing 'competition' with universal primary education for popularity and extremely limited resources.
- Migration of good quality staff and researchers, overseas or to the private sector.
- Increasing age and retirement of senior and experienced staff with decreasing candidates for replacement.¹¹¹
- National and regional need for graduates far outweighs current higher education institutional capacity.
- Low interest and too few graduates in science and technology.
- Poor levels of quality research and publications.
- Poor communications and transport infrastructure.
- Cross-border regulatory obstacles to regional collaboration.
- High dependence on international donors for the foreseeable future.¹¹²
- In addition, a recent report of November 2008 suggests that African universities still face a looming shortage of PhDs.¹¹³

While there is no longer a major ideological argument suggesting that universities in Africa are unnecessary, there is still a problem in framing higher education, research and knowledge in ways that could meet Africa's challenges requiring Africa's combined energy, resources and management. The reality on the ground is that African universities continue to evince a lack of concentration of talent and resources, and an acute governance crisis across the whole spectrum of higher education, research and knowledge.

Higher education with such characteristics creates not world-class universities but low-class universities. The challenge is how research, knowledge and higher education can be framed as African problems in order to provide African solutions. Left as things are now, with the added hazard of donor funding accentuating the divisions and fragmentations that persist, the opportunity to create a few world-class universities will not arise.

African agency and independence is inseparably connected to establishing robust internal research, knowledge and higher education systems. In fact, Africa needs something like a higher education revolution for embedding knowledge and research in the communities, economy, state and society. Real decolonisation comes with indigenising a research, knowledge and higher education culture in Africa.

¹¹⁰ Net immigration from Sub-Saharan Africa was 0.57 million in 1995 fell to 0.29 million in 2000; and then rose to 0.7 million in 2005. An estimated one third of these were university graduates ... Remittances are US 22 billion dollars for SSA (See World Bank, *Accelerating Catch Up: Tertiary Education for Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa*, xxiv, 2009); 'There are more African scientists and engineers working in the United States than in the whole of Africa.' (see Henk Molenaar, Louk Box and Rutger Engelhard (eds.), *Knowledge on the Move: Emerging Agendas for Development Orientated Research*, International Development Publications, Netherlands, 2009, p.2) see Book Review, Mammo Muchie and Nal, in the *African Journal of Science, Technology, Innovation and Development*, Vol. 1, No.1, August 2009

¹¹¹ Adapted from SARUA's Strategic Plan 2007 – 2012 which identifies some of the critical weaknesses that characterise the HE education system in the region

¹¹² *Ibid*

¹¹³ Op. cit., the Chronicle of HE, November 25, 2008

HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE FOR BUILDING THE AFRICAN SYSTEM

'Higher education, research and knowledge are not a luxury, but very essential for Africans' survival, well-being and dynamic transformation'.¹¹⁴

'Together they constitute productive power'.¹¹⁵

Today it has been increasingly recognised that research universities constitute one of the critical levers along with industry and government to shape the knowledge-based economy, community, nation and society in any country in the world. It has been said universities are to the information economy what coal mines were to the industrialised economy. Knowledge production is to the economy, just as labour, capital and money are. It therefore matters very much how the role of universities in the development processes is framed; and how the knowledge and the trained people produced are embedded in the economy and society to change the existing conditions of poverty, the crises of nature and the crises of justice.

The debate must shift, therefore, from whether universities are 'white elephants' or not, to the challenge of how universities can be aligned to the processes of economic development, the eradication of poverty and the sustainability of the environment. In Africa, higher education has not succeeded in addressing these problems because it has continued to mimic the ivory-tower institutions of the developed world. The degree of ivory-towering, in Africa, appears to be inversely related to how well the higher education, research and knowledge system addresses issues of poverty, well-being, infrastructure, sanitation, health, water, forestry, biodiversity, food security, agriculture and a host of livelihood problems that African societies face. In Africa both old and new universities need to combine training with research, and research with training. Research should be understood both as the knowledge and the training of people with the capabilities to create further knowledge.

At the rhetorical level, this conceptual twinning of research with teaching is not difficult to achieve. The real problem has been in putting in place the policies, the resources, the concentration of talent, the governance arrangements and the incentives suitable to bring about the specific translation of this relationship into practice. The deficit also lies in the capacities, capabilities and competencies needed to implement the results of research so that they impact on people's livelihood and well-being in Africa. The task of creating a Pan-African community of researchers is part and parcel of a knowledge-creating strategy to reduce poverty and to prepare to cope with unexpected emergencies and disasters. Thus research and knowledge are far from being ivory-tower pursuits.

If indeed research and knowledge are important to eradicate poverty, building a few world-class research universities should then not be an issue. It will be necessary to generate both the knowledge and trained people to discover novel ways to eradicate poverty. It is a mistake to think the poverty issue will be solved without a strong

¹¹⁴ Berit Olson, Former Director of SAREC

¹¹⁵ Mammo Muchie, Presentation on Research Universities for Eradication of Poverty, UNESCO's Global Research Seminar, November 27-29, 2008

research base to discover resourceful ways to deal with its manifold causes. Research universities should and can emerge as part of a nation's strategy to create capacity to eradicate poverty and deal with and respond to complex uncertainties with foresight.

The neglect of science, technology and innovation in building universities in Africa is a major blockage that needs to be cleared. This is compounded by the disconnection of research and knowledge creation with the African biological, mineral, health, water and food data that has been ignored for far too long. The universities have to build knowledge and research that takes as paramount local resources, people, problems and opportunities. The relevance of the university can be judged on whether or not its research and knowledge building are embedded in the African environment. Only when the universities are carrying out the best research on the problems of Africa can they become a relief, rather than a burden, to poverty eradication. Studying European classics may be tolerated, but should not be a priority, both in terms of the relevance of the research and the trained personnel needed in Africa, although such curricula still exist in many post-colonial universities. There is thus a need to reform the universities and to build the research and knowledge foundation by investing and gearing research to solve Africa's main problems.

There have been two initiatives recently in building research universities that are worth mentioning. The first is from Addis Ababa University which opened a campus to train 5 000 PhDs in the next ten years. The strategy used is to invite some 60 foreign universities to co-operate in helping to train the new PhDs. The vision of changing an existing university into a 'pre-eminent research university' appears ambitious. A downside is that it is resourced mainly from donors and through expected support from other universities in Europe, America and Canada. Another critical problem is that the existing university staff in Addis Ababa is expected to do 70 percent of undergraduate teaching, with an annual expected growth in intake. These constraints perhaps may be overcome. But this will not address the concept of creating a world-class university geared to solving the problems and disasters in Ethiopia, from food to energy, unless the policies, resources, talent, governance arrangements, and incentives are synchronised to indigenise research and knowledge creation.

The second initiative, the African University of Science and Technology (AUST) in Abuja, Nigeria, is part of the Pan-African university initiative, with satellite campuses in Arusha and other regions of Africa. It is not yet clear how this Pan-African university might evolve. It was set up by the Nelson Mandela Institution for Knowledge Building and the Advancement of Science and Technology in Africa. It has been described as an accredited and independent university, and as the first of a network of Pan-African Institutes of Science and Technology and Centres of Excellence. The advantage of this new university is that it can evolve as a research university from its inception, and indeed the framers had this in mind in founding it. It does not need to undertake the painful transition from an existing teaching to a research university that Addis Ababa University wishes to embark upon. A good opportunity exists to create an

African research university, provided the policies, resources, talents, incentives and governance systems are put in place to address the real problems of Africa and create both a stream of knowledge and researchers.

Most research universities are concentrated in one country, namely the United States of America, and it is not easy for poor countries to create research universities. Some countries like Nigeria and China are adopting a dual system of widening access to higher education while trying to create research capacity. Since it is not easy for each African state to create a world-class university, it is necessary to think in terms of building an inter-African knowledge and research infrastructure by sharing values to create a robust African science and technology system. There is thus a need to take a bold initiative to set up at least five regional science and technology universities with five major laboratories that can focus on nano-technology, biotechnology, environmental technology, medical technology, food technology, energy technology and information technology. This is an approach that is now being adopted by the African Union.

The main actors that drive the knowledge and research in Africa must be Africans. Africans have to learn to think through their problems and find solutions. It is precisely to change the asymmetric relationship between donors and Africans that knowledge and research generated and owned by Africans to solve African problems must be promoted. In conclusion, a research university for every African country may not be possible, but a few world-class universities shared and built by Africans to create researchers that think deep, think to create knowledge, think with humility to serve Africans with commitment and non-elitism are necessary to make poverty history.

ENHANCING QUALITY, PRODUCTIVITY, CAPABILITY AND UTILITY

Historically, Africa has had a raw deal, and the effects of this have not yet been fully reversed. It was 125 years ago that Africa was scrambled over and split up by the powers of Europe. This legacy of division and fragmentation, including the negative European influence, has not yet left Africa. The place that has had the raw deal must get a fair deal, if not a new deal.

There is a need to engage the broadest possible mobilisation of, and linkages between, all involved in higher education, research and knowledge from both inside and outside Africa to contribute to training and research capacity building. The outputs of African academics must deal with real and tangible problems in a systematic and consequential manner.

The ability to achieve this requires organising quality and capability-enhancing academies. One such academy could take the form of a global knowledge network and support system to stimulate and inspire co-operation and purposeful engagement by mobilising talents, skills, knowledge and goodwill, and communicating effectively with the issues, problems, needs and aspirations of ordinary people and communities. Such a network will go a long way in contributing to changing society, mind-sets and attitudes in Africa. It could create real organic connections and meaningful, hopeful and productive interactions between the Diaspora and the people, communities and societies in Africa for generations to come.

It is proposed that such a network is established in the form of an African Global Higher Education, Research and Knowledge Observatory. The objectives of this observatory would be:

1. The creation of a knowledge and virtual training centre, and the dissemination of knowledge to empower African learners and assist in transforming individuals, communities, society, and institutions by facilitating networks that interlink Africa, including the Diaspora.
2. The sustained democratisation of African society by means of the use of knowledge and its effective dissemination to bring about sustainable, irreversible and democratic transition, democratic governance, rule of law, protection of the basic freedoms, and separation of powers.
3. To help the structural transformation of African society, economy, politics, ecology by bringing together into a network the best available knowledge and knowledge workers through research, training, capacity building and creative forms of dissemination of knowledge

Along with this Observatory, it is proposed that there is a need to set up an African Doctoral Academy for research, quality and capability enhancement that can be organised as a key component to improve the higher education landscape in Africa. This could build on the model established by the Global Network for Economics of Learning, Innovation and Competence Building Systems (GLOBELICS), which aims to aid in reversing brain drain by encouraging top researchers from the North to interact with and help build research and knowledge capacity in the South.¹¹⁶

There are three main activities that need to come together in order to create such a Doctoral Academy and enhance research capacity building and training:

The first is establishing academic research networking and training that connects inter-African research communities with each other and with the best international research networks globally.

The second is to create and build a body of knowledge for the enhancement of both research and quality training. This will come from focused research programmes.

The third is the strengthening of Africa's higher education landscape to ensure effective dissemination of analytic work, research results and newly acquired knowledge. The establishment of journals like the *African Journal on Science, Technology, Innovation and Development* can open the knowledge world to African penetration. This will, in part, challenge the knowledge monopoly by the dominant knowledge leaders now.¹¹⁷

For both academies suggested above, it is important to build on regional strengths where these exist. South Africa must play a special role in this regard, since research in Africa appears to be concentrated mainly in South Africa. Only Egypt attains similar levels of research. According to Pouris, 'these two countries produce just above 50 percent of the continent's publications and the top eight countries

¹¹⁶ See www.globelics.org for more information.

¹¹⁷ See the AJSTID published by Adonis-Abbey Publishers and supported by SARCHIHERI and TUT.

produce above 80 percent of the continent's research'.¹¹⁸ South Africa, in addition, has a ten-year innovation plan¹¹⁹ (indicating that national leadership has understood the importance of research and knowledge), and has five research universities recognised in international rankings.

While South Africa has its problems, in relation to much of Africa it has built up a relatively functioning higher education system. Research and knowledge have been embedded in the country. Arguably the South African system is also bifurcated. It has not reached the whole country as it should have been due to the peculiarities of the apartheid period. However, it is clearly an important knowledge and research resource. The challenge is how to create research and researcher mobility to link this energy from South Africa to benefit other African countries. This requires a double transformation: South Africa emerging to promote a higher education, knowledge and research African area by opening its borders; and the rest of Africa welcoming South Africa to engage in research and knowledge activities beyond its own shores. Such a double change is critical to create a wider and deeper Pan-African higher education area.

The argument for knowledge that can connect producers and users in Africa through productive and innovative activities is compelling. However, achievement of this vision still leaves much to be desired. Capacity building is essential to strengthen and communicate the research and knowledge from studies in science, technology and innovation to various stakeholders such as the decision-makers at various levels, businesses, civil society organisations and various sectors in education, health, agriculture and engineering. This capacity building could be greatly strengthened if scholars from African and international institutions, universities and networks could come together and creatively organise research capacity training together.

CONCLUSION

We have come a long way. Previous policy recommendations regarding a de-emphasis on higher education in Africa were based on rate-of-return analysis on investment in higher education, research and knowledge, using neo-classical understandings that price equals marginal cost based on 'circulation or exchange-value allocative economics'.¹²⁰ However, this claim could not stand scrutiny even using its own neo-classical terms. African economists, using data for the 1960 – 2000 period, found that at all levels of education human capital has a positive and statistically significant effect on growth rate of per capital income in African countries. This debunked the argument that claimed higher education human capital had no significant effect on the per capital incomes of African countries. They found that human capital developed through higher education has as large a growth impact as physical capital investment.¹²¹

Despite being rejected based on science and commonsense, this narrow allocative economics of existing factors of production and goods and services based on the market could return due to the global economic and financial crises confronting countries and national economies today. Thus, there is a particular need in Africa to locate higher education, research and knowledge within alternative theories, such as looking at productive powers and the capability sets needed to create them, rather than the circulation of the produced commodities. Africa must oppose a neo-classical

¹¹⁸ Pouris, A. and Pouris, A. 2007. The State of Science and Technology in Africa (2000-2004), a Scientometric Assessment 79, 2009, *International Journal of Scientometrics*. In Proceedings, ISSI 2007.

¹¹⁹ Department of Science and Technology, South Africa, *South African Ten Year Innovation Plan*, Pretoria, South Africa, 2008

¹²⁰ See Mammo Muchie, Building Research Universities in Africa: the Challenges, in Heather Eggins (ed.) *Selected Papers on Sharing Research Agendas on Knowledge Systems*, Occasional Paper no.16, www.unesco.org/education/researchforum, 2009 pp. 16-25

¹²¹ See Kwabena Gyimah-Brempong, Oliver Paddison & Workie Mittku, *Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 42, Issue No. 3, April 2006, pp.509-529

exchange economy theory by promoting theories of productive power in order to develop and protect the African higher education, research and knowledge area. The building of Africa's national economic space requires that higher education, knowledge and research become critical components of the making of African innovation systems.¹²² It has been suggested that the creation of a global African Knowledge, Research and Higher Education Observatory, along with networks that are inter-African and global, for enhancing quality, productivity, capability and utility of knowledge and trained human capital would enable this. Practical measures that can access strengths in order to build what is currently weak across Africa must be tried. South Africa can play a big role in this. The Diaspora can create knowledge, research and higher education bonds and links by broadening the African network well beyond Africa to abroad. The Diaspora can be Africa's 'near abroad'.

There is a need to create a few world class Pan-African universities, at least one in each region of Africa, in addition to the possibility of strengthening the existing universities from South Africa to Nigeria. But these world-class universities must be conceptualised differently from those in the West. In order to tower as world-class universities in Africa, they must immerse themselves in the African locale and problems.

Finally, there can be no apologies in putting Africa first. All those who argue for 'one united humanity' acting in solidarity must recognise that the aspects of humanity that others 'othered', enslaved, degraded and rejected cannot remain in the state it has been since the humiliations of the 15th century. 'One united humanity' can only be achieved if those who rejected Africans learn to acknowledge and open the opportunities to provide the fair deal that is owed to Africa. For 'one humanity' to be formed, Africa's dignified and non-humiliated inclusion is a necessary condition, if not sufficient. Only when the excluded is included, when the former recipient of the raw deal has a fair deal, can 'one united humanity' finally emerge.

¹²² See Muchie et al, *Putting Africa First, The Making of African Innovation Systems*, Aalborg University Press, 2003

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