Knowledge and Change in African Universities

Volume 1 – Current Debates

Michael Cross and Amasa Ndofirepi (Eds.)
Knowledge and Change in African Universities
AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION: DEVELOPMENTS AND PERSPECTIVES

Volume 1

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Scope

This book series focuses on the historical foundations and current transformations of African higher education. It is aimed at scholars, students, academic leaders, policy makers and key stakeholders both in Africa and around the world, who have a strong interest in the progress, challenges and opportunities facing African higher education.

A diversity of higher education themes and issues related to African higher education at institutional, national, regional and international levels are addressed. These include, but are not limited to, new developments and perspectives related to knowledge production and dissemination; the teaching/learning process; all forms of academic mobility – student, scholar, staff, program, provider and policy; funding mechanisms; pan-Africa regionalization; alternate models of higher education provision; university leadership, governance and management; gender issues; use of new technologies; equitable access; student success; Africanization of the curriculum - to name only a few critical issues.

A diversity of approaches to scholarship is welcomed including theoretical, conceptual, applied, policy orientations. The notions of internationalization and harmonization of African higher education complements the cosmopolitan outlook of the series project through its comparative approach as critical imperatives. Finally, the book series is intended to attract both authors and readers, internal and external to Africa, all of whom are focused on African higher education including those doing comparative work on Africa with other regions of the world and the global South in particular.
Knowledge and Change in African Universities

Volume 1 – Current Debates

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In Knowledge and Change in African Universities a noteworthy group of scholars have addressed some of the most relevant issues and challenges faced by higher education institutions (HEIs) in Africa today. In these two volumes, the authors have reviewed current debates and imagined possibilities for change, across a broad set of topics. These include the role of universities in promoting development and social justice; the production of public and private goods; educational and philosophical foundations of higher learning; Africanisation, decolonisation and global integration; institutional discourses and cultures; as well as scholarship, epistemologies and knowledge creation.

In most of the contributions, it is possible to trace the authors’ underlying explicit or implicit reflections about existing tensions between the need to comply with global demands and views about scholarship, knowledge and the university, as opposed to local and national historical contexts, university traditions, and societal expectations. In my view, the attention to this divergence constitutes a backbone and an integrating concept throughout the chapters.

It could not be any different. Serious approaches to the understanding of contemporary African universities and their transformation, such as those included in this book, cannot escape the dilemmas that the vast majority of higher education systems and institutions all over the world are facing today. Knowledge and Change in African Universities is a significant contribution to current international debates about higher education, as it brings to our attention observations, analyses and theoretical perspectives that stem from rich and diverse experiences of university developments and conflicts in postcolonial and post-apartheid historical settings.

THE UNIVERSITY: A EUROPEAN AND COLONIAL INSTITUTION

There is evidence of higher learning arrangements in medicine, astronomy and mathematics, among other knowledges, before 500 BC in India, China, Egypt, Greece and other cultures (Cowdrey, 1998; Fulton, 1953). The University as we know it today, however, was originally a western creation, emerging as an institution in twelfth-century Europe. The first universities were founded in Bologna (in 1088), Salamanca (in 1134), Paris (around 1150), and Oxford (in 1167) (Le Goff, 1980; Rashdall, 1936). These universities were later chartered by the Church and
respective monarchies, at the beginning of the thirteenth century. The student-
centered Bologna model had a strong influence in the foundation of universities in
Vicenza (in 1204), and Padua (in 1220) (Perkin, 1984). A new group of universities
emerged after the 1229 conflict at the University of Paris (Le Goff, 1993; Luna
Díaz, 1987), through what has been called the “great dispersion” of scholars
(Brunner, 1990). The University of Paris became very influential in Salamanca and
Oxford, and inspired the creation of Cambridge (in 1209), as well as universities in
Spain and Portugal, including Alcalá (in 1293) and Lisbon (in 1290), among others
(Brunner, 1990).

Universities spread throughout the continent of Europe, becoming increasingly
interconnected with political, economic and social changes. With the advent of
modern European colonialism, starting in the sixteenth century, the university
became an integral part of the cultural domination in most of the colonies. During
three centuries of colonialism in the Americas, universities were established and
chartered by the Catholic Church and the Crown in Spanish America and by
provincial governments and religious denominations in British colonies.

By the mid nineteenth century, almost every country in the Americas had become
independent. Distinct university traditions developed in the former British and
Spanish colonies during the wars of liberation, and as they emerged as new nations
(González & Hsu, 2014). Colleges and universities in the United States had been sites
of political contestation and revolt against England, the majority of them remaining
private after the end of the American War of Independence (Tucker, 1979). In Latin
America most of the universities were conservative and stagnant; in spite of being
public institutions, they had participated little in independence struggles and thus
remained close to the church and traditional scholastic thought until the end of the
nineteenth century (Lanning & Valle, 1946; Wences Reza, 1984). It was not until
the 1918 University of Córdoba revolt in Argentina that Latin American universities
moved away from church control and adopted an orientation towards autonomy,
shared governance, social commitment and national development.

A new wave of European colonisation spread to India and the East Indies in
the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. During British rule in India, HEIs were
created from 1781 onwards. Following the ‘Orientalist versus Anglicist’ debate
(Zastoupil & Moir, 1999), the so-called ‘Indian Universities’ were established in
1857 and reoriented towards an English model. They were based on the University
of London organisation, as Oxford and Cambridge models were considered to be
too expensive (González & Hsu, 2014)—nevertheless, upper class Indian men
traveled to Britain to obtain their higher education. Even though these two strategies
were promoted in order to Anglicise Indian elites, European and Indian university
education played a major role in the struggles for independence (Ellis, 2009). During
Dutch colonisation in Indonesia, three higher learning institutions were founded in
Batavia between 1898 and 1924. Originally designed to promote Dutch culture and
language, these institutions also became very important in the national struggle for
Along the lines of ‘assimilation’ of local elites through education, France established the University of Indochina in Hanoi in 1906 (Vu, 2012).

European powers participated in the ‘scramble for Africa’ between 1881 and 1914. Coastal territories occupied by the Portuguese and British grew into large colonial holdings with the pretext of putting an end to slavery through “Commerce, Christianity and Civilization” (Packenham, 1992, p. xxii). While the French, Belgian, German and Portuguese powers exercised “direct rule”, and a “highly centralised type of administration”, the British “sought to rule by identifying local power holders and encouraging or forcing these to administer for the British Empire” (Khapoya, 1994, p. 126f). For Britain, the purpose of colonial higher education was to create a local elite, required to carry out colonial administration. Even though France and Portugal used higher education to implement their direct rule and ‘assimilation policies’, very few universities were created, and elite Africans were educated in Europe (Bandeira Jerónimo, 2015).

A few African countries gained independence between 1910 and 1942, while the majority succeeded only later, in the national liberation struggles during the 1950s, 60s and 70s, and two more in the 80’s and 90’s. On the verge of, and in the midst of independence struggles more universities were created. A particular case is that of South Africa, where disputes between Afrikaners and the British, and a long history of apartheid, engendered a differentiated and stratified system of universities. These included historically white Afrikaans-medium universities, historically white English universities, historically black universities in the Republic of South Africa (RSA) and historically black universities in the Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, and Ciskei (TBVC) countries (Bunting, 2006). In the transition towards a post-apartheid society, South Africa has undergone a continuing and conflictual process of decolonisation and recreation of new university identities, traditions, policies and practices.

Colonial powers formulated various policies for the provision of higher education and the creation of colleges and universities in their colonies. In spite of their distinct ruling strategies and governing philosophies, they shared ideas about the role of education—and particularly of this essentially European institution, the University—for the dissemination or maintenance of western Christian culture, social organisation and economic interests. As a result, they were able to maintain their hegemony over colonised nations and peoples.

There is historical proof that universities, during different historical periods, contributed to the reproduction of colonialism in the Americas, India, the East Indies and Africa. There is also evidence, however, from the nineteenth century onwards, of intense conflicts between Church and State, and between distinct European colonial powers. These included battles over the nature of the universities and confrontations within them. In this context, many universities made significant contributions to the creation of, and participation in, national liberation movements. So, although the University has been an instrument of colonialism, in many cases, it has also served as a site of contestation, organisation and struggle for national liberation.
In the transition from the European core to the colonial peripheries, universities in different nations and regions developed new identities, assumed diverse social roles, shaped their scholarship cultures, and created distinct historical traditions. During the second half of the twentieth century, this distinctiveness was connected to the mass expansion of higher education all over the world. This, in turn, introduced innovative ways to think about colleges and universities, and alternative views for the creation of new institutions and the expansion of national systems.

A NEW COLONISATION OF THE UNIVERSITY?

Universities have always been global, in many ways. True to their common origins, they have inherited customs and traditions, retained scholarly practices and standards, and adhered, at least in some measure, to one or other of the European models. In spite of this, the national and regional differences previously referred to, have enriched and expanded notions and practices about the University.

At the end of the twentieth century, however, a new dominant view about the University began to emerge (Marginson & Ordorika, 2010). With the demise of the welfare states and the end of east-west world polarisation, a new era of structural adjustment, globalisation and neoliberalism became apparent. New public discourses and polices proclaimed the pre-eminence of the private over the public, stressed the overarching importance of competition practices and productivity, and promoted a reified view of markets as efficient regulators in every aspect of social interaction, politics, economics and even culture (Wolin, 1981).

Education, and particularly colleges and universities, did not escape the push towards privatisation, marketisation and the commodification of education goods and products (Marginson, 1997). Increased productivity, connection to markets, innovation, accountability, competition and new managerialism have become hallmarks in higher education policy all over the world (Ordorika, 2007) under the guise of the all-encompassing but vaguely defined concept of ‘excellence’ (Readings, 1996).

With the advent of globalisation and neoliberalism, the United States strengthened its worldwide ascendency. A relatively small set of HEIs in that country have been portrayed as ‘exceptional’. An idealised model of the US elite research university has become hegemonic globally, and has directly or indirectly impacted higher education policies and institutions in almost every country (Marginson & Ordorika, 2011).

Among the most salient features of this hegemonic model of the University are the centrality of research and the international circulation of scientific publications; an emphasis on graduate studies over undergraduate teaching; attracting international students and faculty; establishing strong links with business; producing marketable private goods; the adoption of ‘new managerialism’; and large endowments that provide financial security (Ordorika & Pusser, 2007).

Many postcolonial and other countries in the periphery have faced difficult transitions and development processes stemming from economic catastrophes,
starting with the debt crises in the 1980s and continuing with the financial collapse of 2008. In this context, contemporary colleges and universities face confrontation between local expectations—for example, responsiveness to their own historical traditions, social commitments, accomplishments and liabilities—and those posed by global competitiveness and dominant perceptions about the characteristics of so-called world-class universities. These conflicting demands have taken place in the midst of, and have also deepened, existing crises of identity in higher education systems and institutions.

IDENTITY AND CONFLICT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

In order to advance the reconstruction of university identities and higher education projects, it is necessary to acknowledge some of the most important tensions and challenges faced by HEIs today. Historically, colleges and universities have been both the object and the site of conflict over societal demands and expectations for democratisation, equality and inclusion, versus attempts to emphasise their role in increasing their contribution to capital accumulation (Carnoy & Levin, 1985; Ordorika, 2003). Confrontations over access, resource allocation and uses of knowledge have been salient expressions of this structural tension within higher education (Slaughter, 1990).

Battles over race, gender, socio-economic status and affirmative action policies for student admissions have taken place in various countries, including the United States (Pusser, 2004), South Africa (Hall, 2016) and Brazil (Lloyd, 2015). Students have struggled against tuition increases and fought for free higher education in Britain (Coughlan, 2015), Mexico (Ordorika, 2006; Rosas, 2001), Colombia and Chile (Observatorio Social de América Latina, 2012). In recent times, students opposing student loan and debt increases occupied Wall Street (Vara, 2014). Students demanding increased public investment in higher education have been paired against governments and policy makers that promote the authorisation and establishment of for-profit universities in the US, Chile and Colombia (Ordorika & Lloyd, 2014).

For many decades, the allocation of resources within universities has veered away from the humanities and the social sciences, into engineering, technology and some of the ‘hard’ sciences (Bérubé & Nelson, 1995). Global trends in university expenditures have become part of a larger ongoing debate about the production of public and private goods in higher education (Marginson, 2007), and more broadly about the nature of the University as a public good in itself (UNESCO, 2009).

These discussions are strongly linked to contemporary dilemmas over local and regional responsiveness, versus international orientation and worldwide competition. The arguments encompass the orientation of the University regarding the uses of knowledge, more precisely, existing contradictions between social commitment and community engagement, on the one hand, and market orientation, the production of private goods (commodities) and patenting, and university-business partnerships, on the other (Ordorika & Lloyd, 2014).
In many ways, these quandaries summarise the clash between historical and nationally grounded university traditions, and the hegemonic global model. They involve questions surrounding knowledge perspectives and the politics of knowledge, as well as issues regarding the preservation of indigenous languages against the domination of English as the language of knowledge and science. Attempts to promote internationalisation through foreign student enrolments and faculty hiring, have placed enormous strain on universities, as higher education systems and institutions fail to ensure proper coverage for local youth within the tertiary education age group.

There are also many contradictions involving the publication of academic work and research. Among these are the focus on local and national, vis-à-vis international cutting-edge research topics; the importance of local audiences against that of international circulation; as well as the complex interactions with multinational corporations like Thomson Reuters, Elsevier, Springer, Sage and others (Larivière, Haustein, & Mongeon, 2015; Ordorika Sacristán et al., 2009). These dilemmas also relate to international flows of knowledge; human resources (students and faculty); financial assets in peripheral countries and their universities; and the established centres of economic and knowledge concentration.

Starting in 2003, international university rankings became an overarching expression of the existing global competition among higher education systems and individual institutions, and the dominance of elite research universities, primarily in the US and the UK (Pusser & Marginson, 2013). International classification systems reproduce the hegemonic model that these institutions represent, as colleges and universities all over the globe, voluntarily or forcibly, attempt to comply with international standards. Rankings have become a symbol and instrument of the contemporary colonisation of universities intent on becoming world-class institutions (Ordorika & Lloyd, 2015).

Attempts at recreating identities in peripheral universities take place in this context of intense contradictions, alternatives, trade-offs and conflicts. Contemporary divergences have enlivened and reshaped existing tensions in exercising institutional autonomy in the face of increasing external intrusion and regulations (Enders, de Boer, & Weyer, 2013). Furthermore, internal contradictions have emerged between academic collegiality and new managerialism (Deem, 1998), with the latter’s emphasis on productivity, efficiency, evaluation, assessment and measurement (Ordorika, 2007).

Attempts at decolonisation of colleges and universities today need to be strongly connected to a thorough understanding of the conditions in which these conflicts and contradictions are played out within national higher education systems and institutions. In our search for understanding, it is very important to acknowledge historical differences and commonalities in postcolonial and peripheral countries.
One of the most relevant topics for the transformation of higher education in the periphery is the re-politicisation of colleges and universities. We need to acknowledge that the recreation of alternative university traditions and identities is a political process in which many actors—within and beyond university campuses—will become participants; and that democratic participation in public debate and decision making is crucial in order to build favourable correlation of forces for students and faculty within universities.

This work, *Knowledge and Change in African Universities*, is an example of how to think about the decolonisation and regionalisation of universities, in the context of worldwide competition and the global hegemony of elite research institutions. Throughout the chapters of this book, alternatives to old and new colonialisms are imagined and framed on the solid ground of practice and experience, of academic research and intellectual thought, and of political theory and praxis.

The two volumes in *Knowledge and Change in African Universities* constitute a thoughtful aggregation of historical knowledge and the work of contemporary scholars. More significantly, they take an insightful step—a much-advanced, work-in-progress for the construction of new identities and transformation of universities in Africa. But this is not all—in generating knowledge and understanding about African universities, while setting the stage for the development of an alternative idea of the University, this group of scholars have also contributed to our understanding of the present and future of universities in other regions, in other nations, in other hemispheres.

**REFERENCES**


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FOREWORD


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1. UNIVERSITY KNOWLEDGE FOR SOCIETAL CHANGE IN AFRICA

Unpacking Critical Debates

INTRODUCTION

The centrality of the role of university education in the future of society is indubitable as institutions of higher learning are, in practice, prime springs of new knowledge and skills—crucial and indispensable drivers of the economy. The university is charged with the responsibility of creating rich learning conditions that prepare learners for their place in society by providing access to scientific knowledge of high quality—an environment that bridges knowledge generation and the application of such knowledge in society. Knowledge is the common denominator on which the three traditional missions of academic teaching, research and social engagement are built (Abrahams, Burke, Gray, & Rens, 2008), and is the nucleus of the academic enterprise. Higher education systems and universities the world over are under immense pressure to reform by adjusting to the local and global demands for change in order to remain relevant.

The publication of the World Bank Report (1994) Higher Education: Lessons of Experience signalled the advent of a critical policy framework foregrounding the primacy of knowledge as a leading factor of production ahead of labour, capital and land, throughout the world economy. Contemporary global prosperity and power, characterised by more diffuse and benevolent expression to the world, continues to exhibit how knowledge has steadily gained significance as a critical influence for social change, including the manner in which ideas are generated, distributed and utilised. In line with the British Council Conference (2014) theme on Universities as agents of social change: How do universities create economic and social equity, this book speaks to the key question of how universities in Africa can contribute to the growth of local communities through knowledge production and skills generation. The primary concern is of an epistemological nature, namely: What is knowledge and what forms can and should it take in African universities?

Universities in Africa have often been accused of being semblances of western epistemologies propelling an encumbering and debilitating Eurocentric education, characterised by an attendant tenacity to exclude and marginalise an indigenous presence and ‘ways of knowing’ in higher education (see Hauser, Howlett, & Matthews, 2009; Nyamnjoh, 2004). After attaining political independence, new African states
inherited a western-educated elite who have continued to lead postcolonial African universities that perpetuate and espouse Eurocentric ‘development’ models (see Nabudere, 2003) by aping and replicating western hegemonic epistemologies on all fronts. This persuaded the editors of this two-volume book to invite critical scholarly contributions from academics and analysts of all persuasions, to engage in discourse about justifiable knowledge relevant for the 21st century citizen in Africa.

The literature is awash with generalisations on the role and function of the university, from Newman’s ([1873]1982) idea of the university, to the Humboldian model of higher education, through to the Castellian university as a system (see Castells, 2001). Nevertheless, there is a dearth of contributions by scholars on Africa and the role of knowledge as a change agent to address the African predicament in the globalising world. This book aims to fill the void in the postcolonial literature on knowledge production, research and dissemination in the African university. It foregrounds perspectives emerging from a continent that has traditionally been silenced and given insufficient consideration in the Anglo-American dominated epistemologies. Knowing what, knowing that, and knowing how, in order to change the African situation, have thus become topical concerns for policy makers, academic leaders and scholars on Africa, hence the focus of this book.

In their chapter in this book, Knowledge, globalisation and the African university: The change agenda, Kingston Nyamapfene and Amasa Ndofirepi discuss the extent to which the African university remains faithful and relevant to the African development process; including its efforts to carve out a place for itself as a key player in the global marketplace, while striving for visibility, recognition and acknowledgement. While conceding that their treatment of the subject is not exhaustive, given that there are nuances not captured in a broad, Africa-wide assessment, they posit that the need for change is no longer a matter for debate—it is in a general sense that the African university is in need of re-thinking. Starting with knowledge production and dissemination, their presentation proffers an opportunity for the African university to rethink and reinvent itself. They argue that the African university must, of necessity, work on the basis of priorities, rather than pursue an unrealistic agenda intended to address both past gaps and the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

KNOWING WHAT, THAT, AND HOW

Knowledge or knowing occurs in three ways, namely knowledge of what, knowledge of that, and knowledge of how. In its relational form, knowing that (knowledge by acquaintance) entails the knower’s awareness of relationships between concepts, shapes, or people. Knowledge of what is the site of inquiry, permitting the knower access to definitions, meanings, and special characteristics of some content. Knowledge of how (know-how) refers to having the practical and theoretical instruments that are necessary to perform a particular activity with a certain level of skill. These three constructions of knowledge are at the heart of any real discourse on
the nature and role of universities. Given the currency of the knowledge economy or society, universities have become progressively more politically and economically critical institutions for the production and dissemination of knowledge. But as Bourdieu (2004) rightly avers, the production, positioning and consumption of knowledge are far from a neutral, objective and disinterested process. It is socially and politically mediated by hierarchies of humanity and human agency imposed by particular relations of power (pp. 18–21).

In support of the foregoing, the World Bank Report 1998/1999 reaffirms that economies are built not merely through the accumulation of physical capital and human skill, but on a foundation of information, learning, and adaptation. Because knowledge matters, understanding how people and societies acquire and use knowledge—and why they sometimes fail to do so—is essential to improving people’s lives, especially the lives of the poorest (World Bank, 1999). In his chapter Africanisation and diverse epistemologies in higher education discourses: Limitations and possibilities, Kai Horsthemke argues that the Africanisation of higher education is, by and large, assumed to involve institutional transformation, and more overtly the ‘decolonisation’ of higher education. He identifies the demand for the transformation of syllabus and content as a key component; as well as transformation of the curriculum (changing the whole way teaching and learning are organised). This includes the need to change the criteria that determine what counts as excellent research, acceptable throughput rates, etc., on the basis of acknowledging and respecting diverse and subaltern epistemologies.

Horsthemke’s chapter concerns itself fundamentally with the question of whether the ideas of diverse and subaltern epistemologies, and ‘indigenous/African knowledge’ in particular, make any sense he provides not only conceptual clarification, but also a critical examination of existing debates within higher education discourses. Horsthemke posits that, given the tentativeness of these debates, discourses about Africanisation and epistemological diversity (in higher education, as elsewhere) need to continue. While acknowledging the centre–periphery binary (Altbach, 2007) between universities in the North and those in the South in terms of the control and management of knowledge research, production and dissemination, contributors to this book provide a justification for mutual existence in a shared academic milieu. In such a scenario, universities from all sides of the globe would develop research capacity for equitable participation in the global knowledge system in order to collectively change the world.

The chapter explains how knowledge has continued unabated to sustain economic growth and improve living standards of societies in which it is generated, and beyond. However, in the knowledge and power dynamic, certain elite institutions have used their powerful position to determine and reinforce the centre – periphery state of affairs in the global society. The result is a situation where certain knowledges have been allocated pole positions, in order to legitimate the power of selected races, gender or classes. But what kind of knowledges and knowledge ecologies are required?
Post-independence African states and their celebratory independence anniversaries have often been rhetorical about measurable achievements and shortcomings in their endeavours to invent and maintain a better society, especially through research in universities. This book follows up on Metz’s (2009, p. 517) question as to whether “…publicly funded higher education ought to aim intrinsically to promote certain kinds of ‘blue-sky’ knowledge, knowledge that is unlikely to result in ‘tangible’ or ‘concrete’ social benefits such as health, wealth and liberty” (p. 517). Despite the normativity of the social change agenda as promulgated in national and regional policy statements, the majority of citizens in Africa are still living in abject poverty—they are poorly housed, unemployed, uneducated, and society is riddled with the increasing casualties of the killer HIV/AIDS pandemic. This has earned the postcolonial African condition descriptors such as “the world’s tragedy” (Oke, 2006, p. 332), “Africa in a precarious state” (Oguejiofor, 2001, p. 7), the “most humiliated, most dehumanised continent in the world”, whose past is “a tale of dispossession and impoverishment” (Osundare, 1998, p. 231).

In the wake of the contemporary overall incapacity to expand the material conditions of life of the majority of Africa’s citizens, we are confident in challenging the status quo by reconsidering the hierarchisation of social policies and the strategies adopted to implement them. This book goes beyond the previous choices made, by applying the change agenda for social advancement to knowledge processes in the university. Close, reflective attention is paid to the topic by offering a critical review of the course, trends and implications of contemporary change in civic society. The book proffers a detailed theoretical analysis of how the bond between knowledge research, its production and dissemination in the university in Africa is an important factor for societal change, not only at local, regional and regional levels, but also at the global level. In particular, the contributors enter the discourse by challenging how change in the socio-economic environment is impacting on the epistemic dimension of university knowledge processes in Africa, given the fact that “…institutions whose character is profoundly ethno-provincial keep masquerading as replicas of Oxford and Cambridge without demonstrating the same productivity as the original places they are mimicking” (Mbembe, 2015, n.p.).

In response to the foregoing, the chapter by Thaddeus Metz calls for Africanising institutional culture. He proffers five rationales, namely relativism, democracy, redress, civilisation and identity, which inform the central dimensions of curriculum research, language aesthetics and governance through which universities in Africa can Africanise their functioning. Using the case of South Africa, Metz concludes that the above rationales, in combination, constitute a convincing case for moderate Africanisation of the institutional culture of public universities. Starting from the notion of ubuntu as an African philosophy of human interdependence and humaneness, Yusef Waghid goes a step further in his chapter, Ubuntu: African philosophy of education and pedagogical encounters. He invites the entry of the concept of ubuntu into university cultures in order to develop a humane and just
society, enable a locally relevant education, and promote democratic pedagogical
encounters at African universities.

In *Pan-African curriculum in higher education: A reflection*, Tukumbi
Lumumba-Kasongo explores the prospects of integrating the concept and politics
of *Pax Africana* in the curriculum of university systems. He advances the view that
there is a lot to learn from pan-Africanism in our efforts to redefine knowledge
and change education systems in Africa. He posits that through the exploration of a
pan-African curriculum, a reinvigorated national foundation of African development
can be engendered. There is plenty of anecdotal evidence about the imposition and
valorisation of western scientific knowledge and its rationalistic origins on the
indigenous ‘ways of knowing’ in former colonial states in Africa (see Kaphagawani &
Malherbe, 2003; Ngugi, 1986; Ramose, 2004). This has resulted in epistemological
imperialism in established educational institutions, including universities. This draws
us to the question of whose and what knowledge is worthwhile in the university in
Africa? We begin with the establishment of the colonial university; move to the
postcolonial university, and then to contemporary times. This allows us to identify
a typology of four categories of universities over time, in terms of the nature of
knowledge and the characterisation of *knowing*.

**UNIVERSITIES IN AFRICA OVER TIME: A TYPOLOGY**

The establishment of university colleges by colonial administrations in colonised
African territories culminated in what we can call today *universities in Africa*. By
their character, they were designed to be satellites of host universities located in
the home country of the colonial power, for example the Ivy League universities
such as Harvard, Yale and Cornell (in the United States of America) and Oxford,
London and Cambridge (in the United Kingdom). Of epistemological interest was
the importation of disciplines and faculty from the home universities, with their
associated content and pedagogy. This practice was designed to train a crop of
elite locals, suitable for service in the colonial governments. The newly established
institutions were close replicas of their Eurocentric host universities; they aspired to
become “local instantiations of a dominant academic model based on a Eurocentric
epistemic canon” (Mbembe, 2015, n.p.).

The same sort of appropriation is experienced today, when universities in the
North, by partnering with research centres they have funded in universities in Africa,
continue to manipulate untapped local knowledges for the benefit of their home
countries, and then trade such intellectual property products back to Africa. Such
a situation locates Africa in the position of an object of study and as a centre for
knowledge production, leaving it in a precarious state in the international division
of intellectual labour. What remains is: how much of the Eurocentric epistemologies
remain in 21st century universities in Africa in the five decades after political
liberation from erstwhile colonisers? If the above explanation is plausible, then