



Higher Education, the State and the Marketplace*

Mahmood Mamdani**

Abstract

This essay is an overview of the historical development of higher education through three different periods – colonial, nationalist and neoliberal – as well as an argument for the strategic importance of higher education. In contrast to the World Bank’s attempt to marginalize higher education as an elitist preoccupation, it argues that higher education is where teachers are trained, where curricula are developed, where the range of leadership of an independent country is cultivated, and where research is located. In sum, higher education is where we develop the range of choices which make democracy meaningful in different spheres of life. Higher education is the strategic heart of education; those who wish to transform general education must begin with higher education. The essay closes with a critical discussion of two paradigmatic reform experiences in higher education in tropical Africa – developmentalist reform at the University of Dar-es-Salaam in the 1970s and market-based reform at Makerere University in the 1990s – so as to draw lessons from a half century of experience.

Résumé

Cet essai est un aperçu de l’évolution historique de l’enseignement supérieur à travers trois périodes différentes – coloniale, nationaliste et néolibérale – et en même temps un plaidoyer pour une importance stratégique de l’enseignement supérieur. Contrairement à la tentative de la Banque Mondiale de marginaliser l’enseignement supérieur comme une préoccupation élitiste, il soutient que l’enseignement supérieur est le lieu de formation des enseignants, de développement des programmes, où le leadership des pays indépendants se cultive ainsi que le creuset de la recherche. En somme, l’enseignement supérieur est le lieu où nous développons la gamme des choix pour une démocratie significative dans les diffé-

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** Herbert Lehman Professor of Government, Columbia University, New York, USA.

rentes sphères de la vie. L'enseignement supérieur étant le centre stratégique de l'éducation pourquoi donc ceux-là qui souhaitent transformer l'enseignement général doivent-ils commencer par l'enseignement supérieur? L'essai se termine sur une discussion critique sur deux expériences de réformes paradigmatiques de l'enseignement supérieur en Afrique tropicale – la réforme expansionniste à l'Université de Dar-es-Salaam dans les années 1970 et la réforme libérale à l'Université de Makerere dans les années 1990 – afin de tirer les leçons d'un demi-siècle d'expérience.

Introduction

I am honoured to have been invited to speak to this august body, partly because your mandate includes the entire gamut of education, from primary to tertiary, and partly because any group that meets once in three years has no choice but to focus on matters of strategic significance. I will begin with some thoughts on the Commonwealth, and then proceed to the question of education.

We all know the history of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth came out of an empire, with both the former imperial power and its now independent subjects as members. What did this project stand for? Was it a graceful way of saying farewell to an empire, and of dismantling its memory? Or was it a project of redress, a way of making amends? As the Minister from Scotland has just said, how does one deal with a past of injustice and oppression? Is it enough to say let bygones be bygones, or do we need to recognize that a measure of justice is necessary for reconciliation to take place?

In this talk, I want to suggest three propositions. First, a meaningful role for the Commonwealth today would have to include reparations or restitution – making amends – for past injuries. Second, these amends would need to be made to the most aggrieved. Finally, I have some thoughts on who are the most aggrieved when it comes to higher education.

My focus will be on higher education, and perhaps that requires a word of explanation in an era when higher education is often discussed as an elitist alternative to primary education. Most of our students are in general education; so why choose to speak of higher education? For one reason: 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.

I will adopt a historical approach in my discussion of higher education, focusing on three periods: the colonial, the nationalist and, finally, the period of neo-liberal reform.

Colonialism and Education

All except one member of the Commonwealth are former colonies. It is commonplace to observe that not all colonies have fared equally badly. What accounts for the difference in performance between former colonies? Of many factors, some primary and others secondary, I would like to advance one: the nature of the colonial experience.

I teach a course at Columbia University, titled 'The Modern State and the Colonial Subject.' It is a course in comparative colonialism, about the technology of rule. I ask questions like: How does a self-conscious minority rule a majority? When it comes to the British Empire, what lessons did this minority draw from centuries of experience? When these lessons were put into practice, what key changes did it effect in ways of ruling?

To answer this question in the case of the British Empire, I distinguish between two main periods in its history, so as to highlight key shifts in the technology of rule from one period to another. The first period was that of a confident colonialism that was conscious of itself as a civilizing influence on the world. That confidence was thrown into doubt by two uprisings at two ends of the Empire in the middle of the 19th century: the Indian Uprising of 1857 and the Morant Bay Uprising in Jamaica a few years later.

There were two debates on the Indian Uprising, one in India and the other in Britain. In the Indian debate, the British claimed that the Uprising stemmed from superstition, from anxieties about modernity, because Indian soldiers, both Hindus and Muslims, objected to using bullets greased with cow and pig fat. In the debate in Britain, particularly in the House of Commons, members asked why religious prejudices did not prevent soldiers from using the same bullets to kill British soldiers and civilians.

After 1857, Parliament took over from company rule. Queen Victoria announced that Britain would no longer interfere in religion, and would in fact respect it, for religion belonged to the private sphere. But the reality proved to be otherwise. Following the announcement, the colonial state undertook to define the boundaries that should not be violated, the true religion that should not be interfered with, and the true authorities who should define the boundaries of the true religion. Thus began a period of the greatest interference by the colonial state in the religions of India.

Thus began a new phase of colonialism. The colonial state no longer claimed to do away with tradition and implement a civilizing mission. It now claimed to

conserve tradition, which it proceeded to define. That tradition was defined as religious in India, but as ethnic in the African colonies that Britain conquered at the end of the 19th century. If the first period in which Britain claimed to be a civilizing mission was known as direct rule, then the second period in which it reversed claims, now championing tradition, was known as indirect rule.

What had changed in the transition from direct to indirect rule? First and most obviously, there was a change in the language of rule, from a language of bringing civilization to one of conserving tradition. Second, there was a change in the local mediators of foreign rule. Direct rule was mediated through the educated strata, which were trained in Western schools and institutions of learning that were built as so many temples and monuments to the civilizing mission. The proliferation of English-speaking strata, from lawyers to clerks, was said to be a visible benefit of colonial rule. In the era of indirect rule, however, the British looked with suspicion on the educated strata and with favour on traditional chiefs.

The point was made explicit by Lord Lugard, a former colonial official in India and Burma, then a fortune-hunting ivory merchant in equatorial Africa, and later part of the staff of the Imperial British East Africa Company. Lugard became a pioneer of indirect rule, the one who systematized its practice in northern Nigeria, and then wrote about it in *The Dual Mandate*. Britain, said Lord Lugard, must avoid 'the Indian disease.' Now, what was 'the Indian disease'? For Lugard, it was a reference to the educated classes being highly susceptible to catching the virus of nationalism.

Anyone studying the modern history of higher education in the colonies will be able to distinguish between two periods. The first was that of the 18th and mid-19th centuries when a triumphant and confident empire placed a high premium on civilizing the colonies, and universities had a pride of place in this mission. But once challenged in the mid-19th century, the Empire went on the defensive. Clipping its modernist ambitions, it opted for order rather than modernity, and higher education fell by the wayside.

My first point is that this student of the modern history of higher education would notice a sharp contrast between the emphasis on higher education in early and robust colonialism, the period of direct rule, and its near boycott in the period of indirect rule that followed the upsurge of anti-colonial resistance in mid-19th century. Not surprisingly, the colonies that suffered most in the sphere of higher education were mainly those that were colonized last, as the 20th century opened. These were the colonies of middle Africa, the Africa between the Sahara and the Kalahari. Many will remember that world media in the decade of the 1960s was full of stories of how one African colony after another – Tanganyika,

Congo, Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia – was about to become independent with no more than a handful of university graduates in the population.

The colonies of middle Africa were divided into two groups. Most colonies had no universities as they approached independence. When they became independent, just as sure as the national anthem, the national flag, and the national currency, a national university too became an obligatory sign of real independence. Then there was a minority of countries, a few, which had one university during the colonial period. This was usually a university meant to serve an entire region, such as Makerere University in Kampala.

Higher education in middle Africa really only began in any meaningful sense with independence, not colonialism. Take the example of Nigeria. One statistic is sufficient to make my point. Colonial Nigeria had one university with 1,000 students in 1961. Thirty years later, in 1991, independent Nigeria had 41 universities with 131,000 students. And Nigeria was not an exception.

The Developmentalist University – the University of Dar-es-Salaam

If higher education in middle Africa was a fruit of nationalism, nationalist governments built the developmentalist university, a university whose mission was defined as ‘development.’ The university that symbolized the promise of the nationalist era was the University of Dar-es-Salaam, where I held my first full-time teaching job, from 1973 to 1979.

The key achievement of the University of Dar-es-Salaam can be summed up in one word: decolonization. At the most superficial level, this was the decolonization of personnel, which went in line with the policy of Africanization that swept through one former colony after another in this continent. At a deeper level, this was decolonization of the curriculum. The transformation of curriculum cut across disciplines. It was spearheaded by inter-disciplinary teams of academics who designed inter-disciplinary courses meant to pioneer the study of development as part of a broader historical study of imperial expansion since the 15th century. Every student was required to take a full year course in Development Studies for the entire duration of the three year undergraduate programme. The object was to historicize economic poverty and social backwardness as ‘under-development’, that is, as the outcome of modern colonialism rather than a pre-colonial legacy. The University of Dar-es-Salaam became the home of the new science of nationalism, political economy.

But there were also problems. The main problem in the exercise that sought to decolonize curriculum was that its historical vision was limited to that of the colonial period. Ironically, those who criticised the colonial period came to share its time horizon. Studies in political economy treated pre-colonialism more as a point of departure than as an object of study. No wonder the point of

departure often lacked depth, texture, and dynamism; in short, history. Second, political economy was preoccupied with objective processes. The three-year program ended with a blueprint on 'development' in the third year. As an off-the-shelf blueprint, it claimed validity for every newly independent colony; there was little room for particularity or subjectivity, or differences in local capacity, whether defined by organization or vision. Finally, the discussion on colonizing curriculum seldom touched the question of language. Could one decolonize curriculum without reference to the language in which it was taught? This led to a curious development in Tanzania. Whereas Kiswahili was the medium of instruction in primary and secondary schools, it had the status of a foreign language in the university, where it was the object of special study at the Institute of Swahili Research. In the university curriculum, there was little or no interest in the experience of countries with multiple languages or where the national language was not an imperial language (such as the Scandinavian countries, China, Korea, Japan, etc.). The unintended effect was that students entering university came with insufficient preparation for English-medium studies. As a consequence, those who could afford to began to send their children to private English-medium schools, and those who could not increased pressure for English-medium education in public schools.

Besides this, there was little discussion of questions such as governance and funding. All assumed that the university would be run as a state apparatus, a parastatal, and the state would continue to be the sole funder of the university.

The crisis of the developmentalist university was part of the larger crisis of nationalism. The more nationalism turned into a state project, the more there were pressures on the developmentalist university to implement a state-determined agenda. The more this happened, the more critical thought was taken as subversive of the national project. The university was, of course, an incubator of both critical thought and of a counter-elite, whose critique sometimes veiled ambition. The more professors sounded like Ministers-in-waiting and sometimes even Presidents-in-waiting, the more their critique began to sound self-serving. In a single party context, the university began to take on the veneer of an opposition party, giving rise to confrontations that often led to strikes and shutdowns.

My second point is that the relationship between higher education and nationalism in middle Africa was contradictory. On the one hand, higher education was a fruit of nationalism; on the other hand, nationalist power tended to stifle critical thought. Nationalists were seldom willing democrats. From George Washington to Indira Gandhi to Robert Mugabe, they tended to see opposition as evidence of factionalism and betrayal. Not surprisingly, by the 1990s, the question of university autonomy was on the agenda. To win autonomy, however, the university needed allies in society and alternate sources of funding.

CODESRIA organized an all-Africa conference on 'Academic Freedom and the Social Responsibility of the Intellectual' in 1991 in Kampala. But the discussion on autonomy was just beginning.

Bretton Woods Institutions and the Assault on the Developmentalist University

The assault on the developmentalist university came from the new global development bureaucracy, particularly the Bretton Woods institutions. They were home to a radically different developmentalism. To understand the difference, we need to take two factors into account.

For a start, think of the end of colonialism which led to the unemployment of a large number of colonial bureaucrats. Many were seconded to the bureaucracies of the new multilateral institutions. I have no idea how many, if any, came to staff the Commonwealth Secretariat. But I have in mind the World Bank.

The World Bank began with a frontal assault on African universities at a conference of Vice Chancellors of African universities that it called in Harare in 1986. There, it advised the VCs that it would make economic sense to close universities in independent Africa and have its human resource needs trained in universities in the West. Unable to convince the VCs to do themselves out of a job, the Bank changed tack, and followed with a different strategy, that of conditional aid.

The second line of attack took the form of 'technical assistance,' leading to the inflow of expatriate staff from donor countries as technical experts, their salaries and perks paid from the component of 'aid' known as 'technical assistance.' The counterpart of this 'technical assistance' was the 'brain drain,' the outflow of national intellectuals, most taking up jobs in the West.

Do excuse me one bit of speculation here. Given the obvious difference between incoming expatriates who were securing jobs under monopolistic conditions and nationals who had to compete in open markets, economists are likely to tell us that those who succeed under free market conditions are likely to be of a superior quality than those who shelter under monopolies. The World Bank estimated recently that roughly a half of university graduates of universities in independent Africa had left for overseas since independence. Sandwiched between international donors and critical intellectuals at home, national governments sadly acquiesced in the marginalization of national intellectuals.

The Bank had a substantial critique of the developmentalist university, and it needs to be disaggregated to distinguish the positive from the negative. The positive part resonated with wider audiences and earned the Bank much support during its initial call for market-oriented reform of universities. The first part of the Bank's critique was that the developmentalist university was duplicating an

expensive colonial model for training a narrow and privileged elite. Other parts talked of the need for greater university autonomy, and for a much needed broadening of the financial base for higher education.

Then there was the negative side, which in many ways summed up the core of the Bank's agenda, and had a deadly effect on the future of higher education in middle Africa. Two ideas need particular mention. Bank studies claimed to show that the rate of return on investment in higher education was much lower than that in secondary or primary education, and that the benefit was mainly private. The Bank drew two conclusions from this: one, that the beneficiaries should share a significant part of the cost of higher education; and, two, that the state should reduce funding to higher education. Overall, the Bank framed a debate in which the private and the public, the market and the state, were seen more as alternatives rather than complementaries between which there needed to be appropriate relations.

The bank was completely wrong on this question. Empirically, several researchers have raised doubts about the calculations on which Bank officials based their claim about the low rate of return on investment in higher education. Conceptually, however, the Bank's understanding of benefits as exclusively individual ignores the institutional benefits involved: for higher education, as I have already argued, is the heart of education. It is where teachers are trained and curricula developed. Without research in higher education to develop curricula for the entire education system, all curricula will be as an off-the-shelf imported facility, with little relevance to the circumstances of the student.

The Bank proposal with the most corrosive impact on higher education was that for financial decentralization. The Bank called for financial autonomy for revenue-earning units inside universities so they may have an incentive to function as so many driving forces on the ground.

The Bank's Model for Market-Driven Reform – Makerere University

Makerere University is currently the Bank's model for market-driven reform. I taught at Makerere in the 1980s and the early 90s, and then returned a few years ago to study the impact of Bank-supported reforms. There were two main reforms at Makerere in the mid-1990s. I call them privatization and commercialization. Privatization amounted to the entry of privately sponsored students fee-paying into the university. Commercialization was a product of financial decentralization which gave substantial resource control to revenue-generating faculties, departments and institutes. At the start of the reform in 1993, individual units were encouraged to bring in as many private students as possible by allowing them to retain as much as 90 percent of fees paid by them. A decade later, as much as 60 percent was still retained. The immediate consequence was

that there ceased to be a single university budget as separate faculty budgets replaced separate faculty votes in the university budget.

As faculties began to compete for students, they rushed to devise programs that would attract private students. The turf war between faculties was around the most lucrative programs: human rights, conflict resolution, secretarial studies, environmental management, and so on. The turf war developed around two questions: *Who* had the right to teach? And *what* did they have the right to teach?

Let us begin with the second question first. The more relations between faculties became commercialized, the more revenue-earning faculties demanded the right to teach a program simply because they had come up with it. It was akin to a right of discovery. Previously, of course, each faculty had a defined mandate and anything beyond its mandate was taught as a 'service' course by another faculty. Now, faculties began to substitute 'service' courses with 'domesticated' courses by hiring adjunct staff to teach it. The selection of that staff too was decided by financial rather than academic considerations.

Now, the first question: who had the right to teach? In a decade, two parallel universities have developed at Makerere. One is the official university in which academic staff are hired on a permanent basis by officially appointed bodies observing official procedures and rules that require teaching staff to have at least a doctorate to continue to teach. The other is the informal university in which the teaching staff is hired by unit administrators on an informal and short-term basis, where someone can teach for over ten years without a formal letter of appointment. The 'reformed' Makerere is an informal university where questions of quality have been thrown by the wayside and where fee paying students receive a low-level vocational education in an expensive campus setting.

The changes have been dramatic over a decade. The number of students expanded from 3,000 to over 30,000 in a decade. The academic staff got two payments: the first a minimum as salary, and the second a supplementary payment over and above the minimum. This supplementary payment was variable and was calculated by the hour. As academic staff began to be paid by the hour taught, the average teaching load increased from 6 hours a week to over 20 hours a week. The result was a dramatic decline in quality of teaching and in research carried out. The most successful programmes were the BA in Tourism in the Department of Geography or another in Secretarial Studies in the Institute of Linguistics, and so on.

What will happen if the World Bank is able to reform higher education in Africa according to the Makerere model, so that local universities focus on teaching to the exclusion of research? What will happen if we see knowledge production as mainly an external process, to be imported? Both problems, and solutions, will then come to resemble ideologically-defined, off-the-shelf offers. Those

interested in research or dissatisfied with an externally-driven process of knowledge production will begin to move to overseas research centres or simply out of the university. The tendency will be to fill the university with mimic men and women, those who are prone to think of knowledge as something produced elsewhere.

My third point is that research needs to be an integral component of higher education, particularly in countries with a recent colonial past, for the simple reason that without a capacity for research we will not be in a position to define meaningful choices. Even the imparting of a meaningful general education requires the development of a curriculum that is responsive to local contexts and local needs, something that cannot simply be picked off the shelf.

The Commonwealth and Higher Education

There is a debate in higher education. One side claims that higher education is a luxury for small and poor countries. The other side points out that without an institutional base for research, we will not be in a position to define any meaningful choices.

It may be that only those countries with a dense network of higher education institutions, like South Africa and Nigeria in this continent, can afford to have a national research university. If so, others – small countries like Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania – will need to direct their efforts regionally, and collaborate to create a regional research university. If the Commonwealth is to have a program of redress in higher education, a regional research university for middle African countries would be a worthy focus for it. But even in the small country context, one needs to think of a decent liberal arts college with a decent general education that responds to both a changing global environment and to local histories and contexts – a site for a general education that can produce a generation of leaders with a shared understanding and a shared vision. None of this can be left to the market. All of it requires willful and concerted action by people like ourselves.



Makerere's Myths, Makerere's History: A Retrospect

Carol Sicherman*

Abstract

Stemming from the author's experience of writing a history of Makerere, this paper examines how the myths that have grown up around the university in the eighty-five years since its founding have obscured a clear view of the evolving institution, which the paper defines as 'a university in Africa' rather than 'an African university'. The first myth, of an egalitarian paradise enjoyed by fully-funded students, was questioned even during its heyday by intellectuals disillusioned by the failure during the 1960s to fulfil the late-colonial dream. In the aftermath of the tormented 1970s and 1980s, a variant myth declared that new funding formulas made Makerere even more egalitarian. Proponents of this myth claimed that anyone who qualified for admission could attend; however, since government scholarships went to increasingly smaller proportions of the student body, only those who could raise the necessary funds themselves could take advantage of the supposedly widened access. After questioning the meaning of 'African' in a socio-political context still strongly flavoured by foreign influence, the paper moves to consider the challenges that researchers may encounter in writing about universities in Africa: challenges that differ according to whether the researcher is an insider or outsider. The paper ends by asking what African academics can do to rid Makerere of the diseases threatening its institutional health.

Résumé

Issu de l'expérience de l'auteur de relater le cas de Makerere, ce document examine la façon dont les mythes qui se sont développés autour de l'université au cours des quatre-vingt cinq ans depuis sa fondation ont embrouillé une vision claire de l'institution en évolution. C'est ce que le document définit comme « une université en Afrique » plutôt qu'« une université africaine ». Le premier mythe,

* Carol Sicherman is Professor Emerita of English, Lehman College, City University of New York, USA.

d'un paradis égalitaire dont bénéficient les étudiants entièrement pris en charge, est remis en question, même à l'époque de son apogée, par les intellectuels des années 1960 désillusionnés par l'échec de réaliser le défunt rêve colonial. A la suite de la tourmente des années 1970–1980, un mythe variant a déclaré que les nouvelles de financement ont rendu Makerere plus égalitaire. Les adeptes de ce mythe déclaraient que quiconque ayant les qualités requises pour l'admission pouvaient s'inscrire; cependant, étant donné que les bourses du gouvernement étaient allouées à des proportions d'étudiants de plus en plus réduites, seuls ceux qui se procuraient des ressources pouvaient bénéficier de l'accès théoriquement élargi. Après avoir remis en question la signification du qualificatif « Africain » dans un contexte sociopolitique encore fortement parfumé par l'influence étrangère, le document propose de considérer les défis que pourraient rencontrer les chercheurs qui écrivent sur les universités africaines : défis qui varient selon que le chercheur est autochtone ou étranger. Le document se termine sur la question de savoir ce que les universitaires Africains peuvent faire pour débarrasser Makerere des maux qui menacent sa santé institutionnelle.

Introduction

In this essay I draw some lessons for scholars of higher education in Africa from my experience researching and writing *Becoming an African University: Makerere 1922–2000*. I reflect on certain problems that I encountered: how to evaluate the myths that had attached to the idea of Makerere, how to understand the phrases 'educated Africans' and 'African university', and how to access sources. Hoping to encourage African scholars to write about other universities in Africa and to encourage funding agencies to supply backing,¹ I also discuss the advantages that they may bring to such a task as compared with a Westerner like myself, as well as the challenges that would face them. I conclude with some thoughts on recent analyses of contemporary Makerere by intellectuals in Uganda, and what the implications of certain analyses are for improvement.

Any book about Makerere, I thought when I began, must be either the work of a Ugandan or a co-production with a Ugandan. When a Ugandan colleague agreed to collaborate once he had completed his doctorate, I began the research. By the time he finished his PhD, however, he found himself unable to contribute. Since I had already made considerable progress, he encouraged me to proceed without him on the grounds that an outsider's perspective could be sufficiently valuable to outweigh the absence of an insider's views. I revised the plan for the book, for an outsider could not discuss such sensitive topics as ethnic discrimination and corruption. The first section of the book, a survey of Makerere's history from its inception to the year 2000, grew to half of the text; this section was followed by five case studies and three thematically organized chapters.² Co-publication in Uganda partly achieved my goal of local participation.

The Background

Makerere University, among the best known of the older sub-Saharan African universities, began in Kampala in 1922 as a small technical school to train African carpenters, construction workers, and mechanics. It was reconceived within a year or two on a broader base, with courses to train medical, engineering, and agricultural assistants; surveyors; and primary-school teachers. Its explicit purpose was to supply inexpensive support staff for a variety of institutions run by the colonial government and its missionary allies; at the same time, there was an implicit purpose: controlling education to forestall the dangers of independent thought (Sicherman 2001/02:93–94). Admitting talented products of missionary schools, Makerere served all of East Africa, with a few students coming from as far away as Malawi or Zambia. Over the next decade and a half, the level of instruction rose steadily, so that by the late 1930s, a report commissioned by the Colonial Office envisioned a further transformation from the status it had by then achieved, that of a British-style public (secondary) school, to the next stage of education, becoming a university college.

World War II delayed further development. Then, in 1950, Makerere was refounded as a university-level institution whose degrees were granted by the University of London. It was one of the 'Asquith colleges', so named after a report issued in 1945 by a commission headed by Lord Cyril Asquith. Charged with making recommendations for the development of higher education in the colonies, the Asquith commission proposed that colonial colleges, a few of which, like Makerere, existed in some form already, be developed in a 'Special Relationship' with the University of London. This arrangement, presented as a means of guaranteeing world-class quality, ensured continued British influence once the colonies ceased to exist as such. Asquith colleges came into being in Sudan, the Gold Coast, Nigeria (at Ibadan), Rhodesia and Nyasaland, and the West Indies (in Jamaica). New colleges in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi were briefly part of the scheme as well.

Once in the Special Relationship, Makerere began a dazzlingly fast expansion while continuing until the early 1960s to serve the entire region. Upon the achievement of independence in East Africa, Makerere was reconfigured yet again (in 1963) as one of three colleges constituting the University of East Africa, joining its young sister colleges in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi in a loose federation that ended in 1970. At the time of its rebirth as an autonomous national university in 1970, Makerere was at the height of its international fame. The political horrors that ensued afflicted Makerere along with the rest of Uganda. Institutional reconstruction, of the very idea of the university, as well as of the physical fabric, began in the late 1980s and resulted in a Makerere very different from the earlier version.

The First Myth and Its Dissolution

Two variant myths have accompanied Makerere during its evolution. The first, arising soon after its founding, held that Makerere was an egalitarian paradise where a precious small group of students learned universal knowledge and values while honing their intellectual skills to serve their societies. This conception lasted well into the 1960s and even into the terrible years of tyranny, when it had powerful preservative effects. The second myth, which developed in the 1990s along with recovery from the bad times, features a pragmatism often couched in commercial terms (students are ‘clients’ of an increasingly corporate university). By incorporating the first myth, the successor version claims greater inclusiveness and, therefore, greater egalitarianism. But the second myth is more a matter of administration cheerleading than something felt by a fractious staff and a dissatisfied student body.

In the cruelly selective colonial examination system, only a few Africans reached the top of the educational pinnacle. In the late colonial period, Makerereans were, to quote the title of a novel by a Kenyan Makerere graduate, ‘the future leaders’ (Ruheni 1978). In another novel by a Makerere graduate set in the 1950s, a narrator named Duncan Ngusa declares that staff and students together constituted ‘a community of people of all ages who had gathered together to extend the frontiers of knowledge which knows no boundary’ (Mwambungu 1975:119). But the author destroys this fantasy of classless harmony by making Duncan supply the formal declaration that all students had to sign: ‘I promise to seek the truth and study diligently; to obey the principal and all to whom obedience is due, and to keep the principles of the College.’³ “Duncan,” says his interlocutor, “your Education was really colonial” (Mwambungu 1975:136). In the words of a leading Tanzanian historian, colonial education was designed to create a ‘backward intellectual robot’ subservient to neo-colonial interests long after the formal end of colonial power (Swai 1980:48).

Timothy Wangusa, one of the first African members of Makerere’s Department of Literature, conveys Makerere’s mythical inaccessibility in the title of his novel, *Upon This Mountain*. At school in the 1940s, Wangusa’s young hero dreams: ‘Oh, he would read all the books and finish them at Makerere.’ (1989:23). Merely getting to the actual mountain, Makerere Hill, might require days or weeks of difficult travel; stories were told of aspiring students who walked a thousand miles to Makerere. They found a multiethnic society in which everyone, literally, at least, sang in harmony. Erasto Mang’anya, a Tanganyikan who studied at Makerere in 1935–37, describes a moment during his final day there (1984:1-2). Taking the required morning shower, he started singing ‘Onward Christian Soldiers, Marching On to War’ Soon he was joined by another Tanganyikan (singing tenor), a

Kenyan (singing alto), and a Ugandan (voice unspecified). Their 'beautiful and melodious' singing was interrupted by the Principal, Douglas G. Tomblings, who had taken a violent dislike to Mang'anya because he had led a group of Tanganyikan students in a protest over poor 'food, uniforms, and transport'. Angry at what he deemed their 'horrible noise', Tomblings threatened to submit a 'special report' on Mang'anya to the Director of Education in Tanganyika; then he walked away, 'whistling the tune "Rule Britannia"!'

One might suppose from this anecdote that Mang'anya would have been immune to the Makerere myth. On the contrary, he remembered fondly most of the staff, whether white or African. Makerere 'left an indelible mark on my life', and 'somewhere in one corner of my heart there is the name 'Makerere College' written in letters of gold' (2-3). On his return to Tanganyika, where Tomblings luckily had not made an impression, he was posted to teach in a far-away government school. To get to the nearest train station, he had to walk twenty-one kilometres from his family home. It was unthinkable that 'a man with Makerere education, should ... carry luggage', even a single light bag, because 'doing so would be lowering his prestige' (47). Some twenty years later, students in another Tanganyikan school gasped when a Makerere chaplain pronounced the single word 'Makerere', which they knew signified 'the place where education, power, wealth, emancipation could be achieved' (Foster 1961:69).

Once Makerere reached university status, the variety of the student body grew much greater. No longer restricted to black African men, it was a college for *all* Africans, no matter what their gender, ethnic origin, or skin colour. Previously there had been no Asians; now they began coming. And in 1945 a tiny trickle of women began seeping in; ten years later, the number of women had risen to thirty, or 5.5 percent of the student body (*Annual Report* for 1955:1). One of the common denominators amid this heterogeneity was the colonial language, a feature that persists to this day even though African languages are finally part of the curriculum. Proud to receive London degrees, proof that they were as good as British students, the students insisted that Makerere University College was *theirs* – *their* paradise on a hill. They were the wa-Makerere, a super-tribe.

This first Makerere myth was powerful. One of the early women graduates, Sarah Ntiro, reacted in dismay to the suggestion that this egalitarian, multi-ethnic, and multiracial paradise was a myth: 'It was real; it was real!' Colonial institutions were *not* perfect meritocracies, however: chiefs' sons (and occasionally daughters) received preferential access to the lower levels of the educational ladder, from which they moved more easily than other strivers to the middle levels and thence to the very top (Sicherman 2001/02:104-05). One supposed remedy to inequities of access, affirmative action, has been used in a variety of

ways at Makerere since about 1990. But instead of levelling the playing field, it does no more than smooth a bump or two. In an incisive analysis of impediments to equal access at Makerere, Joy C. Kwesiga and Josephine Ahikire remark that 'it stands at the very end of the tunnel only to tap those whose privileged position in society enables them to come out. It largely leaves the structure of the tunnel intact' (2006: 32). Nonetheless, the myth *was* partly based on reality: a poor peasant's bright son, someone like Ngugi wa Thiong'o, could reach the heights by studying hard. He got to Makerere.

Myth and fact are intertwined in the only significant twentieth-century book about Makerere as an institution, Margaret Macpherson's *They Built for the Future: A Chronicle of Makerere University College, 1922–1962* (1964).⁴ One reviewer disparaged Macpherson as a mythographer more than the chronicler she modestly claimed to be. In her cheerful pages he heard, to his annoyance, 'the jolly voices of the builders chanting ... the college's motto, *Pro future aedificamus*', which she took as her title (Stuart 1965). Although the criticism is sound, to condemn Macpherson and her book as no more than relics of patronizing colonialism is to ignore a complex situation. It is true that Macpherson propagated and was part of the myth, but she was more. The longest-serving staff member in her day, she stuck it out in the English (later Literature) Department through the Amin years and into the Obote II period.⁵ She won lasting gratitude from many members of the Makerere community. In September 1997, four Old Makerereans who were then their countries' ambassadors to the United Nations pooled their meagre resources to buy her a round-trip ticket to New York from her retirement home in England. Her host was David Rubadiri, who had taught literature at Makerere at various times after graduating. He and his colleagues invited some twenty-five Old Makerereans then living in the New York to a luncheon in her honour in a private dining room at the UN.⁶ When they were undergraduates, she had been a warm maternal presence; now she was a cherished icon of a long-gone and happily remembered period.

Macpherson exemplified Makerere's faith in itself. Something more than a myth was operating when Makerere stubbornly kept going during the torments of the Amin and Obote II regimes. The intellectual capital accumulated during the Glory Years of the 1950s–60s sustained it in the most difficult circumstances. The few outsiders still in contact during the years of tyranny marvelled at Makerere's persistence despite the deprivation of human and material resources, and despite considerable corrosion of the spirit. When that period ended, so did the old Makerere – so full of privilege, so lavishly supported by colonial and postcolonial largesse. The university that evolved in the 1990s – growing exponentially as the market demanded *more* enrolment, *more* courses – was radically different from the still-intimate Makerere of the Glory Years. And it

was no longer the only player in Ugandan higher education. A dozen or so new universities (three public, the rest private) emerged as rivals, albeit rivals of lower standing. Radical cuts in government funding signalled the definitive death of the first myth. With self-funded students an increasingly dominant proportion of the total enrolment at Makerere, its claim to be an egalitarian institution welcoming every brilliant student became unbelievable.

The first myth had begun weakening much earlier, thanks to the 'creeping spirit of disillusion' that overcame so many African intellectuals in the 1960s (Serumaga 1969:4). The phrase comes from Robert Serumaga's novel *Return to the Shadows*, one of a spate of African 'novels of disillusionment' that appeared in the 1960s. The hero, Joe, an idealistic economist like the author, flees one of the many coups to afflict his country, expecting refuge in his mother's rural home. (This scenario had not yet come to Uganda, the model for the fictional country.) Joe finds his mother, just raped, gazing expressionlessly at the dead bodies of young girls in her care; despite (or because of) the sound of gunfire, no neighbour has come to their aid. If 'the old spirit of "neighbourly brotherhood"' is dying even in the villages, Joe reflects, it is dead for good (1969:59). A mini-essay ensues giving an interpretation typical of the 1960s:

As for the educated, that spirit had died a long time ago and the severe individualism of Europe had taken over. However, the sense of insecurity among the *élite* and their eagerness for fast material progress had produced a brand of young men, who though *in a sense quite educated*, *lacked any intellectual commitment to causes* (56; emphasis mine).

It was intellectuals like Serumaga (born in 1939), with their 'intellectual commitment to causes', who, having helped defeat the colonial powers with intellectual weapons purloined from the colonial storehouse, claimed to be 'agents for social change and progress' In Serumaga's view the succeeding elite, although just a few years younger, were only 'in a sense quite educated' Lacking commitment to anything beyond their own welfare, they felt 'insecure' in their sudden achievement of power and considered 'any change to the *status quo* ... a threat' (56).

A year before Serumaga published his novel, Okello Oculi, a Makerere graduate en route to a career as a political scientist, pointed out that few in their generation of educated Africans were free of colonial-induced prejudices (Oculi 1968:26-28).⁷ Indeed, Oculi argued, Makerereans expected to 'join this new "tribe" of educated men and women' and lead lives just like those of the former colonial masters. In the same vein, a young Ugandan social scientist wrote scornfully that Africans struggling up the education pyramid were sustained by

the hope of getting a white-collar job, ... of joining the class of the educated, ...of sitting in beer shops drinking bottled beer in large glasses, ... of smoking State Express, ... of having a telephone ... [and] running water in the house, ... of going to night clubs regularly, ... of owning a T.V. and a car, and above all, ... of being regarded as educated and 'feared' and respected ... (Mushanga 1970:41)

Serumaga attacked the 'apparent futility' of such aspirations (56-57). He himself confronted both the Obote I and Amin governments through his plays. His plays, however, were too abstract and obscure even for many in the target audience of intellectuals, let alone the politicians at whom he aimed (Mbowa 1996:90-92). Thus Serumaga's career ironically illustrated the futility that he attacked in the novel. He was, perhaps, *too* educated.

'Educated' Africans

In his inaugural address as Makerere's first African Professor of Education, Asavia Wandira declared that higher education was producing 'a select community of selfish and greedy giants', giants who, if overburdened by the demands of their community, might well become dwarfs (1970:7). I distinguish three generations of people labelled 'educated' in colonial or formerly colonial countries. The first generation at Makerere, loosely conceived as those attending up to 1950, was educated through secondary level. Their immediate successors, arriving in the 1950s, reached university level, earning bachelor's degrees; some proceeded to postgraduate studies. Then, with a greater (if still very limited) diffusion of education, another generation appeared, ostensibly educated to or beyond the same level as the preceding generation but actually representing a greater range of accomplishment because standards had begun loosening. The first two generations, which coexisted briefly at Makerere, are represented by Simon Musoke and his daughter Theresa. Simon's studies at Makerere in 1929-30 gave him an 'old style ... education' that he vastly improved over several decades through his work as an official in the Buganda and central colonial governments; in the 1950s, his knowledge of Buganda history and culture was invaluable to the researchers (almost all European) at the East African Institute of Social Research (Sicherman 2005/06:307). Europeans thought he was 'old-style' because of two limitations; Makerere's as a quasi-public school and his own as someone without experience beyond Uganda Theresa, in contrast, studied and lived outside Uganda for considerable periods. A star of the Art School, she did further studies in London at the Royal College of Art; returned to teach at Makerere and execute numerous commissions; and took a Master's in Fine Art at the University of Pennsylvania (Prah 1989:5; LaDuke 1991:72-74). When

the bad times worsened, she lived in Nairobi and prospered as an artist. Having found sanctuary and success abroad, she returned to Kampala some years after peace was restored.

The second generation of African intellectuals came to maturity as colonialism was ending. They and their age mates all over Africa were not the 'selfish and greedy giants' of whom Wandira spoke. Rather, they were giants of the intellect who, having conquered the colonial ogre, would lead their countrymen to the promised land, meanwhile bringing riches to their families and clans. Events such as the 1966 military coup that ousted Nkrumah and Amin's 1971 coup overthrowing Obote proved the promised land to be a mirage. In Uganda, the erstwhile giants, along with the third generation, now faced another choice: flee from the current tyranny to save their lives, or challenge it and very possibly lose their lives. Many fled.

Writing a History of an 'African University'

A history of an African university seems impossible without a definition of 'African university', but a satisfying definition is hard to find. The conventional development model sees an African university as one run by Africans, centrally (but not exclusively) devoted to increasing knowledge of all aspects of Africa, and graduating high-level personnel to staff local institutions. That vague description suits the University of East Africa (UEA), yet – as an American participant remarked at a 1962 UEA planning conference – “the African University”, like the African Personality, is a fiction’.⁸ At Makerere, the elusive meaning of 'African' was an implicit theme of many articles during the 1960s in the lively student newspaper, the *Makererean*. After all, aside from the students, nearly everything at Makerere was a British import – even the specimens for dissection in Biology classes. In 1962 the *Makererean* appealed (fruitlessly) for 'a revision of the present examination system', which otherwise 'would cling to the new African university like the musty black crepe of an outworn Victorian fashion' (19 Feb. 1962: 2). The examination system underwent minor changes in the late 1960s, but these amounted to little more than exchanging one foreigner for another; a British for an American model. Undergraduates understood the situation. Until Africans 'face[d] the wide scope of inefficiency, tribalism and corruption that have come hand in hand' with supposed Africanization (Kunguru 1969), and unless new African staff were 'mentally decolonised', the mere shibboleth of Africanization would not satisfy students in a 'revolutionary mood and . . . impatient with those replicas of colonialism' (Okello 1966). In a preview of convulsions during the late 1980s and early 1990s, an undergraduate predicted that an African administration would be 'obstructionist and suspicious

of student views' and would lead the student body to 'develop sinister attitudes' (Okello 1966).

To become African in a meaningful way, a university would have to transform itself from 'a pale reflection of alien universities' into 'a living concrete symbol of all that is African'.⁹ The difficulty of such a transformation is suggested by the thirty-two photographs chosen by Fountain Publishers for the Ugandan edition of my book (2006). Until the mid-1960s, the only Africans to be seen are students. Then, much faster than the teaching staff, the administration became African, as shown in photographs of Makerere's first two African leaders: Yusufu Lule (Principal, 1964-70) and Frank Kalimuzo (Vice-Chancellor, 1970-72). But what kind of African was Lule? While Principal of Makerere, he showed his colonial background when, visiting the women's hall of residence on a 'swelteringly hot guest evening', he was horrified by the students' breach of decorum: in the interest of comfort, they had doffed their academic gowns (Sicherman 2005:40). Academic gowns, Oxbridge in origin,¹⁰ form a leitmotif in the photographs of Makerere's inauguration as a national university in 1970. Obote, now Makerere's Chancellor, ordered Parliament to pass a new University Act that made the university subservient to him as President, and he replaced Lule with Kalimuzo, his trusted aide; in short, he fulfilled the prediction of the student commentators quoted in the previous paragraph. The four African presidents who graced the inauguration – Obote, Kenneth Kaunda, Jomo Kenyatta, and Julius Nyerere (himself a Makerere graduate) – wore academic robes combining European academic styles with African motifs. Their photograph gives inadvertently apt proof that Makerere had a considerable distance to go before becoming 'a living concrete symbol of all that is African'

A snapshot taken a year later speaks volumes. It is captioned 'Idi Amin, Chancellor of Makerere & President of Uganda, with Vice Chancellor Frank Kalimuzo at the first graduation ceremony of the university in 1971'. Over their European suits the two men wear similar hybridized robes, decorated with the crested crane (Uganda's national symbol), and topped by European-style berets; each holds the text of his speech. Their body language is even more important than the symbolism of their attire. Amin looks off to his left, indifferent both to his ghost-written speech and to Kalimuzo. Resting his forearms on his knees, Vice-Chancellor Kalimuzo studies his self-written speech. A year later, he was dead, one of Amin's early victims. When the knock on the door came, he walked to the waiting car in full knowledge that he would be killed.

Questions for a Historical Inquiry

Kalimuzo's abduction on 8 October 1972 took place as the exodus of European expatriates was gathering speed. Because there were too few Ugandans ready to

take over at Makerere, Amin ordered the administration to recruit staff from countries with large Muslim populations; some came from the Indian subcontinent and others from Egypt and a few other countries. Exchanging white expatriates for other foreigners did not make Makerere any more 'African'. The governing question of my book was therefore not whether Makerere *was* an African university but whether it was in the process of *becoming* one. I gave every interviewee a brief statement headed 'Becoming an African University: Makerere 1922–2000'. One person responded irritably: 'Why *should* it be an African university?' Everyone else nodded in recognition, confirming my choice of title. A university like Makerere that retains Western academic structures and Western criteria for assessment of students and staff is simply a university in Africa. In the Glory Years, when the measure of excellence for a university in Africa was how closely it resembled a British university, Makerere proudly bore the soubriquet 'the Oxford of Africa'. Many graduates of Oxford and Cambridge taught then at Makerere; people like Kenneth Ingham, who came in 1950 with a just-earned Oxford DPhil to resuscitate the Department of History. The halls of residence built in the 1950s were designed to conform 'as closely as local conditions will allow with the pattern of an Oxford or Cambridge college quadrangle' (*Annual Report* for 1955:3). Makerere's attempt at kindly intimacy, which echoed the architecture, dissipated as the student body rose from about 237 in 1950 to 2,729 in 1970, and the staff from about 50 in 1950 to 350 in 1970.¹¹ Today, with most of the 40,000 students living off campus, the intimacy is a distant memory – if that.

Besides the overarching dilemma of defining 'African', other questions presented themselves early in the research. I had wondered how Makerere's development compared to that of other Asquith colleges. A.M.H. Kirk-Greene, the Oxford historian of the British Empire, discouraged me from asking the question, for he thought that comparative analysis required, first of all, comprehensive histories of other Asquith colleges in Africa. Comparison with non-Asquith colleges in the former British Empire or with colleges that grew up in other colonial African empires would present even greater challenges. While there have been many studies of certain periods or aspects of quite a few African universities (Sicherman 2005:xx-xxi), the only attempt at a long-term view is Daniel J. Paracka's study of Fourah Bay in Sierra Leone, which arose in the latter nineteenth century in a special relationship with the University of Durham (2003). The awful particularities of Fourah Bay's story hint at the difficulties of comparisons.

Another broad question concerned foreign influence: how could one determine when something foreign had become indigenized? And is foreign influence *ipso facto* a bad thing, especially in a country bent on 'modernization'? After

all, to take one example, Makerere's affirmative action policies for women and people with disabilities have largely succeeded in removing gender and disability as causes of unequal access (Kwesiga and Ahikire 2006:22-26, 28). It is doubtful that progress in women's education would have been made without a powerful push by donors at the 1987 conference planning Makerere's rebirth (Sicherman 2005: 227). Makerere has been redefining 'foreign' by looking elsewhere in Africa for models, rather than further afield. When the staff have struck for higher salaries in recent years, as they did in November 2006, they have claimed to be underpaid not by comparison with universities in the West but by comparison with other universities in the region.¹²

Another question to be asked by future scholars concerns historical continuity. To what extent do the two seemingly different Makerere universities – that operating in 1950–70 and that operating in the era dominated by Yoweri Museveni – share the same ethos? Or are both of the myths dead, continuity broken, as suggested by the history of strikes, deaths on campus, and closures during the Museveni era? A partial answer may come from a Presidential Visitation Committee for Public Universities. With six scant months allotted for its work and a mandate requiring a survey of all four public universities, it submitted its report to President Museveni after the supposed deadline, but this hardly mattered as Museveni did not release it to the public.¹³ According to a newspaper report, the visitation committee alleged that 'unless the institutions' capacity for research is improved, they risk appearing no different from secondary schools' (Muhumuza 2007b). Meanwhile, another report condemned Makerere for financial mismanagement and alleged that the administration was 'bedevilled by cliques and may possibly be involved in fraud'; the report attracted considerable public attention and a pained defence by the administration (Muhumuza 2007a; Gumisiriza 2007). Mahmood Mamdani's just-published book documents Makerere's failure at quality control in damning detail.

Materials for the Historian: The paradoxes of access

Why have Africans not written comprehensive studies of their own universities? It is easy to call for locally written histories, but then reality intrudes. Anyone based in Africa who is writing on topics extending back into the colonial period faces problems in accessing primary and secondary materials. Some materials are in foreign countries, and those in the researcher's own country may be badly catalogued or housed in poorly maintained archives – or lost. Although the details vary from university to university, studying any of the former Asquith colleges presents challenges similar to those confronting Makerere's historian. Secondary sources, including those published in Africa, are more easily available in the West. A Ugandan friend once asked me to photocopy a short colonial-era

book published in Uganda and written in a Ugandan language by a foreign priest; the only copy of which my friend was aware was in the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, part of the New York Public Library. Makerere has never placed sufficient value on cultivating the University Library, a mistake in priorities that has been greatly enlarged during periods of disorder when no books or journals were acquired.¹⁴ Conditions of preservation in the present overcrowded library are poor, and materials for institutional history are scattered in various repositories around campus.

In the case of Makerere, the richest collections of earlier primary written materials (outside of department files) exist not in Uganda but in Britain and the United States. For published material, including rare periodicals, the best sources are in New York and London: the Schomburg Center and, even better, the library of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS, part of London University). For unpublished and locally published materials, five foreign archives are exceptionally rich. These are, in Britain, the Public Record Office (PRO) in London and the Oxford Development Records Project (ODRP) at Rhodes House in Oxford; and, in the United States, the archives of the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the Carnegie Corporation (all in or near New York City). Most of the material in the PRO and the ODRP is unavailable anywhere else. The PRO contains the files of the Inter-University Council, which not only fostered development in the Asquith colleges in the 1950s–60s but maintained contact in the first few years of the Amin regime. Other records also found their way to the PRO, such as papers documenting the early years of the Makerere Art School. The Oxford Development Records Project, conducted in the early 1980s, gathered memories and papers of those who helped shape the universities that came into being in Africa in the late colonial period. Makerere is the best documented of these institutions: ‘of all the Commonwealth Universities, there is none that has inspired the same degree of affection among those who have worked in her as has Makerere’¹⁵ That devotion helps explain how Makerere kept going in the most awful circumstances, sustained by the African staff and administrators who inherited the task from the British founders. Even as staff fled or were murdered and every essential supply vanished, Makerere increased its enrolment and somehow taught the increasing numbers.

Perhaps I am wrong that foreign repositories are richer than what remains at Makerere. Perhaps Makerere-originated documents lie forgotten and mouldering in some dusty cabinet there. Once, permitted against regulations to roam around the supposedly locked Africana collection in the University Library, I rummaged in the back of a filing cabinet and found a worm-eaten handwritten notebook kept by missionary educators in the early twentieth century. Donated by a British researcher, the notebook had not been catalogued; it might as well

not have existed. I suspected that many of the documents generated at Makerere that I read in the American archives mentioned above had vanished from Makerere, but I had no incentive to check because the archives were within easy commuting distance. Some losses, though, are final: in colonial days and again in the Amin and Obote II eras, Makerere documents were used to wrap produce in local markets.

When unique documents that originated in Africa exist in archives in the West, one would suppose that scholarly ethics would demand that copies be sent to the country of origin. In a bitter irony, however, the copyright law (Title 17, U.S. code) that governs American archives permits researchers to use materials for 'private study, scholarship, or research' but forbids them to share photocopies with anyone else. Bound by this rule, I could not include any such sources in the personal archive that I donated to Makerere.¹⁶ I did once persuade a British librarian to abrogate a similar rule in the United Kingdom. Rhodes House permitted me to make a copy of an unpublished paper by Hugh Dinwiddy, who had lost the original. Dinwiddy, in turn, authorized me to give a copy to Makerere.

Africa-based scholars face other problems. Any researcher needs time to do the work and sufficient funds to travel to research repositories. Younger researchers are typically burdened by extremely heavy work. As I was revising this article, a friend at Makerere who was not yet burdened because he had just returned from doctoral studies abroad emailed news of a mutual friend: 'She said she is buried in students' scripts, thanks to Makerere's huge numbers'. Of course, research funding is in pitifully short supply in Africa. Even though I taught most of my career at the City University of New York (CUNY), a public institution with (in American terms) relatively poor research support, CUNY Research Foundation grants for travel to Africa and Britain sufficed as long as I abjured anything smacking even faintly of luxury. At home, at minimal cost to myself, I could reach archives holding primary documents. The enterprising Interlibrary Loan librarian at my college fulfilled nearly all my requests, no matter how obscure, usually at no cost to me. In London, I stayed with a friend and went by public transport to the PRO, SOAS, and other libraries within the University of London. In Oxford and in East Africa I stayed in cheap lodging. Few Africa-based scholars outside of hot fields like AIDS research have sufficient financial support to carry out work such as mine.

One would suppose that being on the ground would give local researchers great advantages. Researchers in Uganda have better access to recent unpublished or locally published materials, in particular reports and statistics compiled by academic officials. Mahmood Mamdani's recent indictment of Makerere (2007) is immune to reasoned refutation precisely because he used his status as an insider-outsider to obtain the hundreds of documents (mostly minutes of meet-

ings) on which he bases his analysis. His many advantages included his years on the staff at Makerere, from which he derived his 'old boys' network'; his experience in 1988 as a founding member of the private Centre for Basic Research, through which he came to know the major local social scientists, and which housed the project that resulted in this book; and his two decades of activities in the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), with a particular focus on higher education (xiv-xvii). All this made it possible for him to mobilize a study group consisting of exceptionally able Makerere staff members and to present their draft findings at a conference attended by sixty to seventy high-level members of the Makerere staff and administration, whose comments enabled him to refine the draft further (2007:xvi). Finally and crucially, he had access to research funding: his employment at Columbia University in New York gave him a well-paid sabbatical leave, and the project was supported by Swedish government agencies and a Unesco agency. Thus he was able to hire a research assistant, a recent Makerere graduate who was familiar with Makerere in its current incarnation. Most researchers, whether in the 'developed' or developing world, do not enjoy such access or support, and we must be grateful that Mamdani made such excellent use of his advantages. Even so, Mamdani was again and again forced to acknowledge the sheer muddle of so-called 'information' available at Makerere, which manages its own data very poorly (Nakao-Ssewanyana 1999).

Another seeming advantage of local researchers, better access to interviewees with otherwise undocumented knowledge, is not always as great as one might suppose, for two reasons. First of all, wars, coups, and other incentives to departure have driven some potential interview subjects to live abroad. In the case of four recent books concerned with Makerere, the authors of three – myself, Mamdani, and Byaruhanga (2006) – were based abroad, although both Mamdani and Byaruhanga had insider-outsider status that gave them a lift in Uganda. The fourth book was by two local researchers who significantly muted the force of their analysis when preparing their internal report for publication (Musisi and Muwanga 2000, 2003); thus they reduced the power of the knowledge they derived from local authorities and unpublished material. The long drip of the brain drain, along with better travel funding, can give scholars based abroad easier access to interview subjects living abroad. I conducted valuable interviews with Ugandans and non-Ugandan ex-Makerereans in Nairobi, Cape Town, London and nine other British cities, New York City and State, California, and Iowa City (Sicherman 2005:343-45).

Furthermore, the lingering effects of colonial racism may give white foreigners easier entree than local researchers. A Ugandan friend commented, with no

resentment but maybe a touch of envy, that as a white person I got more done in a week than she could accomplish in a month; not because I worked harder but because many of the people I wanted to talk to readily dropped whatever they were doing and made themselves available (of course, I hoped that this generosity was courtesy rather than racial deference). I rarely made appointments in advance, as I would have done at home, because there were few posted office hours and phones worked erratically; rather, I practiced the ambush method. Anyone who said, "Come in" when I knocked on a door became a resource. Learning that the Dean of the Medical School was out of the country, I knocked on the door of the Director of the Institute of Public Health He said, "Come in," talked in a focused and useful way, loaned pertinent documents, arranged for me to talk with several other members of his staff, and invited me to return with any questions. As a consequence, the Institute of Public Health is featured in my chapter on the Medical School. Foreign-based researchers who have limited time to spend in Africa must find ways to compensate for their disadvantages. Many, like me, must be grateful for the kindness of strangers.¹⁷

Outsider vs. Insider Scholars

An insider whose vision has been enlarged by experience abroad and has returned home brings that experience to an analysis of topics regarding higher education in Africa. Two Ugandan scholars, Joy C. Kwesiga and Josephine Ahikire, illustrate this point in a recent article in this journal (Kwesiga and Ahikire 2006).¹⁸ Until she left to become Vice-Chancellor of a new university in Western Uganda, Kwesiga had worked at Makerere her entire career and had exceptional knowledge of its working and its evolution. Ahikire came up through the ranks of the Department of Women and Gender Studies, itself one of Makerere's most significant curricular innovations, and had rich scholarly experience in the social sciences. Their joint article about Makerere, based on detailed statistical analysis and enriched by personal experience as staff members, demonstrates that writing from the inside in no way hampers researchers from challenging received opinion despite overwhelming pressure to conform; pressure that is often applied with particular force on women.

As mentioned earlier, as an outsider I had to shun anything connected with finances, corruption, or ethnic favouritism. Mamdani confronted finances head-on and implicitly addressed corruption, but never mentioned ethnic favouritism. His immersion during his sabbatical year in the current scene saved him from what I now see was my own occasional credulity.¹⁹ In my case, my friends, hinting at corruption and unreliability, told me that I must avoid the Academic Registrar, Mukwanason Hyuha. Indeed, not long after this warning, Hyuha was fired for corruption and abuse of office (Sicherman 2005:132). My erstwhile

collaborator, having moved to the United States for doctoral studies, had achieved distance, literal and figurative. While in Uganda, he had argued that his wide reading made him a citizen of the world; in the United States, he concluded: 'We are all mentally incarcerated there'.

However exaggerated his statement, it reflects a journey of self-discovery made by many other Makerereans. Ngugi wa Thiong'o learned his socialist ideas not as a Makerere undergraduate but as a postgraduate student at Leeds University in the mid-1960s. Peter Nazareth, Ngugi's contemporary at both Makerere and Leeds, gave Leeds ironic credit for exposing the colonial lie (Nazareth 1990). He recalled Ngugi at Leeds giving a revisionary reinterpretation of David Cook, a member of the Makerere English Department who had warmly supported undergraduate creative writers. 'Cook is destroying creative writing at Makerere', Ngugi had told Nazareth, 'making people run before they can walk, building them up, and they can't live up to this'. Cook, who spent the rest of his career teaching in Africa, attempted to return to Makerere thirty years after young Ngugi's critique, on condition that his salary be 'topped off', in the manner of expatriate salaries in the old days. Telling me this story in 1995, the Acting Chair of the department remarked wryly that he would like *his* salary to be topped off. Cook was out of luck; his Makerere was long since gone. With students now termed 'consumers' or 'clients' and Makerere an 'enterprise',²⁰ the paradise on the hill no longer existed.

The Second Myth

Another myth, incorporating a reduced version of its predecessor, emerged after Museveni took power in 1986. For Makerere to survive in the new politico-economic climate, its leaders 'had to break the mould' and abandon 'convoluted pride in the old exclusive image of the ivory tower' (Tusubire 2005:87). Avoiding the sticky question of quality,²¹ the current myth depicts Makerere as a phoenix risen from the ashes and superior to the previous model. In a variant of the old egalitarian fantasy, the myth now supposes that Makerere, instead of serving the fortunate few, welcomes the best of the masses. Driven by an official policy of Universal Primary (and now Secondary) Education, the 'massification' of higher education is presented as proof that Makerere 'has become inclusive rather than exclusive' (Tusubire 2005:88; Fehnel 2003). In fact, though, it is those who can pay who are most included; at any rate, as long as they can scratch together the funds. Inability to continue paying is the likely cause of the alarmingly high drop-out rates among private (self-sponsored) students (Kwesiga and Ahikire 2006:40-41). Ironically, since government funding goes to the highest achievers in examinations, and since those from well-off families go to the best schools, a considerable number of those on scholarships can afford to pay the fees.

This phoenix myth, complete with the fantasy of inclusion, pervades commentary from both inside and outside Makerere. An insider celebrates it as ‘a shining example of institutional transformation’ (Tusubire 2005:88). Outside celebrants, naturally enough, tend to be donors. Gordon Conway, president of a faithful foreign supporter, the Rockefeller Foundation, pronounced: ‘Your Ivory Tower has been smashed. It’s gone’.²² Conway said that Makerere (‘a star’) was ‘the best performing university’ that Rockefeller had ever funded. In a similar vein, an article in the American journal *Chronicle of Higher Education* begins: ‘In the bleak landscape of African higher education, a handful of institutions have been able to renew themselves’ (Kigotho and Bollag 2002). This ‘handful’ consists of three universities – Makerere, the University of Dar es Salaam, and Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique – that have been singled out for assistance by the Partnership for Higher Education in Africa, a consortium of four American foundations. Although the *Chronicle* authors report that social inequity increased as a result of the reforms undertaken by the three universities, their tone echoes the headline: ‘A Tale of Rebirth: Makerere U. Survived a Dictator’s Reign and Is Thriving Again’. Agreeing that ‘the transformations at Makerere University were swift, impressive, and fundamental’, a Makerere scholar asked pointedly what the purpose was (Musisi 2003:611). A noted authority on African higher education questioned whether ‘the Makerere Story’ was a ‘Miracle or [a] Cautionary Tale’ and concluded that Makerere’s reforms constitute ‘a decisive move toward the privatization of a public institution’ (Sawyer 2004:45, 50). That privatization, Mamdani argues, has turned into commercialization that features money-making vocational courses better taught at community colleges (2007:237).

Whereas the first myth, of a ‘land of milk and honey’, grew out of love, the motivation for recent defences is different. One can often detect an element of special pleading, born of a wish to make Makerere seem better than the writer or speaker actually believes it is (one never knows which donor or government official might be listening). As mentioned above, two Ugandan researchers who minced no words in writing an internal assessment of Makerere’s current condition toned down their adverse comments when revising the report for publication (Musisi and Muwanga 2000, 2003). The expatriate author of a report highly favourable to Makerere confessed to me that he had omitted his private reservations, apparently out of affection born during his long-ago student days at Makerere (the heyday of the first myth) and his more recent work for international donors (the period of the second myth).

Challenges for Local Researchers

Makerere's current policy of requiring all full-timers to earn PhDs has exposed many staff members to universities in the West and elsewhere in Africa.²³ When they return, however, the academic conditions are so different that their exposure begins to fade in importance. Making good use of Makerere's and Uganda's intellectual capital depends on political capital, which regulates government funding. This becomes obvious on the many occasions when Museveni himself is called upon to intervene in disputes.²⁴ One example of intellectual capital is A.B.K. Kasozi, a historian who is the current head of the National Commission on Higher Education. With patient determination, he and his staff are creating a set of regulations intended to banish the anarchic lack of locally relevant standards. In a locally published book, Kasozi proposed reforms that would obliterate the remaining vestiges of colonialism, prioritize the sciences, and produce a university that is at once African and global; one whose graduates 'can operate everywhere in the world' as well as at home (Kasozi 2003:151). The Uganda government has endorsed the idea of prioritizing the sciences but has failed to provide the support for science teaching in the schools that is essential for improvement at higher levels. The science-based faculties have been losers in the struggle for financial support, but winners in that, unlike many colleagues in other faculties, the scientists have not lost their academic integrity (Mamdani 2007, 86-96). Persuading top scientists to remain at Makerere is difficult given the lack of institutional support. Salary differentials have been proposed, to expectable roars of protests from non-scientists, many of whom have benefited from commercialization.

While aspiring to be a global university, Makerere remains largely in a situation of intellectual dependency described by the Sri Lankan scholar A. Suresh Canagarajah in his *Geopolitics of Academic Writing*. Canagarajah analyzes academic cultures in developing and Western countries, which may differ radically not only in material support and facilities but in the epistemological assumptions that underlie research. One might suppose that because Canagarajah's main examples come from the University of Jaffna in a time of civil war, they would be inapplicable to East Africa in a time of relative peace. Yet there are likenesses. A veneer of Western epistemology covers East African research because local systems of knowledge did not (or so it seems) survive the colonial imposition in the way that Tamil systems survived in northern Sri Lanka. Scholars in Uganda are now exploring some of the knowledge systems of their cultures (for example, Beyaraza 2000), but for the time being East Africans must make do with a system of thought originating elsewhere. Imposed ideas and practices can be like an imperfectly glued veneer vulnerable to splintering at pressure points. Francis Nnaggenda's magnificent wood sculpture 'War Victim', on display in

Makerere's Main Library, offers another apt metaphor (Sicherman 2005:189). Carved from a mukebu tree on campus that had been destroyed by one of Nnaggenda's colleagues, the sculpture transcends destruction to convey resilience and beauty. If Nnaggenda had not returned from exile – and if he had not been aesthetically and intellectually enriched by time abroad – the sculpture would not exist. In yet another irony, a small plaque states that the creation of 'War Victim' was supported by the Rockefeller Foundation.

Integration into the global university depends on the absorption of some key assumptions of, let's be frank, Western academic practice. A Kenyan enrolled in a PhD programme at a Kenyan university, on whose dissertation committee I serve, inadvertently made this point clear to me. When he applied for a six-month research fellowship at Cambridge University, he asked me to vet his application essay. I had been impressed with his sophisticated and well informed dissertation proposal, which would have passed muster anywhere. I was therefore surprised that his essay ignored the clear instructions on the website of the Cambridge African Studies Centre. When I pointed out the implications of the instructions, he immediately wrote an appropriate essay; he got the grant. Even though he was highly accomplished within a British-style environment, certain aspects of the academic culture taken for granted at Cambridge were foreign to him. On a larger scale, African universities are hobbled by the unthinking endorsement of Western academic customs. Makerere continues to impose criteria for promotion that were formulated in the West, even though the circumstances of academics in Uganda are so different as to make their relevance highly questionable.

These criteria are all the more inappropriate because of another expectation given new life by AIDS. It is the long-standing assumption that academics in Africa will assist in a wide variety of off-campus activities, from serving on boards of outside institutions to helping their own families. Returning recently to Uganda with a brand-new PhD from Leeds, a lecturer in the Literature Department found herself besieged by requests that she felt unable to refuse despite the exceptionally heavy teaching load weighing on all younger staff. The pressure of family responsibilities appears in a hastily scribbled note from Rose Mbowa, one of Makerere's most esteemed and creative staff members. Apologizing for missing an appointment with me, she wrote: 'I came back last night from the funeral of my niece. I now with my brother carry the burden of the "extended family"' so could not tear myself away.... This is how all my programmes get disorganised by family problems' Three years later, I met the niece's two children, AIDS orphans whom Rose was raising. The next year Rose herself was dead of a brain aneurysm. Was it brought on by overwork? No one could say, but Makerere – and all of Uganda – had lost yet another inspirational

figure. An African university must take account of the realities of the lives of all those who constitute its community.

What Can African Academics Do?

Makerere's problems have been evident for some time: enrolments soaring beyond either previous conceptions or present capacity, grossly inadequate infrastructure to support these huge numbers, salaries calculated to drive staff away, an apparent absence of thought-through planning, and other very serious difficulties. Universities in other African countries face similar challenges, made worse by the emigration of leading intellectuals.²⁵ A Nigerian computer scientist working in the United States points out that, given the brain drain, the 'African education budget is nothing but a supplement to the American education budget' (Philip Emeagwali, qtd. Madamombe 2006:12). The United States and other non-African countries reap most of the benefits of education conducted in Africa because so many African academics carry on their careers outside Africa. African governments bear some responsibility for universities; so do the donors who partly control universities through their funding; and so do African intellectuals at home and abroad.

What are East African intellectuals doing to address the problems facing Makerere and other universities in the region, and where are they doing it? Those who do not emigrate, the majority, respond in a wide variety of ways, including withdrawal. Commenting that 'Makerere has gone to the dogs', a friend wrote recently: 'I survive on cynicism: I get what I can at Makerere and maximise my opportunities for private research funding'. Kwesiga and Ahikire, both of whom participated in Mamdani's study group, engage directly with Makerere. In their view, Musinguzi and Muwanga's published book about Makerere represents 'the dominant discourse on Makerere reforms', a discourse of celebration 'masking... the contradictions and deepening the inequities engendered by the reforms' (2007: 34). Kwesiga and Ahikire rip off the mask. The implication of scholars like Mamdani, Kwesiga, Ahikire, and Kasozi is that 'reform' has led to the piecemeal dismantling of the old Makerere without creating a coherent alternative; Makerere is now a 'fractured institution' (Kwesiga and Ahikire 2006:35). They prescribe revolution, not reform. In 2003, Kwesiga was 'among the contenders in the hot race for the coveted job of Makerere University Vice-Chancellor' (Businge and Mugisa 2003). But Makerere did not want anyone who might upset the apple cart. She had been at Makerere since 1964 as student, administrator, and professor. No one was more of an insider: an insider who dared to hang out Makerere's dirty laundry for all to see.

Virtually all African intellectuals living abroad assist in private ways, but fewer make major commitments on an institutional level aside from helping

creating linkages. Ali Mazrui – the most famous Kenyan intellectual of the founding generation, who taught at Makerere until forced out by Amin – teaches at Binghamton University in New York State; from time to time, he makes headlines in Kenya as Chancellor of Jomo Kenyatta University of Science and Technology, an honorary position that gives him a bully pulpit. His younger Ugandan counterpart, Mahmood Mamdani, although based in New York, has maintained a closer relationship with his former employer in East Africa, most recently manifested in his new book dissecting Makerere during its ‘phoenix’ period. The depth of Mamdani’s continuing connection with Makerere distinguishes him from most other African scholars who teach abroad. That connection, and the intellectual vigour with which he capitalizes on it, account for the force of his critique.

Mamdani publicly presented the thesis of his book in Kampala in August 2006; publication followed in December. Not surprisingly, his attack on the myth of the happy phoenix provoked a defensive firestorm. The myth had been questioned before, of course: in an internal report (Musisi and Muwanga 2000), in Kasozi’s imaginative and hard-hitting analysis (2003), in my book, and, many times, in the Ugandan press. But because of Mamdani’s position as the best known Ugandan academic in the world, his critique felt like a stingray-like blow to Makerere’s heart. Nakanyike Musisi, who had co-authored the aforementioned internal report, was assigned the task of rebutting Mamdani at the launch of the book in Kampala. In her remarks, she described the author as ‘an émigré-insider who uses the luxury of distance, comfort of a less hustled intellectual environment at Columbia University as well as sharp surgical tools and focused lens to lay open the higher education belly with intent to remove a sprouting cancer’ (Natabaalo 2006).²⁶ Once an ‘émigré-insider’ herself, Musisi chose to return to Uganda from her position teaching history at the University of Toronto. Having thrown her lot in with Makerere, she was in the strange position of defending her university from charges with which she agreed. Her integrity made this an impossibility.

Mamdani accuses Makerere of ‘commercialisation’, an abandonment of planning based on national need and academic competence in favour of short-term responses to a crudely defined ‘market’ (2007:108-09). Augustus Nuwagaba, the Chairperson of the Makerere University Academic Staff Association (MUASA), argued that the ultimate cause of the chaos is ‘poor remuneration’ (Nuwagaba 2006). As noted above, not long after Mamdani’s attack became public, the staff struck for higher salaries, and Museveni ordered Makerere closed. The fundamental problem identified by Mamdani, however, is not low salaries: it is abandonment of all academic principle in a frenzied expansion heedless of the availability of competent staff and the constraints of space. Each academic

unit created by the powerfully centrifugal tendencies of decentralization now seeks one goal: income to perpetuate itself. Because new teaching programs have sprouted regardless of the availability of staff, 'informal and extra-legal' recruitment of people from outside the university has brought in many teachers who do not meet Makerere's own criteria (Mamdani 2007:112). The sole formal qualification of many external staff in the Faculty of Arts, for example, was a Lower Second bachelor's degree, even though a much-trumpeted Makerere report requires an Upper Second Honours degree to reach the lowliest rung on the academic ladder (Mamdani 2007:116-17; Sicherman 2005:140-41).

Makerere is like a carriage careening along a road made a mere blur because of excessive speed. Instead of tightening their hold on the reins, Makerere's leaders have loosened them almost beyond control. Interviewed in July 2007, Vice-Chancellor Livingstone Luboobi observed that the sober title of Mamdani's book was an incitement to read – as if a catchy title were somehow illegitimate – and said vaguely that 'many things [pointed out by Mamdani] will soon be corrected' He offered no details of the corrections aside from a 10 percent reduction in the intake of private students and several new buildings (Wanambwa 2007). A 10 percent reduction is too small, and the new buildings are too few. 'Makerere is still prime in the region', Luboobi declared, but an unsupported allegation is no match for a recent spate of bad news that caused donors to threaten to withdraw support (Ahimbisibwe 2007; Kibuuka 2007).²⁷

The Vice-Chancellor and University Council now face the formidable task of taking up Mamdani's challenges (1) to adhere to the university's own regulations governing staff qualifications, (2) to prune its offerings according to a reasoned plan, and (3) to restore badly eroded academic standards.²⁸ If the powers that be support radical surgery, Makerere may recover its health. It is not (yet) sick unto death. Good work continues to be done, particularly in the science-based faculties, which still stand 'for a research-based academic tradition' recognized as 'central to the pursuit of excellence' (Mamdani 2007:208). The Faculty of Technology, for example, contributes practical inventions that are immediately disseminated to ordinary Ugandans. Researchers in the Faculty of Technology have come up with two inventions that may have considerable impact on the lives of ordinary Ugandans. In one district of Uganda, 700 families benefit from rainwater collected in tanks constructed from blocks of stabilized soil (Juma and Bell 2006); this invention can be applied elsewhere. Schoolgirls improve their attendance because they can afford a new type of sanitary pad manufactured cheaply of local materials (Musinguzi 2006); given the close correlation between female education and development, this low-tech product could have far-reaching social benefits. Such concrete success stories, however, cannot disguise the urgent need for revolution at Makerere. The burden of improvement rests on local

intellectuals with vision, who thus far have lacked the political support without which nothing gets done in Uganda. One can hope that a greater understanding of Makerere's history since 1950 will enable the present leadership to stop – finally – repeating the errors of the past and entrenching the mistaken choices of the present.

Notes

1. Byaruhanga observes that in Uganda 'higher education has not been fully recognized as a field of study in its own right, and has, therefore, not been considered a crucial target for government research funding' (2005:xviii).
2. I chose five representative departments, faculties, or schools for the case studies: the Department of Women and Gender Studies; the Faculty of Agriculture; and the Medical, Art, and Library schools. The three thematic chapters discuss relationships with governments, staff development, and outreach beyond the campus.
3. This declaration stemmed from a notable 'food strike' in 1952, on which see Sicherman (2005:30-34); on the declaration (known as a 'matriculation promise') given in Mwambungu's novel, see Sicherman 2005:38n38).
4. Goldthorpe (1965) is a study of Makerere students, not of the college as such.
5. Apolo Milton Obote's first government ran from independence in 1962 to Amin's coup on 25 January 1971. Amin ruled until April 1979. Obote's second regime ran from May 1980 to July 1985; because the brief governments before and after Obote II were inconsequential, 'Obote II' represents the period from Amin's overthrow to the victory in January 1986 of the National Resistance Army led by Yoweri Museveni.
6. The sole non-Makererean in attendance, I had the good fortune to meet several interview subjects on this occasion.
7. Oculi, who spent 1964-65 as an exchange student at Stanford University, graduated from Makerere in 1967; when he wrote the article from which I quote, he was a Tutorial Fellow in Political Science at Makerere, the first step toward a doctorate (www-sul.stanford.edu/afroca/okellooculi.html).
8. I quote here from pp. 4-5 of Robert W. July's detailed summary of the conference in folder 11, box 2, series 475, RG 1.2, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, Rockefeller Archive Center, North Tarrytown, New York. July was a Rockefeller official.
9. Secretary-General of the East African Common Services Organization, introducing the bill establishing the University of East Africa (qtd. Court 1975:196).
10. On academic gowns and other Oxbridge imports, see Sicherman (2005:39-43).
11. Precise figures are sometimes hard to come by and, when given, are occasionally discrepant. I deduce 'about 50' from Macpherson's statement that staffing 'had risen' to 59 in 1952 (1964:77); the figure of 350 appears in the *Annual*

- Report* for 1970/71, p. 2, which is also the source of the enrolment figure for 1970. The enrolment figure for 1950 is from Macpherson (1964:78).
12. See, for example, Nyanzi 2005. In contrast, when the public universities in Kenya went on strike on 23 October 2006, they demanded the equivalent of salaries in Australia, Canada, and the UK (Siringi 2006). In response to the most recent strike at Makerere, the government ordered it shut, initiating the longest closure in its history. The staff 'laid down their tools' on 3 November, demanding that Museveni honour the pledge of a pay rise that he had made in April 2004. Ordering Makerere closed on 13 November 2006, the government rubbed salt in the wound the next day by denying staff access to all Makerere facilities, including the internet (Izama, Lirri, and Kibuuka 2006). On 7 December, government forces stifled a student demonstration in support of the strike. See the chronology in Lirri 2006. The staff capitulated on 20 December, their unity cleverly destroyed by government manipulation (Muhumuza and Kibuuka 2006), and Makerere reopened on 6 January 2007.
 13. See Muyita 2006, who reports that the Visitation Committee was appointed in March 2006, began work in July, and completed its inquiry at the end of October. It was supposed to deliver its report to Museveni in December 2006 but did not do so until May 2007 (Muhumuza 2007b).
 14. Mamdani does not address the failure to develop the library other than noting its replacement as a source of books by departmental book banks; about the library he says merely, and correctly, that it has become 'simply a reading space for a bulging populations' (2007:142-45). As such, it is grotesquely small. The book banks are at best a version of reserve collections in American libraries; at their worst, they are a useless jumble.
 15. Ian Maxwell, qtd. Dinwiddy (1980:17). Maxwell headed the Inter-University Council, which recruited most of the staff of the Asquith colleges. See Maxwell 1980.
 16. Aware of poor conditions and understaffing in the University Library, I could only hope that my donation would be catalogued and made available to future researchers.
 17. I received copies of essential recent documents through two people based in the United States: Frederick Byaruhanga, a Ugandan who was then writing a dissertation about Makerere for the University of California at Los Angeles; and David Szanton, who as co-author (with Sarah Manyika) of a Rockefeller-funded study of postgraduate studies in the social sciences in African university had collected a good many recent internal documents.
 18. Kwesiga, who served Makerere (among other roles) as Dean of Social Sciences and director of the Gender Mainstreaming Division, benefited from study in England and the United States. Her Master's and doctoral degrees, both from Makerere, concerned aspects of the university. In 2005 she became the Vice-Chancellor of Kabale University, a new institution in the area where she grew up ('Kwesiga, First Woman Vice-Chancellor.' *New Vision*, 15 Mar. 2005

- [online edition]). Ahikire, who like Kwesiga holds a Bachelor's degree from Makerere, took her Master's at the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague and her PhD at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg.
19. For example, I fell too readily for the proposed 'reform' that would have created a College of Humanities (Sicherman 2005:317), which Mamdani exposes as nothing more than a half-baked power play exhibiting the 'vocalisation of Education in the Humanities-based faculties' (2007:218). I might defend myself as less credulous than David Court, whose much quoted 1999 World Bank report Mamdani characterizes as an 'over-the-top celebration' of Makerere (2007:180).
 20. For example, Tsubire 2005 uses these terms repeatedly.
 21. '[E]rosion of the quality of education at all levels' is a widely accepted truism in Uganda today (Musisi 2003:613).
 22. Eremu 2004, reporting that Rockefeller gave Makerere \$7 million in 1998-2003.
 23. It is important to note that, as documented by Mamdani, fully qualified staff members constitute a minority of those teaching at Makerere.
 24. For one example of many, see Mutaizibwa 2006.
 25. See the issue of the *African Studies Review* (47.1, 2004) devoted to higher education in Africa that includes two long Rockefeller-sponsored reports (one by Akilagpa Sawyerr, the other by Joel Samoff and Bidemi Carrol) and commentaries on each of them (by, respectively, William Saint and David Court). See also Musisi 2003, 620-22; and Teferra and Altbach 2003, *passim*.
 26. Using a similar metaphor, Kasozi (2003:xiv) calls for a 'surgical intervention' to reassign resources to science-based faculties. But Museveni's call for greater production of scientists is negated by his government's failure to fund science teaching at the primary and secondary level.
 27. Ahimbisibwe (2007) reports that Makerere dropped in one year from 23rd to 54th in a ranking of the 100 best universities in Africa.
 28. Another 'cancer' is the epidemic of cheating and bribery at Makerere. Early in 2007, the Inspector General of Government (IGG) detailed 'multiple examination malpractices and bribery' uncovered in January-June 2006 (Kasasira 2007). Students hired mercenaries to write their examinations and dissertations, and they bribed administrators in the transcript department to sign off on graduation when students had not completed coursework. Some staff received 'more than two salaries, which is against public service standing orders'. These types of major cheating began in the 1970s-80s, when there was the excuse of hard times, which is inapplicable today.

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The Quality of Nigeria's Private Universities*

Olayiwola A. Erinoso**

With the assistance of Diji Aina, Stephen Okhomina,
and Segun Temilola***

Abstract

This study is about the quality of private universities in Nigeria. Three of them (Babcock, Bowen and Igbinedion), two mission-sponsored and one that is owned by an entrepreneur, were studied using six indicators of quality assurance that are outlined by GOS Ekhaguere for similar work in African universities. First, the data indicate that the institutions mount academic programmes in science, humanities and, most especially, in the social and management sciences. Second, there is gender parity among students and disparity among staff. Third, the mission institutions are better positioned to give quality education. However, these private universities need to strengthen their staff and improve access to information and communication technologies. There is also room for improving the physical facilities. Overall, the study concludes that while it may be worthwhile to encourage private investors in higher education, this should not be at the expense of public universities because the latter's academic programmes are much more diversified than those which are offered by the former.

Résumé

Cette étude aborde la question de la qualité des universités privées au Nigeria. Trois d'entre elles (Babcock, Bowen et Igbinedion) dont deux parrainées par les missions et une appartenant à un entrepreneur, ont fait l'objet de cette étude à

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** Department of Sociology, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, Nigeria.

*** Department of Political Science, Babcock University, Ilishan, Ogun State, Nigeria.
Department of Political Science, Igbinedion University, Okada, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria.
Department of Sociology, Bowen University, Iwo, Osun State, Nigeria.

l'aide de six indicateurs d'assurance qualité dont les grandes lignes ont été exposées par GOS Ekhaguere pour un travail similaire dans les universités africaines. D'abord, les données indiquent que les institutions montent des programmes académiques en sciences, lettres et sciences humaines et plus particulièrement dans les sciences sociales et de gestion. Deuxièmement, on remarque la parité hommes-femmes au niveau des étudiants contrairement au niveau du personnel enseignant. Troisièmement, les institutions de mission sont mieux placées pour assurer un enseignement de qualité. Cependant, ces universités privées doivent renforcer leur personnel et améliorer l'accès aux technologies de l'information et de la communication. Il y a lieu également d'améliorer les installations matérielles. Grosso modo, l'étude conclut que bien qu'il soit louable d'encourager les investisseurs privés dans le secteur de l'enseignement supérieur, cela ne devrait se faire au détriment des universités publiques parce que les programmes académiques de ces dernières sont beaucoup plus diversifiés que ceux qui sont offerts par les premières.

Introduction

The mid-1980s witnessed a major transformation in Africa that has had an overarching effect on all sectors including education. The adoption of the structural adjustment programme (SAP) led to the devaluation of national currencies which in turn undermined the capacity of Africa's institutions to achieve their set goals. The infrastructures of schools and hospitals literally collapsed following the adoption of SAP. Furthermore, the conditions of service for public sector personnel in the countries that adopted SAP plummeted while the standard of their institutions declined rapidly. This situation exacerbated the brain drain with skilled workers leaving Africa in droves for high income countries in search of better conditions of service and professional fulfilment. A key element of SAP was the withdrawal of state support from social sector programmes like health and education. African Governments embraced the notion that education should/could be regarded as a private rather than a public good (Sawyerr 2002) in the context in which most of their citizens are living in abject poverty according to successive UNDP annual reports.

One of the ways by which African universities have responded to the crises is by devising various strategies for generating the much needed funds. This is pursued through rapid expansion in student enrolment without corresponding and perceptible increase in the number of quality staff and improvement/expansion of physical facilities. Universities began to mount various attractive market-driven professional degree or diploma courses in order to attract the students that can pay. Students are charged high fees for these programmes in order to generate the funds that are required to increase the salaries of academic staff and improve/expand infrastructures. The other step that the authorities of higher

institutions took was the privatisation of education. Various schemes have been introduced which made it possible for institutions to admit students into fee-paying and subsidized programmes. Those who could pay but could not be admitted under normal circumstances are offered admission under the fee-paying regime, thereby making it possible for the institutions to generate huge sums of money. Institutions that have implemented such a scheme include Makerere University, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Lagos State University, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, University of Lagos etc.

Another way in which African countries have responded to the demand for higher education in the face of declining resources is to open up the sub-sector to private investors. As will be examined later on, various governments began to issue licenses to private organisations/individuals that have the resources to establish private universities. New private universities are springing up all over Africa to provide education to the yearning masses at fees that are much higher than those of public universities.

The landscape of the higher education sub-sector has changed dramatically within the past decade because of the shift toward a neo-liberal macroeconomic framework. African universities that were originally conceived as developmental institutions to produce high level manpower with government funding have embraced a neo-liberal philosophy in order to survive and also meet the demand for education. They have begun to enrol more students than they can handle effectively. Consequently, the lecturers have begun to spend more hours teaching and therefore they have hardly any time for research. Campuses have become overcrowded amidst limited facilities. The various institutions have witnessed a precipitous decline in the commitment of their staff to knowledge production and quality teaching that is informed by research. A general malaise towards scholarship has crept into them. Above all, the pursuit of material rewards has replaced the presumably hallowed mission of Africa's developmental universities.

Overview of Studies on Higher Education in Africa

There has been a perceptible interest in higher education in Africa as reflected in the body of literature on its scope, place, mission, quality, and performance over the past two decades. The reason for this could be linked to the widely shared concern among scholars, bilateral, and multilateral organisations on the declining standard of higher education all over Africa with the exception of South Africa.¹ As a result, nearly all aspects of university education such as funding, access, equity, gender mainstreaming, infrastructural decay, the impact of information and communication technologies (ICT), to name some, have been addressed.

Available literature contains studies on the interplay between the paradigm shift on financing of higher education in developing countries, most especially in Africa (Obasi 2002). The reports on funding explore the benefits of cost sharing and/or how to generate the much needed resources for public universities in Africa (Johnstone 2004; Ishengoma 2004; Bloom et al. 2005).

Various other reports/studies address the impact of information and communication technologies (Adam 2003); the challenges in capacity building (Sawyer 2004); academic freedom (Zezeza 2003); attributes of university students including tracers studies on how well they are doing in the job market (Mayanja et al. 2001). There are also farsighted proposals on how to restore the lost glory of African universities in the literature.

Further attempts have been made to examine the merits and demerits of cross-border higher education (Knight 2004) including the consequences of the brain drain in Africa (Dovlo 2004). Similarly, other scholars have undertaken a critical appraisal of the World Bank's prescription for higher education in Africa (Hoebink et al. 2004; Jibril 2004) or the possible consequences of the '*massification*' of university education on knowledge acquisition and production (Bature 2004). There is also a genuine concern for the quality of higher education as attempts are made to expand enrolment, prompting Ekhaguere (2001) to outline a set of quality assurance indicators with the support of the Association of African Universities (AAU).

One other major area of interest is the impact and response of higher institutions to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. There is evidence most institutions have responded slowly to the epidemic and it is still doubtful if the situation has changed because their authorities bury their 'heads in the sand like ostriches' (Kelly 2001). He further argued that:

The most striking feature of the university response to HIV/AIDS is what can only be described as the awe-inspiring silence that surrounds the disease at institutional, academic, and personal levels. Notwithstanding some qualifications, for all practical purposes both individuals and institutions conduct themselves as if the disease did not exist.

The ominous silence on such a virulent disease prompted a number of scholars and agencies to study the response of higher institutions in Africa to the epidemic (Chetty 2006; Kelly 2001; Stremlau & Nkosi 2001; Otaala 2006; Ayim 2002; Africa-America Institute 2003; Association of African Universities 2006). A few others organized meetings to underscore the need to tackle the epidemic with all the zeal that is required in these institutions (Ayim 2002; Association of Commonwealth Universities 2001; Otaala 2006; Kelly 2001; World Bank 2001).

Although the emergence and proliferation of private universities is also of critical interest to scholars, nevertheless studies on them are still relatively few and far between. A study by the Association of African Universities (2000) provides an overview of their number, mission statement, and proprietors. Another describes the scope, programme, size, staffing situation, governance structure, financial environment, and regulations of such institutions in six African countries (Thaver 2004). Also, Useem (1999a:1999b) examined the emergence of Muslim institutions of higher learning in East Africa and the gap that they fill while Ruth (2005) and Oanda (2005) explore gender related issues. By and large, a cursory survey of available literature suggests that much more could still be learned if in-depth studies of Africa's private universities were to be conducted.

Rationale and the Objective of the Study

This study was therefore conceived against the backdrop of the dearth of studies on private universities in Africa, using Nigeria as a reference point. Private universities are novel institutions because most of Africa's universities are publicly owned. They have multiplied considerably over the past decades by the tables below (Tables 1 and 2) and it is vital to appraise their quality and potential contributions to development.

Table 1: Private Higher Educational Institutions and Universities in Africa

Country	Private Institutions
Benin	27
Cameroon	17
Ghana	28 (9 university colleges)
Nigeria	26++
Kenya	14
Senegal	48
Tanzania	0
Uganda	12
Zimbabwe	4
South Africa	99

Notes: ++ The Government has since approved 32 universities.

Source: Policy Forum on Private Higher education, 2004; (HEP, ADEA and AAU).

Table 2: Total Enrolment in Private Universities for Selected African Countries (2002)

Countries	Total Enrolment	As % of All Universities
South Africa	30, 000	5% of total
Zimbabwe	1,797	20%
Uganda	13,126	16%
Ghana	5,383	10%
Tanzania	28,910	Less than 10%
Nigeria	19,740*	More than 3%

Source: Policy forum on private higher education, 2004 (HEP, ADEA and AAU).

Notes: * Current enrolment must be above the figures in this table in view of the fact that more private universities have been licensed.

Various concerned stakeholders are now inclined to raise a number of issues on the emergence/proliferation of private universities in Africa. Of significance is the worry in some quarters about the capacity of Africa's private universities to meet the needs of society much more effectively than public universities. Besides and much more important in this context is the feeling about the capacity of these institutions to provide quality education or education that is at par with the standard in public universities before the latter slipped into disrepute and decay.

Quality assurance now occupies the centre-stage in higher education because of the proliferation of higher institutions of learning and programmes that are established in response to markets.² Institutions are either being rated by external agencies or are inclined to initiate self-appraisal of their programmes in order to show their worth, attract students, and meet the expectations of their funders or the public at large. Rating becomes the selling point for higher institutions in the marketplace.

The annual rating of universities within nation-states and across international boundaries and within nations is therefore the vogue today. The institutions that are highly rated attract large numbers of applicants who are also in turn likely to secure lucrative jobs much more easily and quickly than those at the lowly rated ones. Consequently, there is now a shift from the notion that quality could be presumed once higher institutions are granted the license to operate by the responsible national authorities. Various countries now establish a continuous evaluation regime by self-appraisal, peer review, and/or some other independent external agencies.

This study provided a golden opportunity to ascertain the quality of Nigeria's private universities. Even though the National Universities Commission (NUC) has established a Quality Assurance Unit, it is vital for the agency to appreciate the fact that the accreditation of an institution is not coterminous with quality assurance. Quality incorporates more indicators such as governance of an institution, gender mainstreaming, scope access to information and communication technologies etc. than just those that are taken into consideration during accreditation.

The aim of the study would almost be met if quality is recognised as an important issue by NUC as well as given the necessary boost in the research agenda. Both the public and private institutions should be subjected to critical appraisal on a continuous basis in order to restore the confidence of the consumers, their funders and the international community in the degrees that are awarded by Nigeria's universities.

Historical Antecedents on University Education in Nigeria

Nigerians traversed all parts of the globe in search of university education prior to the establishment of the first full-fledged university in the country in 1948. However, the first batch of graduates of Nigerian origin obtained their degrees in the middle of the eighteenth century.

The first tertiary institution in the country was Yaba Higher College which was established in 1934 (Clark 2004). But the dropout rate was high while Nigerian nationalists also criticised the college for what they believed was its sub-standard level of education. Yaba College soon slipped into disrepute, forcing the colonial authorities to constitute a Commission that examined the feasibility of university education for the country.³

The Government subsequently established the first university in Nigeria (viz., University College, Ibadan) in 1948 shortly after the recommendation of the Commission was adopted. It began as a college of the University of London. The examiners came from London University and the Senate of the University granted the degrees of the early batches of students who received their education at Ibadan College.

Later on, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife (viz., then known as the University of Ife), Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and the University of Nigeria, Nsukka were established by the Governments of Western, Northern and Eastern respectively. The Federal Government added the University of Lagos to its list of institutions in 1962. By and large, the quality of these pioneer institutions was not only beyond reproach (Ade-Ajayi 2001) but also at par with that of universities in the United Kingdom.

University education in Nigeria has grown well beyond imagination. There are now 88 (viz., 28 federal universities, 28 state-owned universities, and 32 private universities in Nigeria today.⁴

One of the principal reasons for the rapid expansion of university education in Nigeria is the demand for it in the population. Nigerians believe that university education will open opportunities to them, hence their insatiable demand for it. Not less than a million Nigerians annually seek admission into all the degree-awarding institutions in the country. Yet, all the institutions in the country can barely accommodate 2 percent to 3 percent of the qualified candidates (National Universities Commission 2004).

The rapid expansion of universities is at a price to the nation. Universities are facing serious crises in all respects. The physical facilities of all public universities that offer most of the places to students are grossly inadequate and/or in a complete state of disrepair. Their libraries are bereft of leading international journals and new books while the quality and quantity of teachers have declined. Most of them also lack information and communication technologies. Finally, most of the public institutions have become a haven for cultism, sexual harassment, and other unsavoury practices.

One of the reasons for the deplorable state of Nigeria's public universities is uncontrolled expansion. Banjo (2004), a former Vice-Chancellor of Nigeria's premier University, the University of Ibadan, observed that:

Ibadan is the first degree-awarding institution in the countryThen followed the big explosions: seven new universities in the seventies and eighties. Clearly, other motivations than excellence were behind this proliferation. Not unexpectedly, the new universities found it hard to keep up with the older ones, and what is worse, they have had the effect of dragging these older ones down with them into the quagmire of under-funding and a welter of attendant problems, not least of which is compromised quality.

Prolonged military rule affected all departments of life in Nigeria including universities (Alubo 1999; Adesina et al. 2004). Successive military regimes eroded the autonomy of these institutions and most of the vice-chancellors gradually became dignified agents of the government of the day. Military rule also affected management style as well as subverted the due process that is customary of universities (Ekong 2002). The self-concept of academics and the capacity of their institutions to play their accustomed role in society also diminished.

The final assault on universities came through the implementation of SAP in the 1980s. SAP, as was observed earlier on, has had a deleterious impact on the funding of these institutions (Obikoya 2002) resulting in low salaries and poor

facilities and low morale. The Nigerian authorities searched for a solution elsewhere rather than mitigate the effects of SAP. The Government began to look towards the private sector providers in higher education. They opened the gate for them to establish universities.

The proliferation of such institutions is throwing up unanticipated challenges. Some observers are inclined to argue that the approval of private universities is without regard to their capacity to provide quality education. Others are of the view that they can only fill certain gaps and would therefore not be in a position to offer wide ranging courses as in public universities. Be that as it may, the emergence of private universities offers an opportunity to appraise their potential benefits and the possible risks.

Studies on Higher/University Education in Nigeria

Past studies on Nigeria's universities are relatively few and far between since the establishment of the first university in the country nearly fifty-nine years ago. Early reports on university education consist of commentaries in national newspapers and the reports of commissions and panels that were set up to provide justification for higher education in the colonies. Among the early reports was that of the Sir Eric Ashby Commission (1960) which recommended the establishment of University College, Ibadan.

The establishment of the first university in the country (i.e., University College, Ibadan), stimulated studies on higher education and reports trickled into the literature by the 1960s. Among the baseline work on higher education was the monograph by Yesufu (1973) which was the first systematic attempt to appraise the role universities in Africa including Nigeria. Van den Berghe et al. (1969) conducted a study on the social characteristics of Nigerian university students. The lead author on the attributes of students also published a monograph on campus politics in a Nigerian university in the late sixties. An excellent critique of the educated elite by Ayandele (1974) was to follow.

But the past two decades have witnessed a plethora of reports and studies that describe the factors that account for the collapse of universities. Among such reports are those by the: Social Science Academy of Nigeria (SSAN) (2001; 2003), and the Ford Foundation (2001) including eight projects that were sponsored by a consortium of four US Foundations.⁵

Work by Adalemo (2001) concluded that institutional inadequacies have affected the performance of Nigeria's universities. His assertions are borne out of the fact the facilities are in a complete state of disrepair. Quite a number of the observations by this writer are corroborated in the case studies of four Nigerian universities by SSAN. The reports found decay of physical facilities; underde-

veloped information and communication technologies; and outdated academic programmes in these institutions.

Scholars like Ade-Ajayi (2001) traced the problem of Nigeria's universities to the adoption of SAP at the instance of the Bretton Wood Institutions. According to him, the World Bank plays a palpable role in education in Africa as amply demonstrated by the influence of its vision on the thinking of African policy makers. Ade-Ajayi intoned (2001):

The confusion about Universal Basic Education persist because, although we usually deny it, our policies are, to a large extent, teleguided by World Bank/IMF who use the debt burden to extract compliance even non policies about which there are serious doubts among our policy makers. Since the 1970s, the World Bank has been pushing the heretical idea that the return to the state compared with the return to the individual beneficiary is highest in elementary education and lowest in higher education and, therefore, the state must, in the name of structural adjustment, increase the allocation of resources to elementary education at the expense of higher education.

Available reports also contain suggestions on how to generate funds for university education. Perhaps, the most articulate paper on financing options is by Ukeje (2002) that outlines the following as an important source of funds for running universities: education tax fund, fees, loans to students, transfer of municipal services to government, private sector contributions, and funds from alumni and rationalisation of programmes including scholarships for brilliant and/or poor students. While agreeing, Obikoya (2002) outlined the effects of under-funding on university education.

The response of the authorities of the institutions to the funding crises has been to *massify* university education through the introduction of wide-ranging off-campus and/or extramural diploma and degree programmes. Large numbers of students now pay high fees for various market-driven degree programmes like banking, marketing, accounting, personnel management etc. However, the sudden explosion in the intake of students has had serious consequences.

But universities have also contributed to the crises in a number of ways. In the first place, the universities responded to the dearth of funds by devising various ingenious means of mobilising funds. First, they have launched numerous mouth watering degree programmes in order to attract students who are in turn charged outrageous fees. Programmes in labour and industrial relations, banking and finance, counselling, personnel, including managerial psychology, secretarial studies that are ostensibly dubbed professional courses have been launched in various universities. Lecturers are forced to mark hundreds or thou-

sands of scripts and no wonder quite a number simply do not just bother to mark them but merely supply marks to the departmental examination officers. There are stories that 'money changes hand' for marks. Results are not released on time and students that need transcripts for admission or for some other purposes face a hard time obtaining them (Erinosho 2004).

Ethics also loom large in work in higher education in Nigeria. There are reports of cultism, sexual harassment, and other nefarious acts that undermine the quality of education. Self-sponsored publications and books have overtaken the practice of peer review of scholarly publications while the leadership at the departmental and university levels is notorious for corruption and unethical behaviour patterns. The scope of the problems facing universities is amply documented in a study on university governance as well as in the proceedings of the Academy's 13th General Assembly (Social Science Academy of Nigeria 2001:2003).

The decline in the quality of higher education can be explained by poor funding. The assumption is that the introduction of fees will expand the resource base of these institutions and free funds for improving their facilities and the salaries of teachers. The government position is as follows:

One of the major problems of university education delivery in Nigeria is inadequate funding. Through the studies conducted by the education sector analysis working groups, the cost of training an undergraduate student in any discipline in Nigeria has been calculated. Following from this is how this cost can be shared among the stakeholders. This is to relieve Government of the burden of having to fund university education alone. Through cost sharing, more funds will be available to the universities to improve facilities.

Significance of the Study

This study is about the quality of Nigeria's private universities. Although the Government is determined to licence as many of them as presumably meet the set conditions, it is doubtful whether private universities have the capacity to fill the gap that is being created by the poor state of public universities. While competition between the private and public is desirable, it seems that there is a need to ascertain whether private universities are in a position to meet the accustomed standard let alone solve all the crises in higher education in the country.

The Christian Missionaries have been active in the education sector from colonial times. It is therefore not surprising that they have been in the forefront of higher education in Nigeria since the authorities decided to encourage the private sector to establish such institutions. Most of them to-date are owned by Missions. Overall, the private universities in Nigeria could be grouped into those that are founded by: (a) Orthodox or Pentecostal Christian organisations; (b)

Muslim bodies; (c) entrepreneurs who work solo or in partnership; and (d) Nigerians who are in partnership with foreigners/bodies. The key private sector providers of higher education in the country today are the Seventh Day Adventists, the Pentecostals like the Church of the Living Faith (otherwise known as Winners Chapel), the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Church of God Mission, Baptist, Anglican, and Muslim organizations. The Catholics and Methodists are about to establish their institutions.

One of the reasons why missionaries are responding is because of the rot in the public universities (i.e., they are mired in various unethical and anti-social practices). Another is due to incessant strike actions by academic and non-academic staff, resulting in students spending too many years gaining their degrees/diplomas. Consequently, the private sector especially the missions are determined to restore the lost glory of higher education in the country. They are concerned about bringing morality back into higher education as amply shown in the mission statements of two of the three that were studied.

Setting of the Study

This study was conducted in three of Nigeria's private universities, namely, Babcock University, Ilishan, Ogun State; Bowen University, Iwo, Osun State; and Igbinedion University, Okada, Benin City, Edo State. They were selected based on certain distinctive attributes that would provide the basis for comparative analysis.

The first of them, Babcock University, was established by the Seventh Day Adventists Church of Nigeria in 1999 with the aim of:

Building people for leadership through quality Christian education; transforming lives; and impacting society for positive change through the prevailing influence of its graduates in service to humanity.

It is a residential institution which runs academic programmes leading to the award of first degrees in the humanities, social and management sciences, nursing, public health, education, and agriculture which is mandatory for all private universities in the country. The students' population is expected to rise to 5,000 from its current level of 3,551 in the next five years. Finally, the institution plans to establish degree programmes in law, security services, and medicine within the foreseeable future.

Secondly, the Nigerian Baptist Convention established Bowen University as a residential institution in 2001 in order to provide:

High quality, morally sound and socially-relevant education in the most cost-effective manner to all students irrespective of gender, race, colour, ethnicity or religion.

The students' population of the university which is currently 3,447 is expected to rise to 5,200 over the next five years. Bowen runs degree programmes in the sciences, social and management sciences and agriculture as required by the Nigerian authorities. It plans to introduce degree programmes in nursing, physiology, optometry, and medicine in five years' time.

Finally, the third institution, Igbinedion University, was founded by Gabriel Igbinedion (viz., a Bini Chief and entrepreneur) in 1999 with the aim of:

Pursuing excellence in teaching, research, and scholarship through the provision of world class facilities and opportunities for education, training, and employment to all those who are able to benefit without discrimination.

This residential institution runs a fairly ambitious academic programme that leads to the award of degrees in engineering (viz., mechanical, civil, electrical, petroleum, chemical), law, medicine, the health sciences, and agriculture. It also runs degree programmes in accounting, banking and finance, international relations, business administration, marketing, public relations, advertising and in the humanities (i.e., English, Theatre Arts). The students' population is expected to rise from 5,100 to 10,000 in the next five years.

Two of the universities are owned by corporate organisations (i.e., Christian missions) and a businessman is the proprietor of the third. However, Babcock stands out among the three institutions because the parent international wing of the Seventh Day Adventists exercises supervisory role over its programmes. The parent body has about 103 universities worldwide and Babcock is regularly reviewed by the parent body.

Data Collection and Analysis

Three instruments were designed to gather data. The first (i.e., the institutional questionnaire) was designed to gather the following from each of the institutions: mission statement; year of establishment; history of institution; number of staff and students; gender of staff and students; academic qualifications of teaching staff; current and projected students' population; range of available facilities (i.e., both physical and information and communication technologies) including availability of, and access to, these facilities. Each institution was also requested to indicate the format for assessing its students – whether it incorporates term papers and continuous assessment and whether it organises tutorials for them.

The second questionnaire targeted the academic staff members of each of the institutions. They were requested to provide the following: academic qualifications; working experience, areas of specialisation, the thrust of their research work, and whether they have access to ICT in their offices. It also provided the

opportunity to corroborate the information that is provided by each of the institutions concerning their pedagogy (viz., tutorials etc) and mode of assessment of their students (viz., terms papers, continuous assessment etc.). The instruments also sought to gather information on whether their institution runs a staff development programme.

Finally, the third questionnaire was administered to students using purposive sampling technique. It was designed to gather information on their social background attributes (age, gender, religion, etc. including parental background income, education etc.), reasons for enrolling in the institution, attitudes to academic programmes, aspiration, aspects of pedagogy at the institution etc.

The data from the academic staff and students were procured in order to corroborate the information that was furnished by the authorities of the institutions on aspects of quality. Much more important is the fact that the data were gathered for the purposes of ascertaining quality which was the principal goal of the study. Ekhuagere (2001) hitherto outlined thirteen indicators of quality for universities in Africa that consist of: (i) vision, mission and goals; (ii) teaching and learning process; (iii) assessment; (iv) research; (v) organizational and management structures; (vi) planning budgeting and human resources; (vii) campus and community relations; (viii) norms, values and ethnics; (ix) gender equity; (x) facilities; (xi) new technologies; (xii) internationalisation; and (xiii) response to changing demands. However, six of them that are listed as follows are used in this study to ascertain quality: mission statement, assessment, teaching facilities, gender equity, information and communication technologies, physical facilities were used to judge quality in this study.

The data were coded, entered into the computer, and processed, using a variety of statistical techniques. The qualitative data were extracted and reviewed before inclusion in this paper.

Outcomes

All the authorities of the universities completed the institutional questionnaire. Secondly, one hundred and seventy academic staff (22 from Igbinedion; 75 from Bowen and 79 from Babcock universities respectively) completed the questionnaire. Finally, 1,846 students were broken down as follows: 855 – Igbinedion; 714 – Bowen; and 277 – Babcock completed the questionnaire. The staff and students were self-administered.

The three institutions proclaim a laudable mission and vision which underscore their commitment to moral and quality education with the exception of Igbinedion which is not as concerned with morality as the mission-owned institutions.

Table 3 below indicates the focus of the degree programmes in these institutions. Emphasis is on social and management sciences, followed by the sciences. The majority of their students are therefore enrolled in market-driven courses such as banking and finance, accounting, business administration. However, Igbinedion runs more diversified degree programmes than Babcock and Bowen. By and large, the courses that are offered in private institutions are not as diversified as those in the public in the country.

Table 3: Current Enrolment by Disciplines in Selected Universities

Disciplines	Babcock University		Bowen University		Igbinedion University		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Agriculture	59	1.6714	4.11	11	0.22	210	1.74	
Education & Information Mgt	97	2.73	Nil	Nil	Nil		97	0.80
Engineering	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	502	9.84	502	4.15
Health Sciences	297	8.37	Nil	Nil	133	2.60	430	3.55
Humanities	293	8.25	Nil	Nil	9	0.18	302	2.50
Law	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	735	14.41	735	6.08
Medicine	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	2026	39.73	2,026	16.75
Science	993	27.96	955	27.70	629	12.33	2,577	21.30
Social & Management Sciences	1812	51.032	2350	68.18	1055	20.69	5,217	43.12
Total	3,551	100.1	3,447	100	5,100	100	1,2098	100

Table 4 as well as Figure 2 indicate that there are slightly more female than male students but more male than female academic staff in all the institutions. Furthermore, the ratio of academic staff to students is better at Babcock and Bowen than at Igbinedion (viz., 1:17 at Babcock; 1:22 at Bowen and 1:32 at Igbinedion).

The mission institutions have more PhD degree holders among their academic staffs than Igbinedion and presumably a higher calibre of teachers than the latter (i.e. Igbinedion) if this is adjudged by the number of doctorate vis-à-vis those with Masters' degree holders. There is 1 doctorate degree holder to 46 students at Babcock; 1: 49 at Bowen and 1 to 134 at Igbinedion. The table also indicates that Babcock has 1 academic staff to 17 students while there is 1 to 22 at Bowen and 1 to 33 at Igbinedion.

Figure 1: Scope of Academic Programmes Offered in Nigeria’s Private Universities

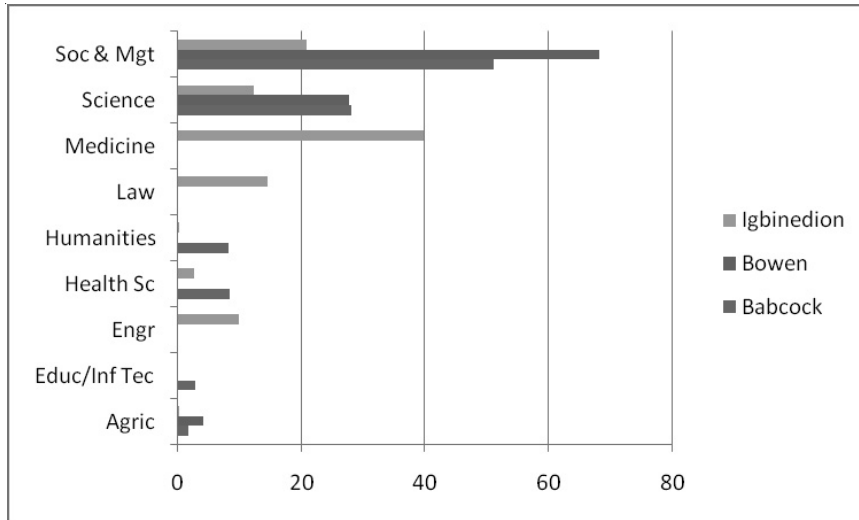


Figure 2: Gender of Staff and Students

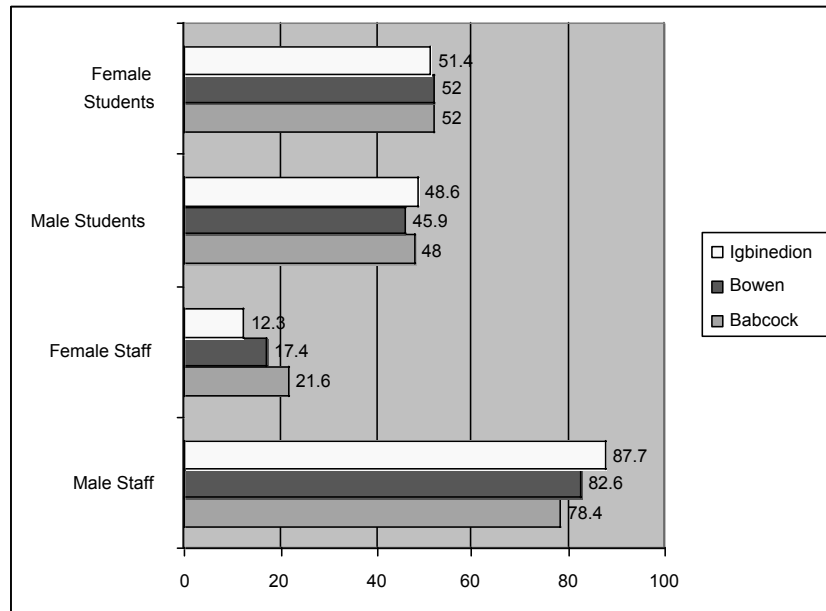


Table 4: Gender of Staff and Students in the Selected Universities

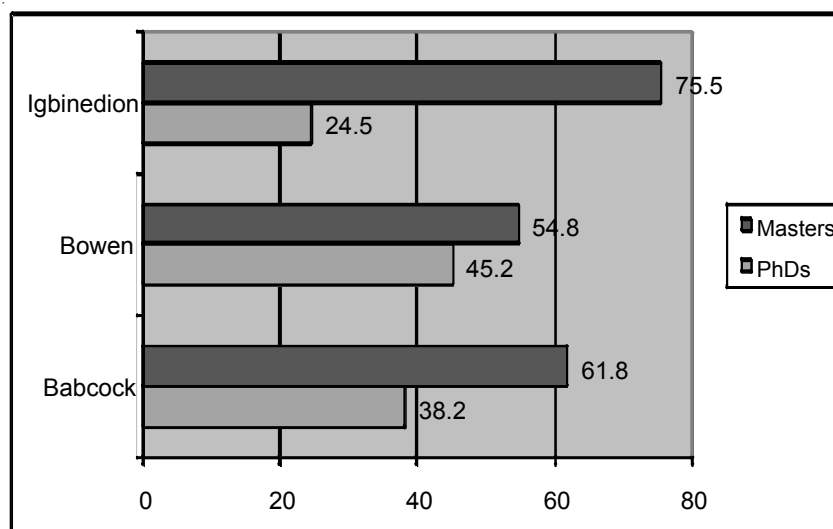
Universities	Male Staff		Female Staff		Total		Male Students		Female Students		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Babcock University	160	78.4	44	21.6	204	100	1,706	48.0	1,845	52.0	3,551	100
Bowen University	128	82.6	27	17.4	155	100	1,583	45.9	1,864	54.1	3,447	100
Igbinedion University	136	87.7	19	12.3	155	100	2,484	48.6	2,626	51.4	5,110	100
Total	424	82.5	90	17.5	514	100	5,773	47.7	6,335	52.3	12,108	100

Table 5: Qualifications of Academic Staff by Universities

Universities	PhD Holders			Masters holders		Total		
	No.	Ratio*	%	No.	%	No.	%	Ratio**
Babcock University (Students' Pop=3,551)	78	1:46	38.2	126	61.8	204	100	1:17
Bowen University (Students' Pop=3,441)	70	1:49	45.2	85	54.8	155	100	1:22
Igbinedion University (Students' Pop=5,110)	38	1:134	24.5	117	75.5	155	100	1:33

*Ratio of PhDs to total number of students.

**Ratio of total academic staff to students.

Figure 3: Academic Qualifications of Staff

Further analysis of the data on the indicators of quality is undertaken in Table 6 below on their physical facilities including information and communication technologies. The mission-based institutions are better equipped than Igbinedion judging by access to space, and vital facilities like common and reading rooms as well as ICT. The facilities are poorer at Igbinedion than the two mission institutions. But the average number of students per room is comparable across the institutions.

Babcock ranks very high on the indicators dealing with capacity enhancement of staffs and students; followed by Bowen while Igbinedion is in the last position (see Table 7 below). Also, tutorials, term papers, handouts, and continuous assessment are incorporated into pedagogy at Babcock and Bowen with the exception of term papers in context of the latter. This is far from being the case at Igbinedion University where only continuous assessment is reported.

Faculty and departmental seminars are organised at Babcock while Bowen and Igbinedion universities do not. Moreover, Babcock University is committed to staff development in contrast to Igbinedion which has not established the mechanism for sponsoring its staff for higher education. Bowen seems to be making some effort in this regard.

It is self-evident in Table 8 that Babcock has more books per student than the two other institutions. There are about 12.6 books per student at Babcock in contrast to 2.56 per student at Bowen and 5.34 books per student at Igbinedion in their main libraries. The mission universities are also better placed than Igbinedion with regard to sitting capacity in their respective libraries. There are 10 seats to a student at Babcock; 4.3 to a student at Bowen and 46 to a student at Igbinedion. Overall, the table shows 10.4 students to a seat at Babcock; 6 staff/students to a seat at Bowen and 47.4 staff/students to a seat at Igbinedion.

Most of the staff members indicate that they would not like to spend the rest of their career in these institutions with the staffs at Bowen and Igbinedion itching to find their way to other institutions due to the conditions of service and the dearth of the wherewithal to provide quality education. About 60 percent of the staff that are surveyed in Igbinedion and 56 percent at Bowen would not like to work for the rest of academic life at these institutions in contrast to 27 percent at Babcock. Between 60 percent and 86 percent of the staff members who completed the questionnaire indicate that their remuneration is not competitive while between 50 percent and 84 percent of the students who completed our questionnaire in the three institutions were dissatisfied with their hostels but pleased with the way they are taught.

Table 6: Physical and ICT Facilities

	Physical Facilities				Information & Communication Technology			
	Common Rooms	Reading Room	Halls of Residence	Staff Access	Students Access	Networking	Internet Connectivity	
Babcock University	Yes	Yes	Yes 4 /6 per room	No	No	Yes	Yes	
Bowen University	Yes	Yes	4 to 8 per room	No	Yes	No	Yes	
Igbinedion University	No	Yes	Yes, 4 per room	No	No	No	Yes	

Table 7: Staff/Students' Capacity Enhancement Indicators

	Staff Development Indicators			Students' Capacity Enhancement Indicators			
	Staff Devt. Programme	Faculty Seminars	Dept. Seminars	Tutorials	Term Paper	Continuous Assessment	Handouts
Babcock University	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bowen University	Yes	Slightly Yes	Slightly Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Igbinedion University	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No

Table 8: Library Facilities

Institutions	Library Stock		Sitting Capacity of Library		Sitting Capacity	
	Number	Ratio of Books per Student	No of seats	Ratio of seats per Student	No of Seats	Ratio of seats per Staff/Students
Babcock University	44,740	1:12.60	360	1:10	360	1:10.4
Bowen University	8,838	1:2.56	800	1:4.3	800	1:6
Igbinedion University	27,000	1:5.34	110	1:46	110	1:47.4

Discussion

The mission statements of the institutions proclaim their commitment to quality education and morality with the exception of Igbinedion which is less concerned with moral education. They provide an avenue for female education in view of the fact that they enrol more female and male students. However, there is gross gender imbalance among their academic staff members.

The academic programmes of these institutions are driven by markets rather than by a commitment to diverse disciplines. They offer degree programmes in the social and management sciences: accounting, banking and financing, marketing, public relations, business administration with the exception of Igbinedion which offers courses in engineering and medicine. This notwithstanding, most of Igbinedion's students are also enrolled in the market-driven courses like banking and finance, advertising etc.

The physical and academic facilities of the mission institutions are of a higher grade than those at Igbinedion. There are more books per student at Babcock and Bowen than at Igbinedion and equally higher ratios of seats per staff/student at the former than the latter. Igbinedion seems to have expanded its students' population beyond its capacity while the students' hostels at all the three institutions are overcrowded (viz., four to six or eight six students per room). This situation is by no means different from what is currently happening in many public universities in Nigeria whose hostels are notoriously overcrowded. But Babcock and Bowen Universities seem to make up for their overcrowded hostels by the provision of common and reading rooms which are not available at Igbinedion.

ICT is fairly developed at Babcock, followed by Bowen in contrast to the situation at Igbinedion where this is not the case. Overall, the staffs and students do not have free access to the Internet because the hostels and offices have not been networked.

One of the remarkable differences between Babcock and the other two is the fact that the former attaches importance to staff development and also utilises the appropriate strategies like term paper and tutorials to develop the capacity of its students in contrast to Bowen and Igbinedion. Igbinedion is perhaps worse off when compared to Bowen in this regard. Babcock also shows appreciation for departmental and faculty seminars. Bowen currently organizes departmental seminars while Igbinedion is yet to appreciate the importance of both the faculty and departmental seminars.

All the three institutions have hired more Masters' than doctorate degree holders as teachers. Overall, Igbinedion is worse off when compared to the other two institutions. This explains why Igbinedion is unable to utilise various strat-

egies like term papers and tutorials to develop the capacity of its students. The ratio of staff to students is bigger at Igbinedion and the institution would need several hours and small rooms for tutorials while its limited number of staff would be forced to spend hours reviewing the students' term papers. In any case, Babcock seems to be more committed to quality in this regard than any of the other two while Bowen is a shade better than Igbinedion. It is unlikely that Igbinedion will be able to improve on these factors as long as it admits large numbers of students into its programmes.

Concluding Remarks

The Government of Nigeria is determined to deregulate the higher education sub-sector. Consequently, the sector is now open to private investors who are drawn from the Christian/Muslim missions as well as solo and group entrepreneurs. The aim of government is to widen access to higher education and also promote quality education. Private universities are now springing up all over the country due to the new policy on higher education. It is reported that hundreds of applications are under consideration while the NUC is likely to approve all those that satisfy the presumably stringent conditions.

While the privatisation of university education is in consonance with the trends in other parts of Africa, it seems that there is need for the authorities to exercise great caution over the implementation of this policy. The data paint a dismal picture of the quality of private universities which are expected to fill the niche created by the deteriorating situation in the public institutions.

The academic programmes of private universities are circumscribed. The founders are inclined to mount courses that will attract students or money or both and they may also be inclined to sacrifice quality. The courses are mainly in the social and management sciences (e.g., banking and finance, business administration, accounting, economics).

The outcomes of this study inevitably lead a crucial question concerning the place of private universities in Nigeria. Can such institutions replace the publicly funded universities? Certainly not, as amply indicated in data on the range of degree programmes that are being offered in the private vis-a-vis public institutions. Thus, any thinking in government circles that private can replace the public would amount to missing the point. It therefore stands to reason that it is in the national interest of low-income countries like Nigeria to invest in public universities while encouraging the private ones. The data indicate that the assumption that the private can fill the gap that is created by the collapse of the public or meet national needs in an effective way may not be valid after all.

It is important for the Nigerian Authorities to appreciate the fact that high-income countries like the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia still invest in

their public universities while giving room to the private investors in higher education. Similarly, the Governments of Ghana (*viz.*, a low income country) and South Africa are still striving to keep their public universities in a remarkably excellent shape while also encouraging private investors in higher education because they still regard education as a public good. More important, countries like Canada, Australia, South Africa, and Ghana to name a few, show appreciation of the fact the private universities are unlikely to meet their countries' needs in such expensive academic programmes like engineering, medicine, agriculture, land management etc. The point is that the promotion of private universities should not be at the expense of the public universities because of their circumscribed academic programmes. Consequently, investment in public universities is not only wise but necessary if the much desired socio-economic development is to be achieved.

More specifically, it is vital to focus on quality in the emerging private universities. Even though the private universities are doing extremely well by engendering higher education in view of the ratio of male to female students, they are however still a long way in ensuring gender parity on staffing. The academic staff members in the three institutions are largely male. Besides, they need to attract more qualified teachers because they are bereft of holders of doctorate degree. They are also inclined to depend on lots of part-time teachers or those who are on sabbatical leave who are mostly drawn from the public institutions that are being vilified by the Nigerian Authorities.

Although the mission institutions (*viz.*, Babcock and Bowen) are striving to maintain a high standard, this does not appear to be the case at Igbinedion which is founded by an entrepreneur. This significant should be noted by policy makers who are now inclined to license the applications of solo or group proprietors/investors in higher education without ascertaining their motives. The situation at Igbinedion clearly indicates that the proprietor is much more interested in making money from higher education than in quality. Already, a private university that is founded by a group of entrepreneurs in Nigeria has fallen on hard times.⁶ In other words, it seems that corporate bodies like missions are perhaps much more likely to be concerned with quality and also motivated by altruistic reasons than entrepreneurs who are out to make money from higher education.

This is a final note to the Nigerian Authorities who are inclined to licence many more private universities in the next few years. It may be advisable to exercise a bit of caution at this point in time in view of the outcomes of this study. A moratorium on new private universities is necessary in order to allow those that currently operating to go through a maturation process. Some time is required to monitor quality in terms of the strengths and weaknesses of these

new institutions. It is undeniable that the knowledge that is gained through an effective monitoring regime could be used for setting the bench mark for eliminating the applications of prospective private investors into higher education whose motives might not be entirely altruistic. The Nigerian Authorities should avoid the mistakes that they encountered in the banking sector which forced them to take drastic measures to force merger and closure of innumerable non-performing banks that had been defrauding the public. As can be seen in the study, the motive to establish a university might not necessarily be altruistic but driven by the desire to make money from the gullible and unsuspecting public.

Notes

1. For example, only four universities in Africa, namely Cape Town, Witwatersrand, Kwazulu-Natal, Pretoria are among the top five hundred in the world and even then they are listed among the last one hundred.
2. See the following on the historical antecedents, components and dimensions of quality assurance in higher education: David Leyton-Brown, *Demystifying Quality Assurance, Conference on Higher Education*, John Deutsch Institute, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada, Feb 13-14, 2004; Alan Tait ed. *Perspectives on Distance Education – Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Selected Case Studies*, Vancouver: The Commonwealth of Learning, 1997; and David D. Dill, 'Designing Academic Audit: Lessons Learned in Europe and Asia', *Quality in Higher Education*, Vol. 6, No. 3, November, 2000, 23-35.
3. This was the famous Sir Ashby Commission which recommended the establishment of the university.
4. Based on the news report in Nigeria's newspapers – *The Nation*, May 15, 2007
5. Seven studies were commissioned: four of them on universities while three others address cross-cutting issues like gender, information and communication technology as well as governance.
6. CETEP, based in Lagos, one of the private universities, founded by such investors is already facing a serious crisis while the founders of Kastina University are also proposing a merger with the state-owned university because it is unable to attract sufficient number to the sciences. It currently has a distorted Science-Arts ratio of 10 to 90 (*The Nation*, November 2006, page 6 news report).

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The Private Provision of Higher Education in Ethiopia: Growth, Challenges, and Prospects*

Kasirim Nwuke**

Abstract

Since the overthrow of the Derg in 1991, the government of Ethiopia has embarked on a number of reforms of the higher education sector. These reforms have been driven by the need to address geographical and structural imbalances in the higher education system, the increasingly sophisticated demand of both the public and expanding private sector for high quality employees, and the changing context of international economic competition. The key elements of these reforms are: expanding access; addressing the geographical distribution of access; improving quality; and encouraging competition in the provision of higher education by allowing private provision. Since these reforms were enacted, the private higher education sector has grown significantly, providing both enhanced access to higher education and diversification of the higher education curricula. The emergence of a pluralistic higher education sector presents threats and opportunities and has, as a consequence, generated considerable public policy debate in the country. However, there has been very little analysis of the sector to serve as a basis for decision-making.

This paper seeks to provide information on the private higher education sector in Ethiopia by examining the general characteristics of the private provision sector and its contribution to expanding access and on the creation of new knowledge through research. It also examines the likely impact of plural providers on

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** Chief, MDGs/Poverty Analysis & Monitoring Section, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Ethiopia.

quality and the policy options adopted by the government. The analysis shows that the private sector is making a significant contribution to the expansion of higher education in Ethiopia, especially with respect to expanding access to women and the production of intermediate-level technical skills that the expanding Ethiopian economy needs. Secondly, due to the relatively small size of private providers and the tight regulatory restrictions on the types of courses and programmes that they offer, private higher education is unlikely to threaten the average quality of higher education in Ethiopia in the short term. Concerns at this time about quality may be premature. However, due to capital and capacity constraints, the scope of the sector to contribute to the creation of new knowledge is limited. Finally, the paper argues that the future of private provision in Ethiopia depends critically on the growth of the public sector. In the short to medium term, it is the public higher education sector that will provide the bulk of the skills needed to staff the private provision sector. It will also depend on the growth of the Ethiopian economy, on the policies of the government especially in respect of expansion of the public provision sector, on the behaviour, performance and conduct of public higher education institutions and on the easing of regulatory restrictions. The paper also points to the need for additional research to better understand the constraints and possibilities of the sector.

Résumé

Depuis la chute du Derg en 1991, le Gouvernement d'Éthiopie a entrepris un certain nombre de réformes dans le secteur de l'enseignement supérieur. Ces réformes ont été dictées par la nécessité de corriger les déséquilibres géographiques et structurels au niveau du système de l'enseignement supérieur, la demande de plus en plus complexe aussi bien du secteur public que du secteur privé en expansion pour des employés de qualité et le contexte en évolution de la concurrence économique internationale. Les éléments clefs de ces réformes sont les suivants: élargissement de l'accès; traitement de la répartition géographique de l'accès; amélioration de la qualité; la promotion de la concurrence au niveau des dispositions de l'enseignement supérieur en tenant compte de la privatisation. Depuis la mise en œuvre de ces réformes, le secteur de l'enseignement supérieur privé s'est développé de façon considérable en favorisant un accès amélioré à l'enseignement supérieur et la diversification des programmes d'enseignement supérieur. L'émergence d'un secteur d'enseignement supérieur pluraliste présente des menaces et des opportunités; ce qui a par conséquent suscité un débat d'intérêt public dans le pays. Cependant, il n'y a pas suffisamment d'analyse sur le secteur qui puisse servir de base pour la prise de décision.

Le présent document traite de ce problème. Il vise à fournir les informations relatives au secteur de l'enseignement supérieur privé en Éthiopie. Le document examine dans un premier temps les caractéristiques générales de la privatisation du secteur et sa contribution à l'élargissement de l'accès et à la création de nouvelles connaissances à travers la recherche. Le document examine également l'im-

pact probable des fournisseurs pluriels sur la qualité et les options politiques adoptées par le gouvernement. L'analyse indique que le secteur privé contribue de façon significative à l'élargissement de l'enseignement supérieur en Ethiopie, notamment en ce qui concerne l'élargissement de l'accès aux femmes et la production d'une main-d'œuvre technique de niveau intermédiaire dont a besoin l'économie éthiopienne en expansion. L'analyse indique également qu'en raison de la taille relativement petite de la privatisation du secteur et des exigences réglementaires strictes sur les types de cours et des programmes qu'elles offrent, l'enseignement supérieur privé n'est pas susceptible de menacer dans le court terme la qualité moyenne de l'enseignement supérieur en Ethiopie. Il serait en ce moment prématuré de nourrir des inquiétudes sur la qualité. Cependant, en raison des contraintes de capital et de capacité, les ambitions du secteur de contribuer à la création de nouvelles demeurent limitées.

En fin, le document soutient que l'avenir de la privatisation de l'enseignement supérieur en Ethiopie dépend sérieusement du développement du secteur public. Dans le court et moyen terme, l'essentiel de la population active sera pourvue par le secteur de l'enseignement supérieur public. Elle dépendra également de la croissance de l'économie éthiopienne, des politiques gouvernementales notamment en ce qui concerne l'expansion du secteur public, du comportement, de la performance et de la conduite des institutions de l'enseignement supérieur public et des exigences réglementaires. Le document aborde également la nécessité de la recherche supplémentaire pour mieux appréhender les contraintes et les possibilités du secteur.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the emerging literature on the private provision of higher education in Africa. In the past fifteen years, the higher education sector in many African countries has become increasingly plural. In Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia, to name a few, private higher education institutions are contributing to the production of skilled manpower for the national economy, helping governments to conserve the resources that would otherwise have been spent on public provision and redirecting to other priority areas. The public higher education sector, though still dominant, is increasingly facing competition and higher education policy in many African countries is recognizing the contribution that the private higher education sector is making to national development. The paper uses Ethiopia as a case study.

Private provision of higher education¹ in Ethiopia is still in its infancy although the first privately-owned institution of higher learning dates back to 1954. Since the mid-1990s, the private provision sector has grown following reforms introduced by the 1994 Education and Training Policy Sector Strategy whose objectives were to increase access to educational opportunities with enhanced

equity, quality and relevance. In 2004, there were 22 higher education institutions classified as private by the Government of Ethiopia, up from 16 in 2001. In that period, most of the institutions were accredited to award certificates and diplomas only. The change in recent years was so unprecedented that the number and scale of institutions rose very rapidly and in 2006 there were 27 institutions enrolling 39,691 students for undergraduate degrees (Education Statistics 2006). Although each is small compared to the public sector providers, together they are gradually beginning to alter the higher education landscape of the country, and their impact is likely to grow as they consolidate and if the regulatory regime becomes less restrictive.

The higher education sector reforms that ushered in private involvement in higher education provision were necessitated by a number of factors. First, there was the need to plug the capacity gaps that had arisen as a consequence of the decades-long Eritrean independence war and the large-scale emigration of qualified manpower that was caused by the repressive Derg regime. During this period, there was very limited expansion of the higher education sector due to severe resource constraints, as resources, a proportion of which could otherwise have been expended on higher education, were instead spent on prosecuting the war and protecting the regime in power. This had very serious consequences for the education sector and for the rest of the economy. The beginning of the massive brain-drain of highly-educated Ethiopians, which continues to this day, can be traced to this period. For the higher education sector, the consequence was quite clear: in spite of recent efforts,² Ethiopia's public higher education sector is one of the smallest in Africa. According to the World Bank (2003), Ethiopia's tertiary gross enrolment ratio stood at 0.8 percent in 2000³ against 4 percent for Sub-Saharan Africa. Given the country's population of over 73 million, half of which is young, the public higher education provision sector, in spite of recent expansion, is unlikely to effectively respond to the rapidly expanding enrolment at the primary and secondary levels, meet the rising and urgent skills demands of Ethiopia's expanding economy and accommodate the rising population.

Second and this is a corollary of the first, there is a wide gap in higher education attainment across gender and across space. Given the limited availability of resources and the pressure on government finances, the government is unlikely to successfully bridge this gap by expanding access in a short period of time without additional resources. Third, the changing nature of international competitiveness which increasingly requires an educated workforce is also a factor. It is unlikely that Ethiopia will attract the foreign investment that it needs to grow and to reduce poverty if its workforce is uncompetitive relative to its neighbours. And finally, there is also the pressure to accommodate the large second-

ary education output – which is likely to increase as Ethiopia intensifies its efforts to meet the education Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

However, there is considerable concern – both public and private – about the place of private provision in Ethiopia's higher education sector.⁴ These range from concerns about quality and the possible erosion of the signalling effect of higher education to the job market, to concerns about exploitation of the poor by rent seekers. Some argue that higher education is a public good which should be provided by the State using taxpayer funds in order to ensure that equity and national educational priorities are met. Others argue that higher education is a quasi-private good whose benefits can be completely appropriated by private actors and as such should be privately provided. Reference is made to the large reserve pool of qualified youngsters who could not win admission into the highly competitive public sector as justification for private provision.

In any case, whatever the demerits or merits of the arguments in the Ethiopian context are, it is important to add that a wave of private provision of higher education is sweeping across the continent, a wave that Ethiopia is unlikely to escape. This wave is likely to intensify if Ethiopia becomes a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and resultantly a signatory to the WTO's General Agreement in Trade in Services (GATS) which aims to open up trade in services including higher education. A gradual opening of the sector to private providers will probably prepare the country to take on the future challenge of international trade in higher education. The emerging debate on the plural provision of higher education in Ethiopia is understandable because education is the fulcrum of sustainable development and indeed, with the emergence of globalization and increasing global competition, it will become one of the defining enterprises of the 21st century. The quality of the higher education system is critical to ensure the adequate supply of qualified, highly skilled and well-trained manpower to support economic development.

Unfortunately, not much is known about the private provision sector in Ethiopia upon which policy can be based. Thus the purpose of this short paper is to contribute to the emerging literature on the private provision of higher education in Ethiopia. The paper begins with a brief discussion of the private provision sector, its characteristics, contributions, and growth. Secondly the paper focuses on some challenges – most specifically quality, access and financing. The analysis shows that the private higher education sector is making a demonstrable contribution to improving access to higher education in Ethiopia and providing intermediate-level technical manpower to the government and private sectors. It also shows that at this stage, its effect on average quality is likely to be minimal given the restrictions on the types of courses/programs offered and con-

cludes that the scope for private provision is likely to increase as incomes rise and as existing private providers consolidate.

Characterizing the Private Higher Education Sector in Ethiopia

Private provision of higher education is relatively new in Ethiopia. As a result, not much is known of the characteristics of the sector, its structure, conduct and the background of the people it serves. However, the emerging national literature on the sector conveys the impression of a rapidly expanding sector that is making significant contribution to the economy.⁵ Hence, the purpose of this section is to present evidence on the sector and to provide a brief discussion of its contribution to improving both gender and geographical access to higher education in Ethiopia in order to provide context for the discussion of quality that follows later. The evidence for the analysis in this section is drawn from various issues of the Education Statistics Annual Abstract published by the Ministry of Education. The conclusion derived from the analysis is that although the sector is expanding access to women, its contribution to bridging the geographical divide in access to higher education remains at best modest.

Characteristics of the Sector

The Ethiopian private higher education sector, as noted earlier, is small and characterized by small, family-owned operators. By enrolment in both diploma and undergraduate degree levels, Alpha University College (which is composed mainly of distance learning programmes and is the largest with about 16,302 enrolled students followed by Unity University College with 8,064 and St. Mary's College with 3,166 students. The smallest is Selam Nurses' College with 86 enrolled students in 2003/2004. Recent data is available only for students enrolled in undergraduate degree level and for the year 2005/2006 there were 27 institutions with a total enrolment of 39,691 students. Of this total, four private institutions take the lion's share: Unity University College with 34 percent, Alpha University College with 22 percent, St. Mary's College with 17 percent and Admas College with 13 percent. By type, most are 'business' schools providing training in areas such as Marketing, Accounting, Office Management, Banking and Finance, Management, Purchasing and Supplies, Journalism, Law etc. Of the 21 privately-owned higher education institutions in 2004, only one, Selam Nurses College, used to offer courses in the medical sciences. However, a remarkably high number of new nursing and medical technology colleges are flourishing very recently and of those colleges engaged in health sciences, four of them were teaching in undergraduate levels by 2005/2006. The scope of courses and type of programs offered is probably an outcome of the existing education manpower gaps in the country, the regulatory regime and cost.

The regulatory regime is an important determinant of the structure, conduct and performance of private higher education institutions in any country. The sector is likely to be small if regulations are tight and restrictive, for example relative to the portfolio of course offerings, access to donor and other funding, the library, fees, and start-up requirements. This was the case in the early years of private provision in Ethiopia. There was even debate whether any of the private higher education institutions should refer to themselves as universities.⁶ However, significant liberalization has occurred in the past few years and resulted in a very rapid expansion of the private provision sector to its current number of 66.

Nonetheless, the impact of regulations on the conduct of private higher education institutions in Ethiopia can be seen from an analysis of their course offerings⁷ which shows a high degree of concentration in the social sciences, business, computers and those courses that do not require huge initial investment outlays. This underscores the nascence of the private provision education sector and its relatively weak capital base and is consistent with the observed behaviour of private providers during the early stages of growth in private provision (Nwuke 2005). Courses such as medicine, engineering and the natural sciences, because they are capital and skill intensive and thus requiring huge investment outlays, remain the domain of the State. The result is that there is virtually no natural science or applied technologies research in private higher institutions in Ethiopia. Hence, their contribution to knowledge creation, except perhaps in the area of pedagogical innovation (such as computer-based instruction, client-centred instruction which is in tandem with the changing needs of the job market), is at best insignificant.⁸ Private higher education institutions are providing skills needed by Ethiopia's booming construction, hospitality and floriculture sectors, for example. Their concentration on low-cost, technical, business, accounting, and nursing⁹ courses clearly reflects the growing labour market demand for intermediate level skills in these areas and could signal an emerging differentiation in Ethiopia's higher education sector.

Further, the concentration on 'light' courses could indicate that concerns at this time about the likely impact on average quality of higher education due to growing multiplicity of private providers is perhaps a bit premature. However, it is intriguing to observe that until recently, there were no private higher education institutions owned by a religious organization or faith-based organizations as in other countries. Not even the dominant Ethiopian Orthodox Church owned a higher education institution. However, that is beginning to change. For example, the Catholic Church and the Adventists, two well-established providers of higher education in many countries, has recently entered the Ethiopian higher

education market. Evidence elsewhere (in Nigeria, Kenya, Latin America and the Philippines) shows that private higher education institutions owned by religious organizations are, on average, well-financed and offer a range of courses not significantly different from those offered by well-established publicly-owned higher education institutions. They are very selective and competitive. The entrance of this group of providers will further the expansion of access to higher education in the country and promote competition not only for very able candidates but also for those with the ability to pay. It will also result in quality improvements and in changes in the conduct of public universities. It may also significantly affect the Government's efforts to mobilize additional resources for higher education through the 'graduate tax'¹⁰ – a cost-sharing mechanism introduced in 2003.

Growth and Structure

The private higher education sector in Ethiopia is growing at an impressive rate. From practically zero in 1998, enrolment in privately-owned higher education institutions has grown to 39,691 in the academic year 2005/2006 as can be seen from Table 1, accounting for 22 percent of aggregate enrolment in degree programmes.¹¹ If enrolment in extension and postgraduate programmes is excluded from government institutions, this contribution could be significantly higher as can be seen from the 2003 data when these programmes were excluded and the private provision sector accounted for close to a third of all enrolment. This is significant given the very modest beginnings of the private sector.

This rapid growth in enrolment is accounted for by significant horizontal expansion. This significant expansion is accounted for in part by the treatment of privately-owned higher education institutions as business ventures. Reflecting growing competition in the sector, there has been an increase in degree-awarding private higher education institutions. From 47 in 2004, the number of private higher education institutions – accredited and pre-accredited – offering bachelor's degree programmes rose to 66 in mid-2007 (see Figure 1). The preponderance of pre-accredited institutions owes to the tight accreditation requirements. This rapid growth also underscores the degree of unmet demand for higher education, especially of the specialized kind, in Ethiopia. In addition to unmet demand, other factors, notably three, are also driving the growth of the private provision sector. First are the liberal economic and social policies adopted by the ruling Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) soon after it came to power in the 1990s. Their coming to power coincided with a period when there was increasing awareness of the contribution of higher education to economic growth and as a major factor determining the competitiveness of nations

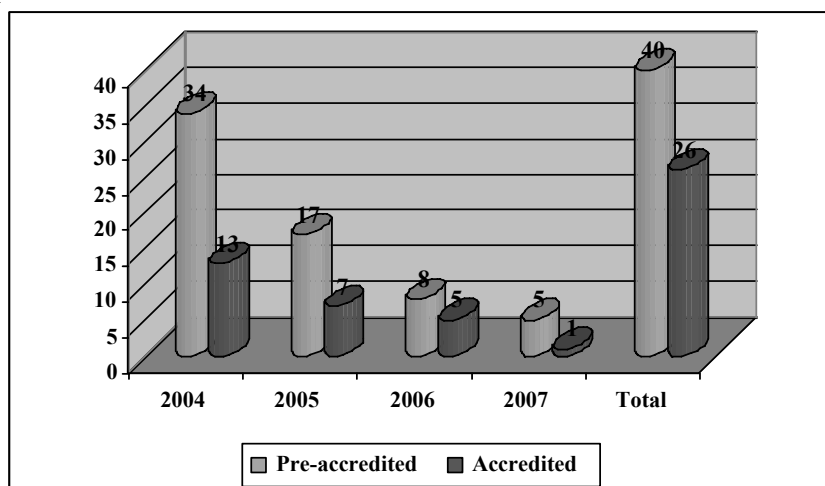
Table 1: Student enrolment in higher education institutions 1998/1999–2005/2006

Enrolment	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04*	2004/05*	2005/06**
Government	26,243	31,723	34,351	34,177	52,327	132,986	143,753	140,426
Non-government	-	5,472	11,175	12,619	23,670	39,125	47,412	39,691
Total	26,243	37,195	45,526	46,796	75,997	172,111	191,165	180,117
% non-government	0	14.7	24.5	27.0	31.1	22.7	24.8	22.0

Source: Education Statistics Annual Abstract, Ministry of Education, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2001/02–2005/06.

* Note that 2003/2004–2005/2006 represents enrollments in all programmes: Regular, Evening, Distance and Kiremt while the 1998–2003 data does not include those enrolled in the extension and postgraduate programmes.

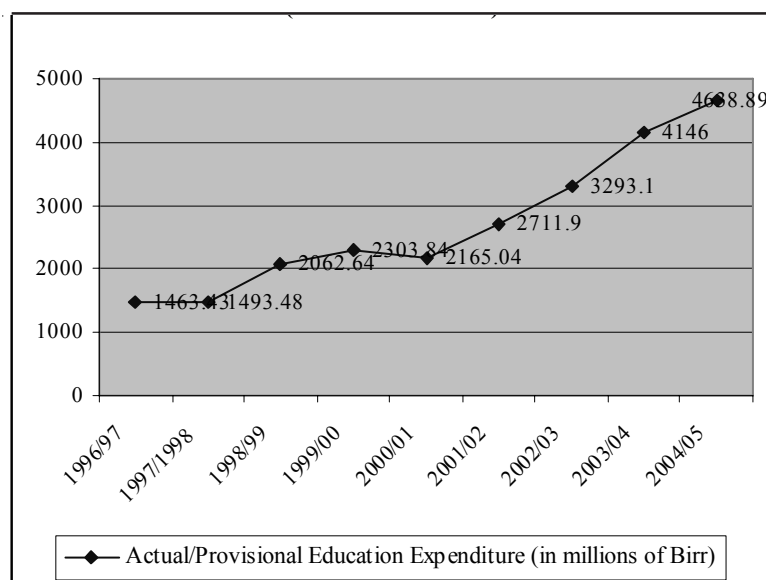
** Note also that 2005/2006 does not include Diploma students.

Figure 1: Pre-accredited and Accredited Higher Institutions

Source: Government of Ethiopia (2007), Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency: Information about Accredited and Pre-Accredited Institutions, Memo www.higher.edu.et, Accessed July 2007.

in a fast globalizing world.¹² Second is the bulge in secondary enrolments and the consequent urgent need to expand access to higher education. The government had over the years made considerable efforts to increase primary and secondary participation rates resulting in 2004, a gross enrolment rate for primary and secondary education of about 65 percent (MoE 2004). However, against a gross tertiary enrolment of 0.8 percent in 2000, considerable investments needed to be made in the higher education sector if the gap in unmet demand was to be bridged. Government's effort in this area can be seen in Figures 1 and 2 which show the evolution of education expenditures in Ethiopia since 1987 (G.C.)

As Figure 2 shows, there has been a sustained increase in budget outlay for education which had risen from less than 1.5 billion Birr in 1996/97¹³ to slightly more than one billion in 1996. However, the share of Grades 1–8 spending in total education spending is falling. On the other hand, total expenditure on the tertiary education sector increased both in absolute and relative terms, reflecting the government's renewed emphasis on the sector as an important anchor for broad-based poverty reduction as it is the sector that must produce the skills that the economy needs to grow and to compete with the rest of the world.

Figure 2: Trends in Total Public Expenditure on Education, in millions of birr

Source: Education Statistics Annual Abstract, Ministry of Education, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2000/2001 and 2004/2005.

However, the increase in spending on the tertiary sector is not sufficient to meet the growing demand for higher education. As can be seen from Table 2 below, it is evident that much of this increase is concentrated on primary and tertiary education at the expense of secondary education. Primary education has commanded the lion's share of total education expenditures with tertiary education a close second. Although this could address the bulge issue in the short-term, it is unlikely to address the physical capacity constraints of public higher education institutions. Constrained by capacity, their scope to expand access by increasing enrolment is in the short-term severely limited thus creating the necessary conditions for the growth of private provision.

Plans are underway, however, to expand the public higher education sector which could alleviate this constraint. The 2005–2010/2011 education sector development programme of the Ministry of Education envisages an ambitious expansion of the sector. As mentioned elsewhere in this paper, thirteen¹⁴ new public universities are planned during this period. However, the share of higher education of total budget allocation to the education sector will be 25 percent, with primary education taking 54.8 percent (MoE 2005). How the private higher

education sector responds to this rapid expansion of the public higher education will to a great extent determine its future role.

Table 2: Percentage Shares of Public Expenditure by Level of Education

Year	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
1997/1998	56.0	10.7	45.3
1998/1999	53.3	9.8	43.5
1999/2000	61.0	11.9	49.1
2000/01	62.6	12.3	50.3
2001/02	65.6	11.8	53.8
2002/03	56.1	9.8	46.3
2003/04	61.1	10.6	50.5
2004/05	65.0	10.1	54.9

Source: Woldehanna, T. and Jones, N. (2006), 'How Pro-Poor Is Ethiopia's Education Expansion? A Benefit Incident Analysis of Education since 1995/96', Young Lives, Save the Children, UK.

And the third factor is relevance. The rapid growth in enrolment in private higher education institutions suggests that the courses and programs offered are of relevance to Ethiopia's changing labour market. With graduate unemployment very high, there is growing demand for technical and professional skills needed by Ethiopia's expanding private sector. However, public sector higher education institutions, constrained by bureaucracy, are not sufficiently nimble to proactively respond to changing labour market conditions. Still another driving the growth of the private provision sector is the growth in real per capita income. The Ethiopian economy has grown at an average rate of 5.6 percent in real terms (ECA 2006). This is very remarkable given that the country emerged from a long conflict about seventeen years ago.¹⁵ According to the IMF (2006) real per capita GDP grew at an annual rate of 5.8 percent in 2005 and was estimated to grow at 2.4 percent in 2006. This growth in real income is expanding the consumption set of the populace, including the consumption of higher education. Further, there was also the example of neighbouring countries such as Kenya and Uganda where access to higher education has been expanded by allowing private provision. In both of these countries, private providers have been making a significant contribution to the production of needed skills, to job creation,

and to efforts to conserve scarce foreign exchange which would have been used to pay for the overseas studies of a significant number of students who would otherwise have gone abroad to study.

Another driver of the growth of private higher education in Ethiopia could be the rising cost in Birrs of overseas education. In the past, when the exchange rate was low, many middle class families, along with the wealthy, sent their children and wards who could not meet the highly competitive entrance requirement of public higher education institutions overseas to study. As the Birr progressively depreciated relative to the dollar and other major currencies (and given an income growth rate that was slow relative to the rate of depreciation), some parents began to see private higher education institutions as an acceptable alternative to overseas education. In addition, given that a large number of private higher education institutions now offer bachelors degree programmes (over 40 according to Yizengaw (n.d.)), parents may select out of public universities because of Ethiopia's central placement system for public institutions. According to this system, students are centrally distributed among public higher education institutions without regard for the catchment area principle. Students are not infrequently enrolled at schools very far from their home. Parents who do not want their children, particularly daughters, to be too far away, especially given Ethiopia's poor road infrastructure and relative scarcity of good health services in far-off regions and who are able to afford it, may opt to enrol their children and wards in private institutions in, or much closer to, their cities of residence.

Finally, the decision of the government as expressed in the 2003 Higher Education Proclamation to introduce cost-sharing in public higher education may be increasing the relative attractiveness of private higher education institutions.¹⁶ The introduction of cost sharing (and the on-going discussion on the elimination of subsidies on food and lodging) is eroding one of the major attractions of public higher education institutions and encouraging the demand for private provision.

Geographical Distribution of the Private Higher Education Sector

One of the primary objectives the new policy has is to minimize geographical or spatial disparities in access to higher education. The State has consciously located new educational institutions in different and in some cases remote parts of the country. The expectation is that private providers, in order to maximize complementarities with the public sector, will also be increasingly located in such geographically disadvantaged locations in order to take advantage of complementarities between public and private providers of higher education.

Evidence indicates that this is not yet the case. Only 21 of the 66 private higher education institutions which are either pre-accredited or accredited for undergraduate degree programs between academic years 2003–2007 are located outside Addis Ababa Region. Some such as Unity University College, Africa Beza College, Admas College, Royal College, and New Generation University College have satellite campuses in the Regional States.

By concentrating in Addis Ababa and in urban areas, the private provision sector is not yet contributing to bridging the geographical divide in access to higher education; in fact, it might be contributing to the entrenchment of the geographical disparities in access to higher education. Three factors may explain this outcome. The first is that industrial and modern sector activities remain concentrated in Addis Ababa, the capital and wealthiest city. Economic theory suggests that the demand for higher education is a function of income, the price (tuition, other fees and the opportunity cost) of higher education. As people get richer, their demand for higher education (and all the services it provides) also increases. Given that Addis Ababa is the wealthiest region in Ethiopia, it is therefore not unexpected that profit-maximizing private providers of higher education will concentrate where willingness and ability to pay is highest. In addition, the scarcity of infrastructural facilities and complimentary inputs outside Addis Ababa and the major urban areas raise quite significantly the cost of private provision in other parts of the country.

One of the major indictments of the Ethiopian higher education sector is the under-representation of women in enrolment in higher education institutions (MoE 2001). According to the World Bank (2003), in 2001/2002, women accounted for only 16 percent of degree enrolment in regular and evening programs of public universities. The private provision sector is helping to bridge the gender gap. For example, in 2003/2004, of the 7,641 students enrolled in the regular programmes of private higher education institutions in Ethiopia, 3,998 or slightly more than 50 percent were women. The contribution of the private provision sector to expanding women's access to higher education can be seen in Table 3 below. In 2004/2005, women accounted for just over 25 percent of the total enrolment in higher education institutions in Ethiopia in 2003/04.

These women would not have got a higher education if the private higher education sector had not existed. While this is a welcome development, it is also important to caution that the private sector is providing intermediate-level skills with limited career and labour market prospects, something which is likely to affect the future earnings profile of women and reinforce the income gender gap.

Table 3: Student Enrolment in the Ethiopian Higher Education System

Year	Both Sexes	Female Number	Percent
1995/96	35,027	7,282	20.8
1996/97	42,112	8,514	20.2
1997/98	45,554	8,702	19.1
1998/99	52,305	9,769	18.7
1999/00	67,673	16,272	24.1
2000/01	87,431	18,207	20.8
2001/02	101,829	26,894	26.4
2002/03	147,954	37,256	25.2
2003/04	172,111	43,303	25.2

Source: Ministry of Education, Education Abstracts, 2004.

The Challenge of Private Provision

The growth of the private higher education sector presents opportunities and challenges for Ethiopia. If well nurtured, it can contribute to the pool of talent and knowledge that the Ethiopian economy needs in order to be competitive in the increasingly knowledge-driven global economy of the 21st century. However, there are three main challenges that I discuss in this paper which will to a great extent determine the future of the sector. These are the challenge of the trade-off between low-cost provision and quality assurance; the challenge of improving real access to the poor; and the challenge of financing.

Cost and Quality Assurance

The most likely immediate consequence of increased private provision of higher education would be a decline in the signalling effect of higher education because of a fall in the average quality of higher education. It is well known from the literature that one of the primary purposes of higher education is to provide a signal of the productivity of workers in the labour market. This effect is likely to diminish if there are many private higher education providers and there is no effective quality assurance mechanism. Under such circumstances, a degree from any university could mean anything in terms of quality. The consequences of a breakdown of the signalling effect of higher education can be quite serious and

it is for this reason that many governments in Africa, including Ethiopia's, are careful about opening up the sector too quickly to private operators.

Private higher education institutions, especially of the family-owned variety, are very vulnerable to the quality problem because to survive, they must have lower production cost. Hence, the average cost of graduating a student is generally lower in private higher education institutions of the kind now predominating in Ethiopia than in public higher education institutions. These institutions are able to keep their unit cost of production low because they rely on part-time faculty, have lean administration and concentrate on offering programmes (social sciences and humanities, business studies) that do not require substantial investment outlays. This enables them to keep tuition fees relatively affordable. But it also has an impact on quality, on the distribution of skills in the economy. For example, part-time teachers are likely to be less committed to their students than full-time, permanent teachers. Where the institutions concentrate on low-cost courses, there could be an over-supply of such graduates and as a result, higher rates of graduate unemployment. Average quality of higher education could be an early casualty of private provision because of the approaches of private providers to cost minimization. In the short to medium term, there is likely to be a trade-off between increased access through private provision and quality.

Such an outcome could increase the recruiting cost for firms as they devise new mechanisms and instruments to screen out potentially low ability/low productivity applicants. But it is difficult to eliminate this risk especially if the number of vacancies is large relative to the pool of low ability/low productivity applicants. Hence, lack of quality control in the private higher education sector could result in an increased average cost of production, loss of international competitiveness and failure to attract foreign direct investment.

There will be labour market implications if a government's imprimatur no longer serves as an indicator of the legitimacy and quality of a programme because of the proliferation of providers. Some countries, (for example, Nigeria) have tried to deal with the problem of quality by creating joint admissions and matriculation board whose purpose is to standardize the criteria employed in selecting potential university and other higher education entrants irrespective of the ownership of the institution. But this will not be enough in an increasingly differentiating higher education system. To assure quality, accreditation institutions will need to be established, mechanisms created and evaluation methodologies developed to ensure 'that a degree is a degree is a degree'.

Efforts are underway in many African countries to assure quality and emerging lessons from these efforts could be of value to Ethiopia's nascent private

provision sector.¹⁷ South Africa, for example, has a national system of Accreditation and Quality assurance in place. The East African Council on Tertiary Education is putting in place a quality assurance system for the sub-region. Egypt's new 20-year higher education plan envisages the establishment of an accrediting agency. A lot still needs to be done. But these efforts, if they are to be successful, must be based on a system for measuring the quality of inputs into the education production function. The quality of teachers must be improved, libraries must be well stocked, science and technology departments must be improved and students and faculty must be part of the international community of learning and knowledge creation. However, Africa's private higher education providers have so far not been active participants in the accreditation drive. They are yet to recognize that it is in their own self-interest to be part of the accreditation effort in order to obviate the need for greater government interference in the sector.

Access

The expansion of access to higher education is one of the strongest arguments in favour of private provision in Ethiopia in particular and in Africa in general. This argument is strong because most African countries with the exception of, perhaps, Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, and Egypt, have a small university and higher education sector. There is evidence that non-university higher education institutions are in general more capable of responding to rapidly changing labour market conditions and they can also absorb a significant share of the demand for higher education. Ideally, access should be enhanced by religion, by gender, by ethnicity, and by income level to enable higher education to become an important growth factor in Africa.

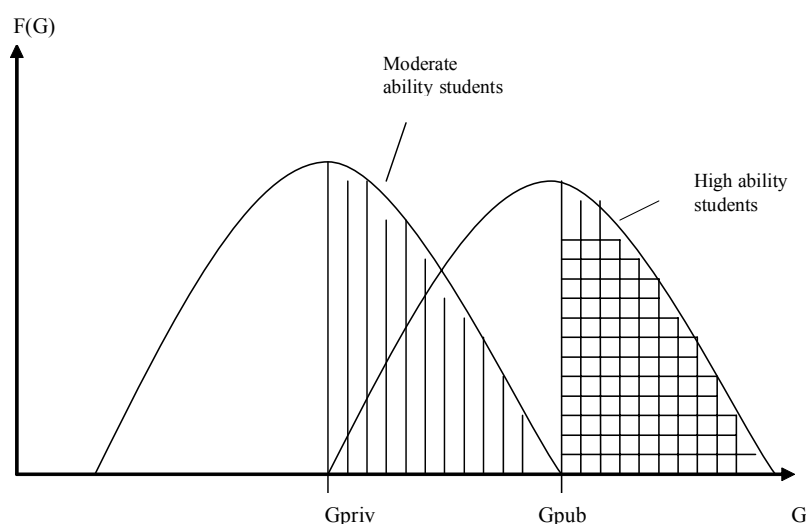
However, the expansion of access to higher education through private provision has important equity implications that are yet to receive policy and research attention. Although education in general and higher education in particular is considered one of the most effective pathways out of poverty, it is not at all clear that privately-provided higher education is beneficial to the poor and that left alone, it can significantly contribute to poverty reduction in the short term. To see why consider the following thought process.

Let us assume, for purposes of exposition, that performance in university entrance examinations is correlated with income and other family characteristics. Put bluntly, the assumption is that, other things equal, children from wealthier households perform better than children from poorer households in university entrance examinations. Wealthier children are better resourced, receive better primary and secondary education, receive (in many cases) private tuition, are

likely to spend more time studying than running errands, are likely to have either or both parents educated, and associate with children of similar backgrounds. These place them at an advantage relative to children from income-poor households.¹⁸ Let us further assume that government universities, because they are older, better resourced and have a better reputation, have a higher admission cut-off point in university entrance examinations. Put differently, they are very selective and competitive.¹⁹ They also cost less to attend because of the high levels of public subsidy. It is easy to show that a large proportion of students in public higher education institutions will be drawn from well-off backgrounds. These are students from families that can afford to pay for their children's higher education but are not paying.

Now suppose that a government, seeking to expand access to higher education to the poor and disadvantaged groups such as women and ethnic minorities, passes a law permitting private provision of higher education. Assume that private providers because they exist to maximize profit depend on tuition for their revenues and receive no subsidies from government. The population of interest to private providers will thus consist of those less able students who could not win a place in the public universities. Assume also that private higher education institutions, because they are new and are yet to acquire reputational capital, will naturally set a lower admission cut-off mark. Since we assumed earlier that performance in the exams is correlated with income, it is easy to see that the main catchment population of these new schools will consist mostly of students from well-off households who were unable to get into the better public schools; this is because they have a higher willingness and ability to pay for higher education.

A simple diagram (Figure 3) can help illustrate this thought process. Assume that students are distributed along a horizontal axis according to performance. Let G represent performance and let $f(g)$ be the distribution function. We assume that this is a normal distribution and that both the public and private higher education institutions draw from a similar distribution. Let G_{pub} denote the cut-off point for public higher education institutions and G_{priv} denote the cut-off point for private higher education institutions. We assert that $G_{pub} > G_{priv}$. Then it is easy to show that private provision is unlikely to address the equity problem and therefore unlikely to contribute to significant progress towards poverty reduction, at least in the short run. As the average admission cut-off point falls, it is richer and better-off households who benefit more than the poorer households for whom access expansion is of vital importance if higher education is to be their pathway out of poverty.

Figure 3: Public and Private Higher Education Distribution

This analysis clearly illustrates the possible implications of increased private provision of higher education in the absence of government intervention. Ability to pay may crowd out merit as a criterion for admission into private higher education institutions. The result of this will be the accentuation and consolidation of existing social relations. Private higher education will thus not serve as a ready pathway out of poverty for most of Ethiopia's poor. For it to fulfil this promise, it is imperative that government put in place effective policies to enable the sector contribute to effective and real expansion of access to the poor. Such policies could include free land, bulk purchase of spaces for the poor, and subventions.

Funding

Private higher education institutions in Ethiopia are self-financing. This is the case in all African countries where the private provision sector is growing (Nwuke 2005). Private providers do not receive any subvention or special treatment from the State. However, their existence is changing the nature and content of the debate on government financing and provision of higher education. It is no longer anathema to talk of cost recovery in Ethiopian higher education. In this context, the Ethiopian government may need to reconsider the manner in which higher education in general in the country is currently funded. Private higher education institutions currently receive no funding from government. However, these

institutions serve a useful social purpose. Considering that higher education is a quasi-public good, government may consider new criteria for allocating funds among all higher education institutions in the country and across all programmes that they offer. This is critical in view of the fact that under the government's Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP III) higher education is envisioned to expand rapidly between 2005 and 2011. The private sector is expected to have an annual admission of at least 45,000–50,000 by the end of the plan period. This is a goal that the sector can achieve if there is a substantial injection of funds. For example, private nursing colleges could be provided with public financing to enable them to expand the enrolment and production of nurses critical for the country's efforts to meet the health Millennium Development Goals. A public funding mechanism that recognizes and embraces the private provision sector as part of the higher education system could be used to foster the emerging differentiation in the higher education sector, enabling institutions to exploit their areas of comparative and competitive advantage. Some of the institutions could be encouraged, through the funding system, to expand access while others can concentrate on research and competing with the best in the world.

Conclusion

The prospects of the private higher education sector in Ethiopia are bright. If the economy maintains the average annual growth rate of 5 percent of the previous years, it will be safe to assert that the demand for private higher education is likely to continue to expand. The country's demographic profile, dominated by young people, is going to be a very important factor too especially as it is unlikely that government expenditure will continue to grow at its current rate.

In conclusion, this short paper has explored the private higher education sector in Ethiopia. The analyses show that the sector, although young, is vibrant and making a demonstrable contribution to the expansion of access and the provision of industry-relevant skills. Given the small size of the sector and current restrictions on the types of courses and programs that they can offer, the sector is unlikely to threaten the average quality of higher education in Ethiopia in the short to medium term. On-going measures by the government through the Higher Education Relevance and Quality Assurance Agency (HERQA) to assure quality should be strengthened and scaled up. This is important as the private higher education sector is likely to consolidate and grow, driven by factors largely outside the control of government. To the extent that there is very limited research activity in these institutions, their contribution to the production of new knowledge is at best modest.

The future contribution of the sector will depend on many factors. First is the production of adequate manpower. In 2004, only 28 students were enrolled in Ph.D. programmes in Ethiopia (MoE 2005). This is insufficient for the needs of the public higher education sector and cannot be a basis for the expansion of the private provision sector. Government policy can seriously contribute to the attenuation of this constraint. Second, government policy, especially with respect to the establishment of new public sector universities and improving conditions in the old ones, will be an important determinant of the future of the private higher education sector. As pointed out elsewhere in this paper, the Ethiopian government in 2005 announced plans to establish thirteen new universities. These new universities, like the existing nine, will not charge (tuition) fees, and food and lodging will be provided free of charge. As the cost of living continues to rise, these attributes of the public sector universities could amplify incentives to choose public higher education, especially since some of the newer private higher education institutions have poorer facilities than the average public higher education institution. Third, the regulatory environment is very important for growth.

Finally, the private higher education sector is making a demonstrably positive contribution to Ethiopia's growth and development. It is educating students – future workers, tax payers and leaders – at no cost to the government, thereby freeing up resources for the public sector to address other priority national development needs. It is also contributing to the dampening of social tension that could have arisen from the stunting of the higher education aspirations of young people and parents by the limited intake capacity of public higher education institutions. A more conducive regulatory and operating environment (which includes duty exemption for the import of educational materials, access to land and security of (land) tenure) could unleash the potentials of the Ethiopian private higher education delivery sector to scale up its contribution to growth, poverty reduction and efforts to reach the MDGs in Ethiopia by the target date.

Notes

1. In this paper, the term higher education institution refers mainly to degree-awarding institutions. In counting the private higher education sector however, we include even those awarding diplomas, which are comparable to public Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET).
2. The number of public universities has grown significantly in recent times. In 2007, the public higher education sector consists of 21 universities (8 old and 13 new ones) under the direct supervision of the Ethiopian Ministry of Education, three specialized institutions under different Ethiopian government ministries/agencies and more than eight teacher-training colleges under the supervision of governments of the regional states.

3. Yizengaw (n.d) reports that gross tertiary enrolment ratio rose to 1.5 percent of the relevant age cohort in 2005. Note that Yizengaw includes students enrolled in private higher education institutions. The Government aims to raise this to 5 percent by the end of the current plan period in 2010/2011.
4. See, for example, Haile-Gabriel, A (2004) in 'Proceedings of the Second National Conference on Private Higher Education in Ethiopia', July 2004.
5. See in this regard World Bank (2003), Bedasso (2006), and Yizengaw (n.d).
6. The case of Unity College which had initially called itself a university exemplifies this early struggle over boundaries between the nascent private higher education sector and the government. The government's position was that Unity was not a university but a college. This controversy was resolved by Unity being re-designated as Unity University College.
7. See in this regard Information About Accredited and Pre-accredited Institutions, Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency, Ministry of Education
8. St. Mary's College was the first in the country to undertake a full quality audit (HESC 2005).
9. The growth in the number of nursing colleges probably reflects in part the high demand for nurses in main Ethiopian migrant destinations such as the USA, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom and South Africa.
10. This is a voluntary scheme introduced in 2003 whereby an amount is deducted monthly from the income or earnings of a graduate of a public university to defray the cost of his/her higher education. This amount is agreed between the government and the student at the beginning of each academic year and depends on the cost in each institution and the program of study. The implication is that students attending high cost – due to inefficiencies – institutions pay more upon graduation; it could discourage students from attending those public higher education institutions.
11. The share of students enrolled would be higher if diploma programmes are included. As can be seen from the 2004/2005 data where this category was included, the private sector accounted for nearly 25 percent.
12. See Nwuke (2001), the World Bank (2002) and The Task Force on Higher Education (2000).
13. This is about US\$172.17 million at an exchange rate of US\$1=8.5Ethiopian Birr.
14. Most of these are not really new but the upgrading/reclassification of some colleges or campuses of the previous eight universities into independent universities.
15. The conflict referred to here is the civil war – Eritrea's war of independence (which started in the early 1960s and intensified from the mid 1970s) and the war prosecuted by various groups against the Derg, the military dictatorship. The author recognizes that Ethiopia fought a border war with independent Eritrea in 1997/98 and has recently been involved in the conflict in Somali.

The impact of these recent conflicts on economic growth and budget outlay for higher education is not ignored or under-emphasized.

16. See Yizengaw op cit for a rich discussion of cost sharing in Ethiopian higher education.
17. Ethiopia has recently set up a higher education quality assurance agency.
18. This assumption is not far from the Ethiopia reality. According to the 1999 Ethiopia National Household and Consumption Survey (HICE) over 70 per cent of students in tertiary institutions came from households in the top income quintile (Yizengaw, n.d)
19. This is a trivial assumption in systems with very limited admission places (one or two universities) and a large pool of candidates as has been the case in Ethiopia.

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L'émergence et les perspectives de l'enseignement supérieur privé au Cameroun*

Luc Ngwe, Hilaire de Prince Pokam, Ernest Folefack,
& Albert Mandjack**

Résumé

L'enseignement supérieur privé s'est considérablement développé depuis la réforme du système universitaire entamée en 1993. Ce développement qui s'est engagé dans une relative impréparation de l'État a conduit à une multiplication quasi exponentielle d'institutions présentant des caractéristiques différentes en termes d'origines, de nature, d'identité et de statuts. Ces institutions ont également des situations différentes, notamment au niveau des structures, des offres de formation, des possibilités d'action variable ainsi que des positions différentielles dans l'espace. Au-delà de ces différences, l'espace d'enseignement supérieur privé est encore sous l'emprise de l'État, lequel assure la maîtrise de sa dynamique à travers le système d'accréditation, la structuration de l'offre de formation, le portage indirect par la fourniture du personnel, etc. Enfin, ce secteur qui reste assez fragile incite au questionnement quant aux possibilités réelles de son développement.

Abstract

Private higher education in Cameroon has developed considerably since its reform started in 1993. This development, which began when the state was relatively unprepared, has brought about a near exponential multiplication of institutions with different characteristics in terms of origin, nature, identity and status. These

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** Luc Ngwé, Attaché temporaire d'Enseignement et de Recherches, Université d'Avignon, France.

Hilaire de Prince Pokam, Chargé de cours, Université de Dschang, Cameroun.

Ernest Folefack, Assistant, Université de Dschang, Cameroun.

Albert Mandjack, Chargé de cours, Université de Douala, Cameroun.

institutions also face different situations, especially in their structures, training programmes, variable action possibilities and differential positions in space. Beyond these differences, private higher education is still under the grip of the state which controls its dynamics through the accreditation system, structuring of training programmes, indirect sponsorship through the provision of personnel, etc. Finally, the sector remains rather fragile and calls for the questioning of its real development possibilities.

Introduction

L'enseignement supérieur privé apparaît dans le paysage universitaire camerounais au détour de la décennie 1990. Avant cette date en effet, l'enseignement supérieur a été essentiellement public avec l'université unique complétée par une myriade de grandes écoles et de centres universitaires. La réorganisation du système qui intervient en 1993 est le produit d'une conjonction de deux facteurs international et national. Au plan international, le procès de redéfinition de la nature de l'éducation posé comme un bien commercialisable et à caractère privatif au niveau collectif et individuel (Tilak Jandhyala 2004), porte entre autres sur la diversification de l'offre et des acteurs. Dans ce cadre, le privé tend progressivement à s'imposer comme une alternative à la redynamisation de l'enseignement supérieur (World Bank 2000). Cette exigence de réforme des systèmes éducatifs qui est essentiellement portée par les institutions internationales (Banque Mondiale, FMI, Unesco) et appliquée aux pays européens et américains pendant la décennie 1970 est progressivement étendue dans les pays du Sud dans les années 1980. Elle est en fait partie intégrante des projets globaux de restructuration des États africains et dont les grandes étapes ont été les programmes d'ajustement structurel, les transitions démocratiques (Varghese 2004) et dans une moindre mesure le procès de mondialisation annoncé.

Cette prescription rencontre et se confronte à un contexte et une dynamique locaux. En effet, le Cameroun est sujet à une profonde reconfiguration sous la pression à la fois internationale des bailleurs de fonds et interne des groupes sociopolitiques. En fait, les exigences d'adoption d'un « État modeste » rencontre une situation de déliquescence de l'enseignement supérieur, notamment son incapacité à répondre aux objectifs assignés et nouveaux de formation, de recherche, de service à la communauté, de positionnement de ses produits (Ngwé, Pokam, Mandjack, Folefack 2006). Bien plus, le système universitaire mis en place depuis les indépendances n'a pas connu de réforme profonde¹. La combinaison de ces différents éléments internes et internationaux annonce le déclassement du système existant, voire sa faillite et précipite sa réforme. Celle-ci débouche entre autres sur deux dynamiques concomitan-

tes : une tendance à la privatisation des services éducatifs dans les universités publiques (accroissement des frais de scolarité, modification des règles de financement, transformation voire suppression des services aux étudiants, etc.) ; une ouverture du paysage aux initiatives privées avec la création des institutions privées.

Cette ouverture, entamée dans une relative impréparation s'est produite de façon progressive, et a abouti en 2005 à la reconnaissance de 34 institutions d'enseignement supérieur.² Plusieurs demandes de création étaient également en instance d'étude au ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur. Les institutions autorisées sont de natures différentes, ont des origines et des statuts tout aussi différents³ et présentent des caractéristiques différenciées, en termes d'identité⁴, d'offre et niveau de formation, de buts, etc.

Cet article se propose justement d'explorer et de questionner cette dynamique de l'enseignement supérieur privé. L'analyse se fera au travers de l'observation de trois institutions : l'Institut Catholique d'Afrique Centrale de Yaoundé (UCAC)⁵, l'Université des Montagnes de Bangangté (UDM) et le Complexe Universitaire ESG⁶-ISTA⁷ de Douala. Ces trois institutions sont en effet représentatives de la forme actuelle de l'enseignement supérieur privé au Cameroun. Tandis que l'UCAC s'est constituée sur le modèle d'université et bénéficie de ce label auprès des autorités, l'UDM et le Complexe Universitaire ont été accrédités comme un institut pour le premier, un institut et une école pour le second. Egalement, ces institutions ont une origine ainsi qu'une identité différentes. Autant de variables qui non seulement permettent de rendre compte du paysage de l'enseignement supérieur privé au Cameroun, mais surtout jettent un éclairage certain sur les tendances qui se dessinent.

Par ailleurs, les institutions privées évoluent dans un contexte et un environnement socio-économique et politique spécifique où le monopole de l'État ou du moins ses vellétés de contrôle de l'espace d'enseignement supérieur restent fortes. En effet, l'espace de formation est encore structuré par « le passé étatique » en termes d'offre de formation, de personnel et dans une moindre mesure de destination des produits. Par conséquent, ces trois institutions entretiennent des rapports différenciés avec l'État et s'inscrivent différemment dans l'espace de l'enseignement supérieur camerounais. Enfin, la pérennité ainsi que le développement de ces institutions suscitent des questionnements, tant par rapport à la permanence d'une demande éducative forte que les capacités financières d'investissement de ces institutions pour leur développement.

Une diversité d'institutions et de tendances

Le paysage de l'Enseignement Supérieur Privé au Cameroun se met en place au travers des phases qui se succèdent dans le temps et parfois se contredisent

les unes les autres. Il est également caractérisé par une diversité d'institutions et de tendances qui les animent. Cette diversité se manifeste sur plusieurs plans. D'une part, les initiatives et les modalités de création divergent autant que la nature et l'identité des institutions, d'autre part, ces institutions ont des infrastructures et des structures de fonctionnement variables en fonction de leur nature, de leurs moyens ainsi que de leurs perspectives. Enfin, elles comportent des modes de financement différenciés, proposent des formations variables même si l'on retrouve quelques invariants génériques.

Des initiatives et modalités de création variables

Les institutions d'Enseignement Supérieur Privé obéissent à des initiatives et aux modalités variables en ce qui concerne leur création comme l'illustrent parfaitement l'UCAC, l'UDM et le Complexe Universitaire ESG-ISTA de Douala.

Initiatives de création et identité des institutions

Selon la loi d'orientation de l'Enseignement Supérieur de septembre 2001, plusieurs catégories de personnes peuvent créer une institution privée d'Enseignement Supérieur. Il s'agit des personnes physiques et morales privées, des organisations publiques internationales (Églises et organisations internationales). Peuvent également bénéficier de cette possibilité, les universités étrangères qui souhaitent avoir des campus au Cameroun ou des activités de formation à distance à partir du Cameroun, en dehors des conventions ou accords particuliers. En ce sens, les institutions privées d'enseignement supérieur ont des origines différenciées.

Ainsi, le Complexe universitaire de Douala créé en 1993 relève de l'initiative d'une personne physique tandis que l'UCAC et l'UDM sont le produit de l'initiative des personnes morales, mais ayant des statuts distincts. En effet, l'Institut Catholique de Yaoundé est créé en juillet 1989 par l'Association des Conférences Episcopales de la Région d'Afrique Centrale (ACERAC). Il s'agit d'une personne morale de nature confessionnelle. Quant à l'UDM, elle est créée en août 1994 par l'Association pour l'Éducation et le Développement (AED)⁸ qui regroupe essentiellement des universitaires Camerounais et étrangers⁹ ainsi que des hommes d'affaires.

Ces modalités de création des institutions structurent fortement leur identité. Ainsi, le Complexe Universitaire est un établissement laïc et a une origine proprement nationale en ce sens que le promoteur désigné est un ressortissant camerounais. L'UCAC qui est de nature confessionnelle est une institution étrangère implantée sur le territoire camerounais dans la mesure où elle est régie par un accord entre le Saint Siège et le Cameroun. L'UDM créée par une

association non confessionnelle est à cheval entre le local et le transnational car les membres de l'AED et le personnel de gestion se recrutent également hors du pays, particulièrement en Europe. Il en est également des buts de ces institutions. Justement à ce sujet, la loi d'orientation de l'enseignement supérieur de 2001 précise que les institutions privées d'enseignement supérieur sont des structures à but non lucratif. Or, on observe une diversité de tendances dans les buts affirmés ou non de ces institutions. En effet, le Complexe Universitaire de Douala s'inscrit plutôt dans la logique des écoles de commerce ayant un but lucratif. L'UCAC et l'UDM quant à elles, sont créées par des organisations qui par leur statut ou par leurs règles de fonctionnement se présentent comme des institutions à but non lucratif.

Toutefois, cette classification sommaire (à but lucratif et non lucratif) n'épuise pas la palette infinie des enjeux qui président à la création de ces institutions. Ainsi, par exemple, l'Institut Catholique manifeste la présence de l'Église Catholique sur le territoire camerounais à côté d'autres religions, mais dont les effets sociaux et politiques sont indéniables. Tout comme l'UDM doit être analysée en prenant en compte les concurrences nationales entre différentes communautés du Cameroun dans l'espace public. Autant de considérations qui sont de nature à différencier leurs tendances tant au niveau de leurs structures, de leur fonctionnement que de leurs rapports avec l'État et par voie de conséquence leur positionnement dans l'espace d'enseignement supérieur camerounais.

La construction graduelle d'un cadre juridique

Le processus de mise en place d'un espace d'enseignement supérieur privé a connu plusieurs phases auxquelles correspondent des tendances institutionnelles différentes. Ces différentes phases peuvent se ramener à trois périodes renvoyant également à des réalités distinctes : la première couvre la période qui va du début des années 1980 jusqu'en 1993, moment de l'émergence d'un enseignement dit post-secondaire. La seconde va de 1993 à 2001, celle de la réforme du système universitaire camerounais qui officialise et encourage l'existence d'un espace d'enseignement supérieur privé ainsi que de foisonnement de ces institutions. Cette période est essentiellement marquée par un vide juridique. La troisième qui s'étend de 2001 à 2006, est caractérisée par une organisation progressive d'un espace d'enseignement supérieur privé à travers la mise en place d'un cadre juridique draconien.

- Une période de vide juridique féconde
L'État camerounais qui engage la réforme de son système d'enseignement supérieur, affiche dès le départ son impréparation à l'ouverture de l'espace

d'enseignement supérieur en général et à l'organisation de l'enseignement supérieur privé en particulier. En effet, la réforme de 1993, précipitée par les revendications récurrentes qui se manifestent à l'université reconnaît les possibilités d'existence d'un enseignement supérieur privé. Or, cette reconnaissance ne constitue pas en réalité une naissance dans la mesure où il existe déjà des structures d'enseignement secondaires privées qui offrent des formations post-secondaires conduisant aux diplômes nationaux de Brevet de Technicien Supérieur (BTS) et accessoirement aux diplômes étrangers. Il en est ainsi du Groupe Tankou Supérieur, de l'Institut Samba Supérieur et de l'Institut Siantou Supérieur qui sont au départ des collèges d'enseignement secondaire privé. Fonctionnant sur la base des autorisations, ces structures constituent en fait des dérogations marginales face à l'unicité du système d'enseignement supérieur basé sur le public. En revanche, la nouveauté est la consécration officielle d'un espace proprement privé d'enseignement supérieur.

Toutefois, cette consécration n'est suivie d'aucune réglementation jusqu'en 2001 créant ainsi un vide juridique propice au foisonnement désordonné des institutions d'enseignement dans la mesure où l'État n'a défini au préalable aucun cadre de fonctionnement (infrastructures, formations, etc.) (Galbraith 2003). Ainsi, on assiste à deux phénomènes imbriqués. D'une part, les institutions secondaires existantes tentent d'investir le nouveau marché en opérant des mutations de leurs structures pour parfois les ériger en institutions d'enseignement supérieur ou encore en université. Ce sont notamment les cas de l'Institut Siantou Supérieur et l'Institut Ndi Samba qui tentent de s'ériger en université. D'autre part, plusieurs nouvelles institutions privées sont ainsi créées et fonctionnent pendant cette période, tantôt sur la base d'une simple autorisation qui leur est délivrée, tantôt en ayant simplement déposé un dossier et en attente d'une autorisation.

Dans le cadre des institutions qui nous intéressent, nous retrouvons ces différents cas de figure. En effet, l'UCAC est créée en juillet 1989 par un Accord de siège entre la République du Cameroun et le Saint-Siège et bénéficie en même temps du titre d'université. Le Complexe universitaire de Douala créé en 1993 sous la dénomination d'École Supérieure de Gestion fonctionne sur la base de l'autorisation qui lui est délivrée. L'UDM en revanche, qui s'est attribuée d'entrée de jeu le label d'université, dépose un dossier en vue de sa création en 1996. Face au silence de l'Administration, elle ouvre ses portes en 2000 et fonctionne sans aucune autorisation jusqu'en 2005. Pourtant, une autorisation de création est délivrée en septembre 2002 sans précision ni sur les intentions de l'administration ni en réponse aux attentes des promoteurs, parlant de la création d'une institution d'enseignement supérieur privé. Puis, interviennent les arrêtés du 12 janvier 2005 qui semblent ignorer le texte de 2002

car ces derniers textes portent à la fois sur la création de deux instituts et leur ouverture respective.

Ces deux mécanismes de création et de transformation constituent une des phases du processus de structuration d'un espace d'enseignement supérieur privé en ce sens qu'elles construisent un état de fait avec lequel l'État doit composer dans son intervention. Cette phase est complétée par un arsenal juridique draconien lequel procède en même temps à l'organisation de l'espace et à des tentatives de définition d'une cohérence.

- La mise en place d'un cadre juridique draconien

Depuis 2001, le vide juridique est graduellement comblé par un arsenal de textes qui, par leur caractère draconien et systématique se veulent une véritable mise en place d'un espace structuré en face du foisonnement des initiatives privées. Trois caractéristiques se dégagent de cette période et des textes qui la régissent. D'abord, les textes entérinent un état de fait dans la mesure où ils prennent acte des institutions existantes. En fait, l'État se retrouve devant le fait accompli et est donc obligé de reconnaître les institutions existantes. Le cas de l'UDM est illustratif à cet égard. Ayant fonctionné pendant quatre ans sans autorisation, l'État est plus ou moins contraint de délivrer une autorisation à cette institution.

Ensuite, l'État procède à une tentative de reprise en main du processus en l'organisant. C'est ce à quoi procède la loi du 16 avril 2001 qui fixe le cadre juridique général et fondamental de l'Enseignement Supérieur au Cameroun¹⁰. Elle indique que l'Enseignement Supérieur est constitué de l'ensemble des enseignements et des formations post secondaires assurés par les Institutions publiques d'enseignement supérieur et par les institutions privées agréées comme établissements d'enseignement supérieur par l'État. Elle précise surtout que l'État qui accorde à l'Enseignement Supérieur un caractère de priorité nationale, l'organise et le contrôle.

Enfin, la reprise en main du processus s'accompagne, à l'instar de ce que décrit Ka Ho Mok (1997) dans le cas chinois, d'une tentative de définition d'une cohérence du système laquelle consolide en retour le contrôle de l'État sur l'espace. Ce processus s'opère à travers deux mécanismes imbriqués. D'un côté, l'État distingue et hiérarchise les différentes institutions en même temps qu'il gradue l'acquisition des différents statuts. En ce sens, on a au niveau inférieur les établissements privés d'enseignement supérieur qui sont des structures assurant des formations post-secondaires. Au niveau supérieur, on retrouve les universités privées qui sont des structures assurant des formations supérieures et comprenant au moins deux établissements.¹¹

En même temps, l'existence d'une institution privée d'enseignement supérieur ainsi que son changement de statut sont ponctués de phases successives attestées par l'État, notamment l'accord de création, l'autorisation et l'agrément. Ainsi, une institution qui entend exister ou encore passer du statut d'établissement à celui d'université doit parcourir ces différentes étapes habilitées par le Ministre de l'Enseignement Supérieur et l'avis de la Commission Nationale de l'Enseignement Supérieur Privé (CNESP). De l'autre, il définit les conditions de création et de fonctionnement des institutions privées d'enseignement supérieur¹², les conditions et les modalités d'obtention des autorisations d'enseigner, des accords et agréments aux postes de responsabilité dans les institutions privées d'enseignement supérieur¹³, les modalités de création et d'ouverture au Cameroun des institutions privées d'enseignement supérieur préparant à des diplômes étrangers,¹⁴ les programmes de formation et la collation de diplômes.

Ces différentes mesures qui contribuent à organiser l'espace de l'enseignement supérieur privé tout en consolidant l'emprise de l'État produisent des effets différenciés sur les institutions soumises à notre étude. Elles offrent moins de difficultés aux Instituts comme le Complexe Universitaire de Douala qui au départ avait choisi ce statut. En revanche, elles affrontent l'UDM qui a ouvert ses portes et initié des formations en se fondant sur son ambition de devenir une université. Le déclassement de statut qu'a connu l'UDM qui, aux termes de la législation est un établissement privé d'enseignement supérieur comportant deux instituts (des sciences de la santé et sciences et technologies), s'accompagne d'un déclassement de ses formations. L'UCAC par contre, est la seule institution privée qui échappe à toutes ces procédures dans la mesure où elle est reconnue officiellement depuis 1989 comme université.

Cette différence de statut induit du même coup, le cycles de formation habilités, la nature des diplômes délivrés et leur reconnaissance. Elle induit aussi des rapports avec l'État et par voie de conséquence le positionnement dans l'espace universitaire.

Des structures et infrastructures de fonctionnement différenciées

Les structures et les infrastructures caractérisent les institutions d'éducation en général et d'enseignement supérieur en particulier. Ces éléments les matérialisent et donnent une idée du niveau d'investissement, du projet et/ou de la tendance de l'institution. Ces éléments qui constituent des pré requis banals pour toute institution d'enseignement supérieur sont des indicateurs visibles de leur effectivité, de leur évolution, de leur projection et subséquemment de leur viabilité. Dans le cas du Cameroun, ils revêtent une importance particulière dans

la mesure où ils fondent l'appréciation de ces institutions, particulièrement par l'État tant dans le processus de leur constitution que de leur transformation. En fait, l'État définit un modèle de gouvernement minimal pour des institutions à savoir un Conseil d'établissement, un Chef d'établissement, un Responsable des affaires académiques, un Agent comptable pour les établissements ; un Conseil d'administration de l'université, un Chef d'Institution universitaire, un Responsable des affaires académiques, un Agent comptable pour les universités.¹⁵

Plus encore, l'État intervient dans la mise en place des structures administratives et académiques. Deux arrêtés en définissent les règles. Celui du 27 mars 2002 qui fixe la composition, le fonctionnement et les attributions des organes administratifs et des autorités académiques des institutions privées d'enseignement supérieur¹⁶ et celui du 16 avril 2002 qui fixe les conditions et les modalités d'obtention des autorisations d'enseigner, des accords et agréments aux postes de responsabilité dans les institutions privées d'enseignement supérieur.¹⁷ A cet égard, les institutions soumises à notre analyse présentent des différences tant au niveau des structures que des infrastructures.

Des structures conformes à son statut d'université pour l'UCAC

L'UCAC est une université régionale placée sous la tutelle du Saint-Siège et de l'ACERAC. Sa direction est assurée à deux niveaux. Au sommet, on a le Conseil Supérieur qui est l'organe chargé de la direction générale. Il est constitué d'un Evêque représentant chacune des six Conférences Épiscopales des pays de l'ACERAC et présidé par le Grand Chancelier de l'Université. Au niveau inférieur, on a le Recteur, assisté de deux Vice-Recteurs et du Secrétaire Général. L'UCAC comporte également d'autres structures qui participent à la gestion académique, politique, financière, de l'institution, notamment le Conseil Scientifique, le Conseil d'Université, le Conseil d'orientation et le Conseil d'Administration

Sur le plan académique, l'UCAC comporte outre une Ecole des Infirmiers plusieurs établissements classiques d'une université, en l'occurrence la Faculté des Sciences Sociales et de Gestion, la Faculté de Théologie, la Faculté de Philosophie et le Département du Droit canon. L'administration de ces établissements est assurée par un doyen assisté d'un vice-doyen et d'un secrétaire. Sur le plan académique, la gestion est effectuée par un Conseil de Faculté composé d'un Doyen, d'enseignants permanents, d'un représentant des enseignants non permanents et de trois représentants des étudiants. Enfin, l'UCAC dispose de nombreux groupes de recherches.

Quant à ses infrastructures, elles confirment son statut d'université avec ses trois campus (Nkolbisson, d'Ekounou et Messa) comportant chacun de

nombreuses salles de cours et amphithéâtres d'une centaine de places, des bibliothèques

Des structures proches de celles d'une université à l'UDM

L'UDM, comme l'UCAC a une direction à deux niveaux : une administration mise en place par l'AED et une administration opérationnelle de l'Université. L'administration mise en place par l'AED comprend : l'Assemblée Générale de membres de l'AED (221 membres), le Conseil d'orientation – organe délibérant de 40 membres, le Bureau Exécutif de l'AED. A cela s'ajoute plusieurs commissions.

Au niveau opérationnel, l'UDM est dirigée par un Conseil d'Administration qui détermine sa politique générale. Sous ce Conseil d'Administration, on retrouve le Conseil de l'Université et le Président de l'Université qui est chef de l'administration générale de l'Université. Le Président est assisté d'un secrétariat, d'un ou de plusieurs Chargés de Mission et de trois directions : direction des affaires académiques et de la coopération (DAAC), direction des affaires administratives et techniques (DAAT), direction des affaires financières et comptables (DAFC).

Sur le plan académique, l'UDM possède deux établissements qui sont agréés comme des instituts : la Faculté ou l'institut des Sciences de la Santé et la Faculté ou l'Institut des Sciences et de Technologie. Chaque Faculté est gérée par un doyen assisté d'un assesseur. D'autres structures concourent à l'administration de la Faculté, notamment l'Assemblée de Faculté composée du Doyen et du Doyen Assesseur, des représentants de l'AED, des représentants des usagers (étudiants et stagiaires), des représentants élus du personnel enseignant et de personnalités extérieures.

Au niveau des infrastructures, l'UDM possède un potentiel infrastructurel avec plusieurs sites, mais pas encore mise en valeur. Celui existant reste assez modeste.

Le Complexe Universitaire de Douala et sa structure modeste

Contrairement à l'UCAC ou à l'UDM, le Complexe Universitaire a une structure plus modeste et adaptée à son statut d'institut. Son promoteur assure l'essentiel de son administration car il est le Principal de l'établissement. Il est assisté d'un Directeur des activités académiques, d'un Directeur de recherche et de la coopération et des coordonnateurs de niveaux et de filières. Au niveau académique, le Complexe comporte deux établissements complètement intégrés à la structure globale de gestion.

Les infrastructures du Complexe Universitaire sont bien plus modestes par rapport à celles de l'UCAC et de l'UDM. Ce qui se justifie en partie par le fait qu'il s'agit d'un institut.

Des modalités différentes de financement et leurs aléas

Le financement des institutions d'enseignement supérieur constitue une question préoccupante à travers le monde (Vinokur 2001). En effet, la ressource financière constitue une variable importante non seulement dans la création, mais surtout dans l'efficacité, la survie et le développement des institutions d'enseignement, particulièrement privées. Cette situation est encore plus prégnante au Cameroun dans la mesure où les établissements publics peinent encore à diversifier leurs ressources et que l'État n'accorde aucune subvention aux institutions privées. Du coup, chaque institution privée soumise à notre analyse développe ses propres modes de financement.

Un financement plus diversifié à l'UCAC

La dimension internationale et confessionnelle de l'UCAC est un atout considérable pour cette institution car elle lui permet de diversifier ses sources de financement. Celui-ci provient de deux sources principales auxquelles sont attachées des missions spécifiques : les ressources propres pour le fonctionnement, les dons et les legs pour la réalisation des infrastructures.

Pour son fonctionnement, l'UCAC vit principalement de ses propres ressources qui sont essentiellement constituées des droits d'inscription, des frais d'hébergement dans les cités universitaires. Les frais annuels de scolarité varient selon les cycles : 1^{er} cycle 605 000 F CFA, 2^e cycle 715 000 F CFA, 3^e cycle 825 000 F CFA. Les frais d'hébergement s'élèvent à 270 000 F CFA (soit 30 000 F par mois).

Quant à la réalisation de son infrastructure, l'UCAC bénéficie de soutiens ponctuels de divers bailleurs de fonds dont les principaux sont : des organismes catholiques allemands (MISSIO, MISEREOR, Diocèses de Munich, Cologne, Rottenburg-Stuttgart, Limburg, Fridbourg, Regensburg), la Conférence Episcopale Italienne, la Coopération Française, l'Union Européenne, l'État belge, l'Association des Conférences Episcopales de la Région d'Afrique Centrale. Ces ressources, qui prennent des formes différentes (dons, subventions...) sont destinées à satisfaire des besoins en investissement immobiliers ou de besoins pédagogiques (équipements didactiques, informatique, acquisition des livres, etc.). En dépit de cette diversification des sources de financement, l'UCAC éprouve certaines difficultés financières qui l'obligent à envisager d'autres perspectives, notamment la constitution de la Fondation Saint-Augustin et le Comité de Levée de Fonds.

Un financement à base communautaire à l'UDM

L'UDM a trois modes de financement : les paiements en espèce (frais de scolarité, les cotisations des membres de l'AED et autres), les dons en nature (terrain, équipements etc), les missions d'enseignement prises en charge soit par un bienfaiteur de l'université ou par les organismes étrangers, soit non rémunérées et considérées comme des dons ou des contributions personnelles de ceux qui dispensent ces enseignements.

Ces sources peuvent se regrouper en deux catégories de sources de financement : certaines et incertaines. Les sources certaines concernent les frais de scolarité qui s'élèvent à 500 000 F CFA pour la Faculté des Sciences et de Technologies et 1 050 000 F CFA pour la Faculté des Sciences de la Santé. La certitude ici réside dans le fait que c'est la condition pour suivre les enseignements, prétendre à la qualité d'étudiant et que l'université peut percevoir avec plus d'assurance de chaque étudiant.

Les sources incertaines sont constituées de dons de toute nature, de subventions, de cotisations des membres d'associations parties prenantes qui peuvent être très importants. L'incertitude de ces ressources provient du fait qu'elles ne dépendent pas de la volonté des responsables de l'université, mais de celle des mécènes qui n'ont aucune contrainte comme les étudiants, à honorer constamment leurs engagements. Ce qui fragilise cette institution qui, sans autonomie financière ne saurait fonctionner normalement et incite à poser la question de son avenir sans ce mécénat ou encore en misant sur les aléas de celui-ci.

Un financement simplifié au Complexe universitaire

Contrairement à l'UCAC et à l'UDM, le Complexe universitaire ne fonctionne que sur la base des droits d'inscription qui s'élèvent à 350 000 F CFA par étudiant et des frais d'étude du dossier qui s'élèvent à 25 000 F CFA par étudiant. La limitation de ses sources de financement qui s'expliquerait en partie par l'absence d'une politique partenariale rend cette institution totalement tributaire des aléas de la demande scolaire.

La diversité des sources de financement de ces trois institutions manifeste également les différentes tendances de ces institutions ainsi que leurs perspectives de développement. En même temps, ces modes de financement interrogent quant à leur viabilité à terme dans la mesure où ils présentent de nombreux aléas. D'une part, la survie de ces institutions repose sur la constance d'une demande sociale d'éducation dans la mesure où les ressources financières de ces trois institutions sont soit essentiellement basées sur les frais de scolarité (l'Institut Catholique et Université des Montagnes) soit exclusive-

ment (Complexe Universitaire de Douala). D'autre part, les autres sources de financement dont bénéficient ces institutions, en l'occurrence les dons et legs provenant du Cameroun et de l'étranger, les contributions des membres de l'Association fondatrice pour l'Université des Montagnes, le soutien financier de divers bailleurs de fonds, particulièrement internationaux¹⁸ pour l'Institut Catholique présentent deux caractéristiques.

D'un côté, elles sont ponctuelles et aléatoires en ce sens qu'elles sont soumises à l'effet de conjoncture. Par exemple, les cotisations des membres de l'Association fondatrice de l'Université des Montagnes autant que les vacations gratuites qui constituent une part non négligeable du budget de cette institution ne constituent pas des données stables et consolidées en matière de financement face à l'accroissement des besoins de cette institution.

De l'autre, ces différentes contributions se sont avérées des leviers importants dans le processus de constitution et/ou de développement de l'institution.¹⁹ Le caractère aléatoire que présente ce mécanisme suggère des questionnements sur les capacités d'autonomisation de ces institutions et surtout leur viabilité ainsi que leur efficience à terme ; d'autant que les filières de formation qu'elles entendent investir (santé, technologie de l'information et de la communication) nécessitent des investissements constants et coûteux.

Cette absence d'assise financière solide des institutions privées d'enseignement supérieur peut diligenter alors les tendances à la constitution des « écuries » sur le modèle des écoles de commerce en France, sorte de fabrique des diplômés conjoncturels. Un tel processus ne manquerait pas d'impacter sur la dynamique de l'enseignement supérieur, notamment d'en modifier la philosophie pour l'orienter vers une logique uniquement marchande sous forme de bien à caractère essentiellement privé.

Des disparités sur le plan académique

Les institutions privées d'enseignement supérieur connaissent également de grandes disparités sur le plan académique, notamment au niveau de leurs offres de formation, des modalités d'accès et de la délivrance des diplômes. Quant au personnel enseignant, il varie également d'une institution à l'autre même si on y retrouve des caractéristiques communes

Les offres de formation

L'offre de formation constitue un élément important dans la caractérisation d'une institution d'enseignement supérieur. Levier important dans les exigences posées par les bailleurs de fonds en vue de la restructuration des espaces d'enseignement supérieur à travers le monde, elle constitue un des éléments de justification de l'émergence d'un secteur éducatif privé autant que de son cré-

dit (World Bank 2000). En effet, face à l'insuffisance de l'offre publique autant qu'à son discrédit actuel, les institutions privées à l'instar de l'UDM et de l'UCAC justifient parfois leur démarche par le souci de combler ce manque en termes de nombre, de qualité ou de différenciation (AAU 1995).

Les institutions soumises à notre étude présentent des orientations différentes en matière d'offres de formation.

- Une offre de formation à tendance généraliste à l'UCAC

L'UCAC offre dans ses trois Facultés, une formation très généraliste. Elle possède quelques filières professionnalisantes surtout en Faculté des Sciences Sociales et de Gestion. Sa plus grande spécificité est sa filière religieuse qui la distingue de toutes les institutions d'enseignement supérieur tant publique que privée.

Par ailleurs son offre de formation s'étend sur l'ensemble des cycles universitaires et comporte des durées variables. En effet, les formations du 1^{er} cycle ont une durée de 2ans, celles du 2e cycle de 4 ans, et celles du 3e cycle ont une durée variable.

- Une offre de formation spécifique à l'UDM

L'UDM qui aspire à devenir une université, n'a pas une vocation généraliste, mais se veut spécialisée. Elle se concentre sur les Sciences de la santé et les nouvelles technologies. Cependant, son offre de formation présente une certaine dualité liée à son statut incertain voire ambigu ainsi qu'à la situation de fait dans laquelle se trouve l'institution. Ayant, en effet, fonctionné pendant quatre ans sans autorisation, elle a inscrit des étudiants dans les cycles de formation liés à son projet de constitution en université. Or, elle a été déclassée comme institut par l'autorisation de fonctionner qui lui est accordée entraînant par la même occasion le déclassement de son offre de formation. Du coup, son offre oscille entre les formations accréditées par l'État (professions médicales et sciences et technologies de premier cycle) et celles revendiquées et/ou préparées par l'institution avec le concours de la coopération internationale (médecine générale, pharmacie, sciences et technologie de 2e cycle). En début 2007, la position de l'État à l'égard de cette institution s'est assouplie à la faveur d'un accord de partenariat que celle-ci a conclu avec l'Université de Yaoundé I.

- Une offre une formation axée sur la gestion et les nouvelles technologies au Complexe Universitaire de Douala

L'ESG-ISTA de Douala s'inscrit dans la tradition classique des écoles de commerce telles qu'elles existent en Europe. Son offre de formation est essentiel-

lement axée sur la gestion et les nouvelles technologies. Limitée au premier cycle (BTS), elle se veut professionnalisante comme la plupart des écoles supérieures de formation au Cameroun.

Toutes ces filières sont enseignées soit en formation initiale pour une durée de deux ans couronnés par un BTS, soit en formation permanente. Celle-ci se veut une formation accélérée qui consiste en une forme de spécialisation qui vise à encadrer l'étudiant dans un domaine précis en six mois

Le personnel enseignant

Le personnel enseignant ou de formation constitue une des composantes essentielles des institutions d'enseignement supérieur. De son nombre, de son niveau de qualification autant que de son investissement dépendent en effet l'existence pérenne de l'institution, de sa performance ainsi que de son développement (Altbach 1999). Or, le personnel de formation, notamment son nombre et la permanence de son niveau de qualification constituent une question récurrente de l'enseignement supérieur camerounais depuis les indépendances.

Cette situation a connu une accélération depuis 1993 consécutive à la réforme du système laquelle a conduit entre autres à redimensionner sa taille. On a alors assisté à la création de cinq grands ensembles publics en lieu et place de l'unique université existante. Bien plus, à l'intérieur de ces grands ensembles, on retrouve une myriade d'institutions généralistes et spécialisées. Enfin, on a assisté à l'émergence d'institutions privées d'enseignement supérieur.

Cette modification morphologique de l'espace d'enseignement supérieur qui a accru les besoins en personnel de formation a du même coup accentué la pénurie de celui-ci à laquelle se confrontent particulièrement les institutions privées. En effet, les trois institutions privées analysées ne disposent pas d'un personnel de formation propre en nombre suffisant. Leurs effectifs, variables d'une institution à l'autre, sont essentiellement composés de deux catégories fort inégales : les permanents et les vacataires. De plus, cette dernière catégorie comprend également différents sous-groupes tels les enseignants associés, les enseignants vacataires, les missionnaires et les bénévoles. Enfin, ce personnel provient d'horizons divers, notamment des établissements publics, des administrations de l'État, de l'étranger, des entreprises privées

Ainsi, l'UCAC compte 51 permanents et 201 vacataires. L'UDM comptait 49 enseignants en 2002 dont 4 permanents et 45 vacataires. Bien plus, ses effectifs enseignants fluctuent d'une année à l'autre eu égard au statut hétérogène de ce personnel. Les vacataires sont constitués essentiellement des missionnaires de la coopération, des bénévoles et des personnels des établissements publics.

Le complexe universitaire compte selon la statistique officielle de 2002, 63 enseignants dont 4 permanents et 59 vacataires. Il compterait en 2006 selon les estimations de son fondateur 85 enseignants dont plus de deux-tiers sont vacataires.

Si on tente une comparaison avec les universités publiques, il ressort que les institutions privées sont mieux loties en valeur absolue en matière de personnel enseignant. En effet, les 13 institutions privées agréées en 2002 compaient un total de 837 enseignants contre 2110 pour les 5 universités publiques. Toutefois, cette embellie est vite tempérée par la différenciation des statuts des personnels. En fait, la plupart des enseignants des institutions privées sont des vacataires. Ce qui ne manque pas d'avoir des effets sur les mécanismes de leurs investissements dans la mesure où leur présence sur le campus est limitée à leurs vacances. Plus encore, leurs projections de carrière s'inscrivent davantage dans le cadre des institutions publiques et étatiques.

Quant au niveau de qualification de ce personnel, il varie d'une institution à l'autre bien que réglementé par l'État. En effet, l'État exige que le personnel enseignant des institutions privées ait le même niveau de qualification que celui des établissements publics. Or, le niveau minimal requis pour enseigner est Bac+5. Dans l'impossibilité de donner avec précision ce niveau au regard de l'état actuel des recherches,²⁰ nous indiquons quelques tendances. Ainsi, le niveau de qualification du personnel enseignant de l'UCAC et de l'UDM semble répondre aux exigences étatiques dans la mesure où ces deux institutions soit emploient principalement le personnel des institutions publiques pour leurs enseignements (cas de l'UDM), soit combinent l'emploi du personnel public et une politique de formation de formateurs (cas de l'UCAC). En l'occurrence, l'UCAC comptait en 2004, 108 enseignants ayant le grade universitaire de docteur (IAU 2004). Le personnel enseignant de l'UDM vient principalement de l'Université de Yaoundé I (École Polytechnique, de la Faculté Biomédicale de Yaoundé I) ou encore des universités étrangères. Quant au Complexe universitaire de Douala, son personnel semble répondre pour la majorité aux critères fixés. Il compte en effet selon les affirmations de son promoteur, 23 enseignants ayant le grade de docteur, 23 ayant les diplômes DEA/DESS et 23 ayant le titre d'ingénieur.

Au demeurant, les trois institutions présentent des situations différentes tant au niveau de leurs statuts, de leur identité, des structures, etc. Ce qui leur imprime des positions et des possibilités d'action variables dans l'espace de l'enseignement supérieur au Cameroun autant que des trajectoires différenciées. Au-delà de ces différences, ces institutions présentent quelques caractéristiques semblables liées à la fragilité du secteur et à l'emprise de l'État.

Un espace sous contrôle de l'État et encore fragile

L'espace de l'enseignement supérieur privé forme une configuration de jeu (Elias 1991) dans laquelle l'État exerce une très grande emprise sur les autres acteurs à tel point que les perspectives de pérennité et de développement de l'Enseignement Supérieur Privé au Cameroun sont en grande partie tributaires de son action. Ces perspectives dépendent également des stratégies des institutions privées qui tentent par divers mécanismes de s'affranchir de la tutelle de l'État

La forte emprise de l'État sur l'Enseignement Supérieur Privé

Les perspectives de développement de l'Enseignement Supérieur Privé au Cameroun laissent percevoir une forte emprise de l'État. Celui-ci joue un rôle d'influence, soit directement par une ouverture contrôlée du champ, soit indirectement à travers le portage des institutions privées et la structuration de leur offre de formation. La compréhension de cette emprise mérite de prendre en compte un certain nombre de facteurs et de contraintes qui produisent des effets contrastés. D'un côté, la tendance à la continuité du passé étatique de l'enseignement supérieur, liée en partie à la « vampirisation » de l'espace public par l'État, limite encore les possibilités de développement de l'initiative privée en général et de l'enseignement supérieur en particulier. De l'autre, la tendance au développement anarchique de l'enseignement supérieur privé autant que les priorités socio-économiques nationales contraignent l'État à assurer le contrôle de l'espace d'enseignement supérieur et d'en assurer la régulation.

Une ouverture contrôlée du champ

Le champ d'enseignement supérieur en général est structuré en grande partie par l'État qui est le maître d'œuvre dans la création de la plupart des institutions à travers la définition quasi unilatérale des règles du jeu. Si les institutions publiques sont directement l'émanation de l'État, celui-ci modèle également les conditions d'existence des institutions privées. Deux mécanismes complémentaires sont utilisés par l'État pour maintenir son contrôle direct sur l'espace d'enseignement supérieur, à savoir l'accréditation progressive et l'élaboration des programmes ainsi que la collation des diplômes.

- **Le système d'accréditation progressive**

L'ouverture d'une institution d'enseignement supérieur privée est soumise à l'autorisation de l'État, modalité normale peut-on dire, que pratique la plupart des États du Monde qui entendent ainsi exercer leur souveraineté en matière de formation. Cependant, cette modalité ne renvoie pas uniquement pour l'État à la perspective de régulation de l'espace ou encore de jauger de l'effectivité

de l'entreprise, mais tend volens nolens au contrôle de l'espace d'autant plus qu'elle revêt une forme particulière (Barrow 1996). Différente en effet selon la nature de l'institution privée (université ou institut, école), la création d'une institution privée est composée de plusieurs phases institutionnelles qui laissent à l'État la latitude d'influer sur le processus d'ouverture et surtout de son développement et/ou de sa transformation.

Le cas de l'Université des Montagnes est illustratif à cet égard. En effet, cette institution a déposé un dossier pour se constituer en Université depuis 2000 et a engagé son fonctionnement effectif, elle n'a reçu en 2005 qu'une autorisation de se constituer en Institut limité au premier cycle de formation.²¹ Cet exemple fait voir non seulement qu'il est quasi impossible, aux termes de la réglementation actuelle sur l'organisation de l'enseignement supérieur privé, de créer directement une université sans transiter par la création d'un institut, mais surtout que l'État garde une forte mainmise sur le processus de création des institutions de l'enseignement supérieur privé.

Et même, la mise en place d'un institut se décompose de plusieurs phases successives sans lien les unes avec les autres, ni calendrier défini. La mise en place commence par l'accord de création d'une validité de trois ans renouvelables qui constitue une sorte d'habilitation théorique à exercer. Vient ensuite l'accord d'ouverture d'une validité de deux ans renouvelables deux fois qui spécifie la nature de l'institution et les formations habilitées, la notification de fonctionnement qui autorise l'ouverture effective.

Bien plus, la création d'une université est soumise à des restrictions plus draconiennes. Outre le fait que le projet d'université doit selon les principes énoncés par les autorités, transiter par l'ouverture d'institut, un processus de probation est également mis en place. Ainsi, tout institut, à l'exception des deux universités confessionnelles (UCAC et Université Adventiste Condensai) désireux de devenir une université est d'abord placé sous régime d'autorisation dont on observe le fonctionnement pendant au moins deux ans. Au terme de ces deux années et en cas de rapport d'inspection favorable, l'institut est ensuite érigé en Collège universitaire fonctionnant sous le régime d'agrément. Enfin, le Collège universitaire pourra après deux ans et toujours en cas de rapport d'inspection favorable, obtenir le statut d'une Université à part entière et fonctionner sous le régime d'homologation.

Par ailleurs, l'institut fonctionne pendant ces années sous la tutelle académique d'une Université d'État avec laquelle il aura signé des conventions de partenariat. Il s'agit là d'un accompagnement certain des institutions privées, mais qui participe également de leur mise en ordre en ce sens qu'il constitue également une relation de validation des formations de ces institutions autant que les règles d'organisation et de fonctionnement²². En fait, cet accompagne-

ment contribue à façonner ces institutions sur le modèle étatique tant sur le plan de l'organisation, des logiques de fonctionnement que des méthodes de gouvernance (Dima 1998).

Ainsi, la procédure d'accréditation progressive s'inscrit certes dans le but, comme le disent les responsables du ministère de l'enseignement supérieur, «de s'assurer du sérieux des institutions qui doivent ainsi démontrer leur capacité à assumer les missions d'enseignement et de recherches d'une université». Mais, l'État conserve néanmoins le monopole de l'usage et de l'attribution du label prestigieux d'université du moins pour les institutions ayant une origine locale.

- L'élaboration et/ou la validation des programmes et la collation des diplômes

L'État intervient dans le processus d'organisation des programmes et des filières de formation et de collation des diplômes des institutions d'enseignement supérieur privé. Cette intervention varie entre les différentes institutions soumises à notre analyse.

À l'exception en effet de l'Institut Catholique, toutes les autres institutions d'enseignement supérieur privé sont astreintes au régime national édicté par l'État en matière de programmes et de diplômes. Cette différence trouve son fondement en partie dans le statut national ou international des institutions dans la mesure où ce statut engage ipso facto des rapports différenciés avec l'État. Ainsi, l'Institut Catholique, en vertu de son statut international, élabore ses propres programmes d'enseignement ainsi que ses filières de formation sans que l'État puisse les valider.

De la même façon, l'Institut Catholique délivre également ses propres titres et grades universitaires. Ceux-ci soit n'appartiennent pas à la nomenclature des diplômes nationaux (diplômes ecclésiastiques comme la licence, maîtrise canoniques, Licence professionnelle en Administration des entreprises) soit y sont répertoriés (Diplômes de Licence et de Maîtrise en Économie de Gestion et en Sciences Sociales, Licences en Sciences Juridiques et Politiques, Licence, Maîtrise, DEA et Doctorat en Philosophie). Aux termes du protocole d'accord de 1995²³ et de l'arrêté ministériel de 1998,²⁴ l'État ne fait que reconnaître les diplômes délivrés par l'institut. Cette autonomie est toutefois tempérée par le droit de regard de l'État à travers sa procédure de reconnaissance des diplômes, laquelle est soumise aux critères de correspondance, notamment en termes de disciplines enseignées. C'est justement ce que précise le protocole d'accord ainsi que l'arrêté. L'État qui reconnaît ainsi les diplômes de l'Institut Catholique en leur apportant également une caution, valide du même coup leur usage sur son territoire. Ce droit de regard est d'ailleurs repris avec la création

en 2004 du comité de suivi de l'accord de siège. En fait, cette collaboration permet ainsi à l'État d'exercer un contrôle indirect sur cette institution.

En revanche le Complexe Universitaire de Douala et l'Université des Montagnes, comme du reste les autres institutions privées ne bénéficient pas des mêmes conditions d'autonomie ni en matière de programmes, ni de collation de diplômes. En fait, les deux aspects sont étroitement imbriqués en ce sens que le monopole de la collation des diplômes que détient l'État à travers la nomenclature des diplômes nationaux conditionne de façon insidieuse les programmes de ces institutions.

S'agissant des programmes, c'est l'État qui définit en toute souveraineté les programmes d'enseignement des établissements et particulièrement ceux relatifs aux diplômes nationaux. Dans ce cadre, le ministère de l'enseignement supérieur public, à l'instar de ceux du diplôme d'Études Professionnelles²⁵, les programmes d'enseignement pour l'ensemble des institutions d'enseignement supérieur publiques et privées existant au Cameroun. Dans le même ordre d'idées, le ministère valide les programmes de formation des institutions privées dans la mesure où l'ouverture effective d'une formation dans un établissement public ou privé est subordonnée à son aval sous forme de texte particulier.²⁶

Quant aux diplômes, trois possibilités tantôt distinctes, tantôt complémentaires sont offertes aux institutions privées: limiter leurs services à la préparation des diplômes nationaux (BTS/HND²⁷ et DSEP/DPD²⁸), signer des accords de tutelle académique avec un établissement public d'enseignement supérieur et/ou enfin préparer sous les conditions fixées par la réglementation des diplômes étrangers reconnus. Plusieurs institutions privées font usage bon gré mal gré de ces possibilités, particulièrement du système national. Ainsi, le Complexe Universitaire de Douala est inscrit depuis sa création au cycle national des diplômes de BTS. L'Université des Montagnes en revanche, a été obligée de s'aligner pour ses formations de premier cycle sur le système de grades nationaux avec la création en 2005 par l'État, du Diplôme Supérieur des Études Professionnelles (DSEP) de niveau Bac+2. Les mesures qui lui permettent de continuer avec ses cycles antérieurs de formation jusqu'au doctorat ne modifient pas substantiellement la donne dans la mesure où elle ne délivre pas ses propres diplômes. Ceux-ci sont le fait de l'État par la médiation de son institution publique qui en assure la tutelle académique.

Ce monopole de collation des diplômes sur le territoire national constitue un moyen efficace de contrôle des institutions privées, particulièrement de leur offre de formation. Dans la mesure où le crédit de ces institutions sur le marché éducatif est étroitement lié à leur performance, notamment à leur taux de

réussite aux diplômes délivrés par l'État. Or, celui-ci est le seul à définir non seulement les modalités, mais aussi le contenu à travers une commission créée à cet effet.²⁹ Composée uniquement des représentants de l'État, et notamment du ministère de l'enseignement supérieur, cette commission est chargée en effet, de définir la nomenclature des référentiels de la formation de ce diplôme. L'État procède ainsi par la médiation des diplômes (collation et référentiels de formation), à la mise en ordre des institutions privées d'enseignement supérieur. Bien plus, l'influence de l'État sur les institutions privées emprunte des voies détournées et se manifeste de façon indirecte

Le portage indirect par l'État

L'influence de l'État sur les institutions d'enseignement supérieur privé emprunte également des voies détournées et se manifeste de façon indirecte. Il en est ainsi du soutien en personnel enseignant qu'apporte l'État à ces institutions. Cette situation que l'on retrouve dans bien d'autres pays africains comme le Ghana, le Nigeria, le Kenya, la Tanzanie, l'Ouganda et le Zimbabwe (Thaver 2004) prend une dimension particulière au Cameroun liée à la fois à la situation de pénurie chronique depuis l'indépendance, de conditions d'emploi dans ces institutions et de l'intervention de l'État.

Ainsi le portage de l'État se manifeste de plusieurs façons. D'une part, les conditions d'exercice de la profession d'enseignant soigneusement définies en 2002 par l'État accentuent la pénurie tout en référant les critères par rapport aux canons des établissements publics³⁰. En effet, les enseignants des institutions privées doivent avoir les mêmes qualifications académiques et/ou professionnelles minimales que celles exigées des enseignants des institutions universitaires publiques pour les mêmes filières et niveaux de formation. Ils doivent également enseigner principalement leur spécialité. Pour toute candidature à un poste d'enseignant dans une institution privée, l'autorisation d'enseigner est sollicitée par l'Institution concernée auprès du Ministre de l'enseignement supérieur. Aux fins de contourner cette réglementation et face à l'accentuation de la pénurie qu'engendre cette mesure, les institutions recourent aux enseignants des universités publiques contribuant du même coup à accentuer leur dépendance vis-à-vis de l'État et de sa politique d'orientation de l'enseignement supérieur.

Dans le cadre qui nous intéresse, ces institutions sont tributaires d'une myriade de personnels vacataires venant des horizons divers parmi lesquels les universités d'État. Cet emploi qui est le fait privé des agents résulte de plusieurs facteurs, tels la crédibilité de la formation et la présomption de qualité des enseignements pour ces institutions, un complément de rémunération pour les enseignants. Egalement, il varie d'une institution à l'autre. À l'Université

des Montagnes, ils représentent 65 pourcent du corps enseignant. Ils viennent essentiellement de la Faculté des Sciences biomédicales de l'Université de Yaoundé I en ce qui concerne la Faculté des Sciences de la Santé, et de l'École Polytechnique pour la Faculté des Sciences et de Technologie. Ils représentent près de 60 pourcent au Complexe Universitaire de Douala et proviennent principalement de l'Université de Douala. Ils sont également très souvent des enseignants en début de carrière (Assistants, moniteurs) ou du moins aux grades inférieurs de la hiérarchie universitaire. Ils représentent 7 pourcent des enseignants à l'Institut Catholique. Ils sont surtout pour ce dernier cas des enseignants de l'Université de Yaoundé I et II. Certains d'entre eux font même partie du Conseil Scientifique. En fait, l'État étend par la médiation de ces enseignants, ses pratiques, ses logiques de fonctionnement autant que ses mécanismes et la forme de socialisation de la population étudiante.

Par ailleurs, les institutions privées d'enseignement supérieur ne semblent pas, en dehors de l'Institut Catholique, engagées dans le processus de formation du personnel enseignant. L'Institut a engagé en son sein depuis sa création une politique de formation emploi de ses produits dans un premier temps, complétée par une politique de bourses de formation de formateurs à l'étranger (Useem 1999). Quant aux autres institutions, leur niveau de formation (bac+2) autant que leurs ressources financières ne les disposent pas à cette politique de formation des formateurs. Cette situation les rend plus dépendants de l'État et notamment de la politique étatique de développement de l'enseignement supérieur public dans la mesure où ces institutions ne se constituent pas un personnel enseignant autonome. Dans ce cadre, leur développement ou du moins les possibilités de leur transformation en universités sont limités les cantonnant ainsi au simple rôle de ce que Tilak Jandhyala (1993) nomme les « teaching shops ». En même temps, cette dépendance autant que ces contraintes ou du moins ces politiques peuvent constituer des facteurs limitant dans la qualité des formations ; d'autant que la recherche qui est étroitement liée à l'enseignement et sa qualité sur la durée sont absentes des stratégies éducatives de ces institutions.

Une offre de formation en partie structurée par l'État

L'influence de l'État sur les institutions privées se prolonge également sur le plan proprement académique. En fait, l'offre de formation de ces institutions est en grande partie structurée par celle existante et développée en majorité par l'État. Ce conditionnement de l'offre de formation des institutions privées peut s'expliquer par une série de facteurs. D'une part, le système étatique de diplômes et de programmes nationaux imposé au Complexe Universitaire de Douala et à l'Université des Montagnes, les équivalences selon les disciplines pour

l'Institut Catholique limitent leur capacité d'innovation en matière de formation. D'autre part, ces offres de formation sont tributaires des ressources humaines disponibles, notamment en termes de personnels de formation. Or, ces ressources s'inscrivent majoritairement dans les cycles de formation étatisés de l'enseignement supérieur post-indépendance et sont liées à la spécialisation de ce personnel. Lorsque ce personnel est doté des cursus spécifiques telles les nouvelles technologies, son niveau de qualification est relativement moins élevé.

À cet égard, la dépendance des institutions privées vis-à-vis du personnel enseignant du secteur public d'enseignement supérieur tend du même coup à diligenter leur offre de formation. D'autant que ce personnel dispense parfois les mêmes enseignements qu'ils font dans les institutions publiques.

Ainsi, plusieurs institutions privées ont les mêmes filières de formation que les institutions publiques. Le Complexe Universitaire de Douala, qui s'inscrit dans la tradition classique des écoles de commerce telle qu'elle existe en Europe, en France notamment et dans les Instituts publics camerounais, a des filières essentiellement axées sur le commerce, la gestion et les nouvelles technologies que l'on retrouve par exemple à l'Institut Universitaire de Technologie de Bandjoun rattaché à l'Université de Dschang. C'est ce qui explique en grande partie son partenariat avec cet Institut. Il s'agit par exemple de l'Informatique de gestion, du Secrétariat de Direction et Bureautique, de l'Electronique, de la Maintenance des systèmes informatiques. Certaines de ses filières se retrouvent également à l'ESSEC de Douala rattachée à l'Université de cette ville. Ce sont les cas du Commerce international, de la Comptabilité et Gestion des Entreprises. D'autres enfin, notamment le journalisme se retrouvent à l'ESSTIC de Yaoundé rattachée à l'Université de Yaoundé II.

L'Institut Catholique pour sa part, s'inscrit dans la tradition classique des universités africaines post-indépendance. Son offre de formation est à tendance généraliste. Certaines de ses filières de formation comme le Droit et les Sciences sociales, les Sciences économiques et de gestion, les Lettres et la Philosophie sont identiques à celles des Universités d'État. Son offre de formation s'étend aussi sur l'ensemble des cycles de l'université et comporte des options professionnalisantes qu'on retrouve parfois dans le secteur public.

L'Université des Montagnes quant à elle se rapproche de l'offre existante par sa filière médicale (Sciences de la santé) que l'on retrouve à l'Université de Yaoundé I et depuis cette année à l'Université de Buea et de Douala. Quant à sa filière technologique, elle s'apparente à ce que l'on retrouve dans les instituts publics tels l'Institut Technologique de Bandjoun, l'Ecole Polytechnique, etc.

La tendance des institutions privées soit à calquer leurs formations sur celles que proposent les institutions publiques, soit à adopter les formations devenues

courantes dans l'espace international limite leurs marges de manœuvre et contribue volens nolens à fabriquer des cursus de formation rigides et standardisés. Ce qui tend du même coup à les cantonner dans la formation du premier cycle sans perspective de développement et de transformation. Il ne peut en être autrement dans la mesure où la taille de ces institutions est réduite autant que leurs capacités d'investissement limitées. En fait, l'adoption des formations au coût moins élevé est liée, comme l'estime à juste titre Sarah Guri-Rosenblit (1993) à propos de la situation d'Israël, aux moindres exigences d'investissement que les cursus techniques et/ou de technologie de pointe. De plus, ces formations offrent des possibilités d'accès au plus grand nombre eu égard au coût, cette variable du nombre constituant en retour le seul moyen de survie de ces institutions.

Stratégies d'autonomisation et de positionnement de l'enseignement supérieur privé

Les différentes institutions de l'enseignement supérieur privé, déploient des stratégies à la fois pour s'autonomiser de l'emprise de l'État et mieux se positionner dans l'espace de l'enseignement supérieur en général. Ces stratégies qui varient d'une institution à l'autre empruntent différents canaux tels, le démarquage par rapport aux institutions publiques sur le plan académique et la définition des finalités par rapport à la structure du marché éducatif et de l'emploi. Cependant, elles connaissent de nombreux écueils qui interrogent sur leur pérennité et leurs perspectives de développement

Les tentatives de démarquage par rapport aux institutions publiques et de la tutelle

En dépit du fait que l'offre des institutions privées d'enseignement supérieur est en grande partie structurée par l'offre existante développée par l'État, ces institutions tentent de se démarquer par rapport au secteur public sur le plan académique et de s'affranchir de la tutelle pesante de l'État. Ceci passe par la création ou les tentatives de création de filières nouvelles de formation ainsi que la préparation et/ou la collation des nouveaux diplômes par différents canaux, l'insertion dans les réseaux de coopération internationale.

En ce qui concerne la création de nouvelles filières, l'Institut Catholique avec son option religieuse par exemple, détient seule la filière théologique au Cameroun. L'Université des Montagnes de son côté, qui se rapproche de l'offre existante par sa filière médicale que l'on retrouve à l'Université de Yaoundé I, s'en éloigne par sa formation en Pharmacie.

Quant aux diplômes et à la coopération internationale, les trois institutions privées étudiées développent des stratégies différentes autant que les enjeux

varient. L'Institut Catholique délivre des diplômes spécifiques, notamment la Licence Professionnelle en Administration des entreprises à la Faculté de Sciences sociales et de gestion, la Licence universitaire (Baccalauréat canonique), la Maîtrise universitaire (Licence Canonique), le DEA et le Doctorat en Théologie. Ces diplômes spécifiques renforcent l'autonomie de l'Institut Catholique vis-à-vis de l'État et ses velléités de contrôle total de l'espace d'enseignement supérieur au Cameroun. Quant à sa coopération, elle prend deux directions. D'une part, elle se déploie au sein des réseaux de l'Église Catholique, la Conférence Mondiale des institutions universitaires Catholiques de Philosophie, l'Association des Universités Catholiques d'Afrique et Madagascar, la Fédération Internationale des Universités Catholiques, l'Université Pontificale Salésienne (Rome), la faculté de droit canonique de Paris, l'Université Catholique de l'Ouest Angers (France), les Facultés Catholiques de Kinshasa (RDC). D'autre part, L'UCAC est insérée dans des réseaux tels l'Association des Universités Francophones et l'Association des Universités Privées d'Afrique. Les usages sont variés, notamment le soutien pédagogique, le soutien à la formation des formateurs (bourses), la visibilité internationale, etc.

L'Université des Montagnes tente de développer dans sa filière des Sciences et de Technologie, une formation conduisant au diplôme de Licence. Elle entend également développer l'ensemble de son cursus de formation de médecine, de pharmacie et d'ingénieur. Pour cela, l'Université des Montagnes tente de parachever les accords de partenariat et/ou de parrainage au niveau national avec les universités d'État (Yaoundé I, École Polytechnique), et au niveau international (Université de Kinshasa en RDC pour la médecine et la pharmacie, de Paris 13 en France pour sa filière de sciences et technologies, de Parakou au Bénin). Son réseau de coopération s'étend également à d'autres institutions universités (Udine et Milan en Italie) et établissements para universitaires (CHU de Dijon, Centre de Cardiologie de Milan). Ici, l'enjeu pédagogique s'accompagne des perspectives de soutien en terme de matériel par exemple.

Le Complexe Universitaire prépare, par le biais de la coopération, au diplôme de Licence de gestion décerné par les Facultés de Gestion de l'Université de Dschang et de Montpellier. Il prépare également à la Maîtrise professionnelle des Sciences de gestion décernée par le CNAM de Languedoc Roussillon en France. Ces stratégies s'inscrivent certes dans une optique de crédibilité de ces institutions, – on pense aux usages et à la représentation des diplômes du Nord au Cameroun- de leur visibilité internationale, de leur soutien dans les perspectives de développement, mais constituent aussi et par ces faits même, des mécanismes de subversion de la tutelle de l'État. Et le conflit qui a opposé à la rentrée scolaire 2006-2007, l'État à l'UDM quant à l'offre de

formation annoncée, notamment le maintien des filières non agréées ainsi que les titres qui en résulteraient fait voir les luttes sur le problème de l'autonomisation de ces institutions privées.

Stratégies de positionnement dans l'espace d'enseignement supérieur et ses aléas

Outre les tentatives d'élargissement de l'offre de formation, les institutions privées d'enseignement supérieur développent différentes stratégies pour se positionner dans l'espace d'enseignement supérieur. Il en est ainsi de l'accès au marché du travail. Ce mécanisme concourt à l'établissement de leur crédibilité sur la scène éducative au moment où l'emploi se raréfie. En même temps, il tend progressivement bon gré mal gré à reconfigurer la destination des produits de l'enseignement supérieur et subséquemment à redéfinir les finalités de l'enseignement supérieur, notamment la philosophie globale qui sous-tend l'éducation.

Les trois institutions étudiées fondent leurs stratégies dans les relations avec le monde du travail. En effet, l'établissement des partenariats entre ces institutions et les entreprises se constitue en élément de réussite. Aussi développent-elles des mécanismes divers entre autres les accords de stage, le système de placement des étudiants, le réseau d'anciens, etc. Par exemple, l'Université des Montagnes développe des mécanismes de placement de ses produits auprès des entreprises doublés de la mise en place d'un réseau des anciens étudiants tout aussi destiné au placement.

Ces mécanismes constituent ainsi l'insertion professionnelle (et pas seulement la professionnalisation) qui en est au cœur comme une marque distinctive de ces institutions (Oene Eone 2003). Cette situation est justement mise en avant par les différents responsables des institutions dans leurs stratégies de recrutement des étudiants car elle vise à fabriquer du crédit de ces institutions auprès de différents publics (étudiants-parents, État, bailleurs de fonds internationaux, entreprises, etc.). Stratégies de positionnement s'il en faut, qui rencontrent parfois les exigences de ces publics sur les attendus de l'éducation dans une configuration de déclasserement du modèle existant.

De plus, ces mécanismes laissent entrevoir des lueurs de reconfiguration du marché de l'emploi. En fait, les institutions privées d'enseignement supérieur entendent investir pour la plupart le secteur privé comme cible privilégiée de la destination de leurs produits. En effet, tandis que les institutions publiques avaient pour mission explicite aux lendemains des indépendances, mais toujours d'actualité de former les agents de l'État, les institutions privées étudiées qui évoluent dans un contexte de crise économique, s'emploient à insérer plus leurs diplômés dans le secteur privé. Ce mécanisme engage peut-

être un processus de dé-fonctionnarisation³¹ de la formation au Cameroun. Il ne peut en être autrement dès lors que l'État qui a fait le plein de ses besoins en personnel pendant les décennies 1970–1980 a considérablement réduit ses recrutements.

Par ailleurs, ces institutions sont plus sensibles aux exigences du marché du travail et tendent à modeler leur offre de formation en fonction de celles-ci. En effet, les institutions privées, particulièrement celles constituées en école de commerce ont tendance à privilégier les formations prisées à un moment donné par le marché du travail, telles les nouvelles technologies de l'information, le commerce. Phénomène de mode, peut-on penser, mais qui tend à inscrire ces institutions uniquement dans la logique marchande. La question n'est pas nouvelle au Cameroun dans la mesure où elle a concerné les établissements secondaires dans les années 1980–1990.³² Si on ne saurait nier l'engouement d'adaptation de ces institutions par rapport aux évolutions, un tel positionnement interroge néanmoins sur leurs capacités de réactivité par rapport au caractère versatile du marché du travail. En même temps, ce positionnement tend à constituer ces institutions en simples lieux de fabrication de diplômes conjoncturels et subséquemment à transformer toute la philosophie qui sous-tend l'éducation dès lors que le seul aspect de l'emploi est de mise.

Toutefois, cette tendance qu'on observe davantage dans les instituts, à l'instar du Complexe universitaire de Douala, ne gouverne pas l'ensemble des institutions. D'autres formes de positionnement sous-tendues par d'autres enjeux se retrouvent au sein des institutions privées d'enseignement supérieur. Ainsi l'Institut Catholique entend selon les termes de son Recteur Oene Eone s'intéresser davantage à la formation intégrale de l'homme, c'est-à-dire une formation intellectuelle, morale et spirituelle » (Oene Eone 2003 : 11). Son positionnement sur le marché éducatif se décline aussi à travers ses enjeux proprement religieux aux effets sociaux indéniables et dévoilés dans ses missions, notamment contribuer au développement des sociétés en Afrique, par des formations professionnelles et intellectuelles répondant à des besoins réels, proposer la vision chrétienne de l'homme dans ses dimensions philosophiques et théologiques, contribuer à la définition de comportements éthiques dans tous les domaines de la vie publique et privée.

L'Université des Montagnes par exemple se situe à mi-chemin entre une logique marchande et un apport supplémentaire au marché éducatif camerounais en terme de formation, soit absente, soit peu représentée dans le paysage universitaire.

Conclusion

L'enseignement supérieur privé connaît un développement rapide au Cameroun depuis la libéralisation de 1993. Après une période de flottement marquée par une floraison d'institutions, s'est ensuivie une phase de réglementation draconienne dont l'application rigoureuse mettrait hors circuit plusieurs institutions. Cette réglementation qui apparaît comme une tentative de l'État de reprise en main de l'enseignement supérieur ainsi qu'une définition d'une cohérence dans ce secteur n'entame pour autant pas la demande de création dont on peut penser qu'elle répond dans une certaine mesure à une demande sociale en matière de formation.

En même temps, cet enseignement supérieur privé est marqué par une forte emprise de l'État dans une double perspective de contrôle et de régulation de son développement ainsi que de son portage indirect, ce qui l'érige en maître de jeu dans cet espace, d'autant que le secteur reste assez fragile, voire encore limité dans ses perspectives de développement. En fait, la dépendance vis-à-vis de l'État autant que la fragilité de ces institutions en termes de ressources financières et humaines par exemple mettent en lumière leur caractère extraverti et interrogent sur leur viabilité à terme et/ou leur développement. On peut en effet se poser la question de savoir quelles sont les possibilités réelles pour l'UDM ou le Complexe Universitaire de Douala de se transformer en une université – comme elles le souhaitent – avec toutes les obligations et contraintes inhérentes à ce statut? Le développement des institutions sur le modèle des écoles de commerce ne marquerait-il pas, au-delà de la réglementation, des tendances lourdes de cet enseignement supérieur privé ?

Quelles sont les capacités de réactivité de ces institutions face au caractère versatile de la demande sociale en matière de formation, d'autant que cette demande sociale est parfois corrélée aux phénomènes de mode en matière de formation lesquels ne dépendent pas justement du système national ? Autant de questionnements qui ouvrent des pistes et invitent à d'autres recherches sur l'enseignement supérieur privé au Cameroun.

Notes

1. Malgré la création des centres universitaires dans les années 1970, le système n'a pas connu de transformation, ni de modification de la politique des œuvres universitaires (bourse, logement).
2. Le communiqué du Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur datant du 12 septembre 2005 ayant pour objet la mise au point de la situation des institutions de l'enseignement supérieur énumère les institutions reconnues et donc habilitées à fonctionner.

3. Deux institutions sont reconnues comme des universités, 26 sont des instituts et 6 sont dénommées des écoles.
4. Deux de ces institutions sont confessionnelles et les autres sont laïques.
5. Les deux dénominations sont utilisées de façon interchangeable dans les documents de l'institution ainsi que les responsables. L'institut se définit non seulement comme une université, mais est aussi le siège de l'institution de l'Afrique Centrale.
6. ESG : École Supérieure de Gestion.
7. ISTA : Institut Supérieur des Technologies Avancées.
8. Association à but non lucratif (Loi de 19 décembre 1990). Date d'enregistrement de l'AED : 26 août 1994 (Déclaration N0 23/RD/F36/BAPP).
9. Pierre Carteret, ancien enseignant pendant plus de 20 ans au CUSS dans un interview lors d'un séjour de Cinq semaines à l'Université des Montagnes souligne qu'il est un des concepteurs du projet mais ne pouvait se mettre en lumière parce que Directeur du CUSS (1985–1993), *Le Messenger* du 19 juin 2006.
10. Loi n°005 du 16 avril 2001 portant orientation de l'Enseignement Supérieur.
11. Décret du 19 septembre fixant les règles communes applicables aux institutions privées d'enseignement supérieur.
12. Arrêté du 7 décembre 2001 fixant les conditions de création et de fonctionnement des Institutions Privées d'Enseignement Supérieur.
13. Arrêté du 5 avril 2002 fixant les conditions et les modalités d'obtention des autorisations d'enseigner, des accords et agréments aux postes de responsabilité dans les institutions privées d'enseignement supérieur.
14. Arrêté du 5 décembre 2003 fixant les modalités de création et d'ouverture au Cameroun des institutions privées d'enseignement supérieur préparant aux diplômes étrangers.
15. Décret du 19 septembre 2001 fixant les règles communes applicables aux institutions privées d'enseignement supérieur.
16. Arrêté du 27 mars 2002 fixant la composition, le fonctionnement et les attributions des organes administratifs et des autorités académiques des institutions privées d'enseignement supérieur.
17. Arrêté du 16 avril 2002 op. cit.
18. Il s'agit par exemple des organismes catholiques allemands, de la Conférence Épiscopale Italienne, de la Coopération Française, de l'Union Européenne, de l'État belge et de l'ACERAC.
19. L'UDM a bénéficié pour sa constitution de divers dons immobiliers et matériels de pédagogie. L'UCAC a bénéficié de divers soutiens financiers pour son infrastructure.
20. Depuis la contrainte réglementaire sur le niveau de qualification des personnels enseignants, certaines institutions privées ne communiquent pas sur leurs personnels (nombre, niveau de qualification, rémunération, etc.)
21. Arrêtés n°05/0008/MINESUP du 12 janvier 2005 et n°05/0035/MINESUP du 12 janvier 2005 portant création de l'Institut Supérieur des Sciences de la Santé

- et arrêtés n°05/0013/MINESUP du 12 janvier 2005 et n°05/0025/MINESUP du 12 janvier 2005 portant création de l'Institut Supérieur des Sciences et de Technologie.
22. L'UDM a obtenu l'autorisation de faire fonctionner ses 2e et 3e cycles après son accord de tutelle académique avec l'Université de Yaoundé I. voir *Cameroon Tribune* du 10 janvier 2007.
 23. Protocole d'Accord du 17 août 1995 entre le Saint Siège et la République du Cameroun portant reconnaissance des diplômes de l'enseignement supérieur.
 24. Arrêté n°00002MINESUP/DFO du 15 janvier 1998 portant reconnaissance des diplômes de l'Institut Catholique de Yaoundé.
 25. Arrêté N°06/0032/MINESUP/DDES du 30 mars 2006 portant publication des programmes des enseignements du Diplôme d'Études Professionnelles ou Higher Professional Diploma des institutions d'Enseignement Supérieur au Cameroun.
 26. Article 4 de l'arrêté du 30 mars 2006 portant publication des programmes op. cit.
 27. BTS/HND : Brevet des Techniciens Supérieurs/Higher National Diploma.
 28. Diplôme Supérieur d'Etudes Professionnelles/Higher Professional Diploma.
 29. Arrêté N°06/0034/MINESUP/DDES du 30 mars 2006 portant création et organisation de la commission nationale d'organisation du Diplôme Supérieur des Etudes professionnelles ou Higher Professional Diploma.
 30. Arrêté N0 02/000035/MINESUP du 16 avril 2002 fixant les conditions des autorisations d'enseigner, des accords et agréments aux postes de responsables dans les institutions privées d'enseignement supérieur.
 32. La fonctionnarisation de la formation est entendue ici comme l'inculcation par l'école de la logique de la fonction publique (avec ses représentations, ses pratiques, etc) comme seul horizon possible d'insertion et de carrière.
 33. Les premières remises en question des systèmes éducatifs mis en place aux lendemains des indépendances avaient souligné le déficit de professionnalisation de la formation en même temps que l'absence des orientations techniques. On a alors vu fleurir sur le territoire des établissements qui entendaient combler ce manque.
 34. Eone Eone (2003 : 11).

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The Private Higher Education Sector in Africa: Current Trends and Themes in Six Country Studies

Beverley Thaver*

Abstract

In Africa, the phenomenon of access to public higher education is under much pressure, and is harnessed by (among others) two privatization forces. These refer to the retreat of the state in terms of the provisioning of public higher education and the global economic rush which have culminated in both an increase in the number and to some extent the range of private higher education institutional types offering diverse course offerings. Although still small in scale and not representing a dominant share of higher education enrolment, their existence signals that they are meeting a social function of access in Africa, albeit limited. In light of this, there are traces of course offerings that suggest a small alignment with the economic and social needs of a modern society. Caught between the interstices of global economic capital and national societal functions, these institutions' mandates and identities are beginning to be stretched to meet modern imperatives. But, in this vortex, they are simultaneously hamstrung by certain sustainable systemic elements that go against the grain of the requirements for traditional higher education. Following this line of argument, the article begins with an overview of six country studies in Africa, including an outline of some of the discursive trends. It concludes by providing a snapshot glimpse into the private higher education sector in South Africa.

Résumé

En Afrique, le phénomène de l'accès à l'enseignement supérieur est sous grande pression et sous le joug (entre autres) de deux forces de privatisation. Ces dernières sont relatives au désengagement de l'Etat en termes de fourniture d'enseignement supérieur public et l'urgence économique mondiale qui a abouti à l'augmentation du nombre et dans une certaine mesure la gamme des types d'établissements d'enseignement supérieur privé offrant une diversité de cours. Leur existence révèle

* Centre for the Study of Higher Education, University of Western Cape, South Africa.

qu'ils satisfont à une fonction sociale d'accès bien que limitée en Afrique, même s'ils sont encore en petite échelle et qu'ils ne représentent pas une part optimale des inscriptions de l'enseignement supérieur. Compte tenu de cet état de fait, il existe des traces d'offres de cours qui suggèrent un petit alignement sur les besoins socioéconomiques d'une société moderne. Pris entre les interstices du capital économique mondial et les fonctions sociétales nationales, les mandats et les identités de ces établissements sont entraînés d'être élargis pour répondre aux exigences modernes. Mais dans ce tourbillon, ils sont simultanément paralysés par un certain nombre d'éléments systémiques durables qui vont à l'encontre du brin d'exigences de l'enseignement supérieur traditionnel. Dans cet ordre d'argumentation, l'article commence par un aperçu de six études par pays en Afrique, y compris les grandes lignes de quelques unes des tendances discursives. Il se termine par un aperçu sélectif rapide dans le secteur de l'enseignement supérieur privé en Afrique du Sud.

Introduction

Following previous research (Thaver 2003), this article¹ maps the field of private higher education in six African countries,² drawing on recent empirical data. It seeks to understand whether there have been shifts in the sector in these countries since the start of the 21st century. In light of this, I take up some of the challenges posed by scholars writing on the topic (Altbach 2005; Levy 2005) by trying to make sense of some of the forces at work in these countries from a political economy angle. Thus, the article does not provide specific detail on the cases as most of these are available in a series of reports by Varghese (2006). Instead, it describes some of the general trends as these are reflected systemically, following which it then thematically analyses some of the political and economic forces at work across the six countries. Thus, I can only paint a picture of certain overall tendencies as represented by aspects of the survey data.

An Overview of the Country Case Studies

In seeking to conduct an audit of the size and shape of the sector in these countries, I have been struck by a recurrent theme, concerning the complexities associated with fixing what could be defined as the boundary level for higher education. In other words, one of the difficulties in charting the size of the sector is that the colleges are amorphous in terms of how they function (Thaver 2003). This poses a methodological problem in terms of mapping the size of the field. Given this constraint, it continues to be difficult to get an accurate picture of the size of the field across the countries that form the focus of this study. Consequently, the following figures should be treated cautiously.

Since 2000, the size of the sector in the six country studies appears to have grown, as evident in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of Private Higher Education Institutions, 2000–2007

Region	Country	Colleges		Polytechnics		Universities		Total*		Grand total**
		2000	2007	2000	2007	2000	2007	2000	2007	
West Africa	Ghana	27	0	0	0	4	4	31	4	35
	Nigeria	2	2	1	7	3	4	6	13	19
East Africa	Kenya	0	0	0	0	8	9	8	9	17
	Tanzania	0	0	0	0	10	4	10	4	14
Southern Africa	Uganda	0	0	0	0	6	19	6	19	25
	Zimbabwe	3	0	0	0	4	0	7	0	7
Total								68	49	117

Source: Varghese (2006) and web-based data, accessed 2007.

* The total number of institutions up until 2000 and between 2000-2007.

** The total (overall) number of institutions as at 2007.

In probing for the size of the sector, two broad trends seem apparent. On the one hand, there are countries in which growth is static with Zimbabwe as a case in point; while on the other hand, there are those that are experiencing rapid development. For example, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda show fairly prolific growth. More specifically, Uganda has witnessed the establishment of several private universities since 2004, not all of which are registered (Tumwesigye 2006). This trend of functioning without official accreditation is reflected across at least five of the countries. Thus, while the number of institutions is rising, their official accreditation status is uneven. For example, while Kenya has approximately 17 private universities, only seven are fully accredited, with the remaining ones at various stages of the accreditation process. Notwithstanding these variations in the sector, the growth five years later (at one hundred and seventeen) represents about seventy percent on the original figure of sixty-eight institutions, as shown in Table 1. However, a methodological caveat needs to be invoked here: the key challenge in terms of accounting for the size of the sector arises when those programmes with technical and narrow skills-based focus delivered at colleges and institutes are included as part of the higher education domain. Overall, with the exception of Zimbabwe, the sector is expanding in the remaining five countries. Systemically speaking, what are the trends?

Enrolments

In a previous study (Thaver 2003) I signalled the size of enrolments in the sector as being rather small, a trend that has been corroborated by later studies (Varghese 2006). Current data suggests that the growth continues to be marginal. For example, Ghana has witnessed an increase of just under 5 percent on the original figure of 5,000 student enrolments (Effah 2006), while in Kenya, the growth is proportionately higher, totalling 15 percent on the initial figure of eight and a half thousand (as in 2002). An interesting trend in Tanzania is that over a four year period, at one of the institutions (Tumaini University, Iringa), the enrolments have increased almost fourfold, from 149 in 1999/2000 to 599 in 2004 (Kuhanga 2006). The reasons for this growth in a mainly religious-based institution are unclear. While the enrolments are small and display variations within and across the country studies, it does represent a form of incremental growth. These are manifest through different institutional types.

Institutional Types

Following the increased growth of polytechnic institutions in Nigeria, four institutional types can be found in the private higher education sector: universities, colleges, professional institutes or schools and polytechnics. As evident

from Table 1, five of the countries show a concentrated growth in the university sector, while in one (Nigeria) there is an increased focus in the polytechnic type.

The above-mentioned institutional types are also demarcated on the basis of for-profit and not-for-profit status. Because a correlation often exists between financial status and programme orientation, the not-for-profit institutions tend to have a religious orientation. The latter has already been signalled in a previous study (Thaver 2003), a trend that continues with the recent established ones. This religious phenomenon is coloured in by a wide spectrum of denominations. Clearly, the not-for-profit institutions are used as a vehicle for religious proselytization of various forms and persuasions. Scholars have noted this for Nigeria (Ajayi 2006), Kenya (Abagi 2006), Tanzania (Kuhanga 2006) and Uganda (Tumwesigye 2006).

While religious institutions that have a not-for-profit status predominate, there is increasingly more commercial activity within the sector. In other words, there are more institutions with a for-profit status emerging. These institutions tend to fall into two categories. The first are (tutorial) colleges that are franchisees of foreign providers offering mainly (foreign) programmes leading to the award of international diplomas and professional certificates. The second are those international providers of higher education that offer distance-learning courses inside the countries. These institutions are owned by individuals. This is the case with the majority of Nigeria's polytechnics, four institutions in Kenya and one in Zimbabwe.

Programme Focus: Curricula

The curricula in the institutions in all six countries are characterised predominantly by four fields/disciplines. These are Business Administration; Theology; Commerce; and Information Communication Technology. Furthermore, there are also traces of education and agricultural programmes across the six country studies. Notwithstanding the preponderance of these courses, there are shifts at some of the institutions insofar as small programmes are being offered in natural sciences, law, and psychology and in engineering technology as in the case of one of the Nigerian institutions. The expansion of boutique-type course offerings thus continues. Most of these courses are delivered at undergraduate level, although in Nigeria, two universities currently offer postgraduate courses. These are the Pan-African University and Igbinedion University (Ajayi 2006).

An interesting development regarding the intersection of curricula and government regulation is that in Kenya, since 2000, many private institutions appear to be under pressure to diversify their curricula (Abagi 2006). Besides

market forces (in terms of attracting more students), he notes that diversification appears to be one of the conditions required in order to be accredited. In this instance, the state is playing a direct role in establishing the conditions for the existence of private higher education institutions (Geiger 1988).

Financing

A glimpse into the data available for the sources of finance for private institutions shows that there are two main ways in which the institutions sustain themselves. These are through tuition fees and grants from sponsoring organisations. In some of the country studies there appears to be heavy reliance on one source either in the form of tuition fees or sponsor grants. For instance, in Zimbabwe, the Solusi University receives donations from the Seventh Day Adventist Church in the United States. However, it is important not to generalise on this point, since the exception is the Islamic University in Ghana, where the sources of funding are evenly spread between foreign/donor support and tuition fees. By contrast, in Kenya, the United States International University is fully dependent on fees. In all the country studies, there are attempts at tapping into other sources, such as donations from parent organisations, gifts and finance accrued from charging residential fees. However, in general the revenue sources of the not-for-profit institutions does not display diversification. Tuition fees are clearly the main source and in certain countries such as Ghana, institutions have leveraged fee settlements through government sponsored student loans. Similarly, in Tanzania, the Education Authority provides loans and grants to both public and private universities. In general however, funding from government is very small. It is important to note that where loans are provided to public and private sector students, the system is part of an intricate web of international capital woven by the International Finance Commission (Maas 2001) through national governments.

The levying of relatively high tuition fees is a common feature in all the private universities in the six countries. In Nigeria for instance, Alani (2004) reports that in 2004 students at Covenant University paid US\$1,231.84 which was six times higher than the fees paid by students in the faculties of Clinical Sciences and Pharmacy at Olabisi Onabanjo University (a state university) and about seven times more than the fees paid by new students who enrolled for science courses at the University of Lagos (also a state university).

Governance

As previously outlined (Nwamuo 2000; Thaver 2003; Varghese 2006), the structure of private higher education institutions comprise a board of trustees preceded by university and academic councils. The composition of the structures

continues to be determined by private institutions through the proxy of the Rector/Vice Chancellors. The latter holds key decision-making powers, representing the interests of sponsors and shareholders in the case of not-for-profits and for-profits, respectively. Notwithstanding the influence of religious parent, or corporate trans-national, bodies, there is pressure in certain countries for private institutions to model themselves on national academic systems and structures. In light of this, in both Kenya and Nigeria the idea of uniform and standard criteria for academic governance structures across private and public sectors are advanced. Again, we see the hand of the state seeking to establish the relevant conditions for their existence.

Academic Staff

The institutions continue to be characterized by a strong complement of part-time staff, with several of the part-time staff being full-time employees at public universities and in industry (Abagi 2006; Wesonga et al. 2007). In surveying certain institutions in the six countries, just under half of the staff is employed on a part-time basis (Varghese 2006). For instance, at the United States International University, out of a total of 106 academic staff in 2002, 65 were part-time. In the same year, 58 out of 115 staff at the Catholic University of East Africa were part-time. The profile of the staff's qualifications show much variation.

The academic staff's level of qualifications tends to vary. The number of staff with doctorates is uneven across and within the countries. For example, of the 56 academic staff at Central University College, nine have doctorates. Furthermore, out of the 41 full-time staff at the United States International University in 2001, approximately 50 percent had doctorates (Abagi 2006). By contrast, at Daystar University, out of a total of 84 academic staff, fewer than 10 percent held doctorates (Abagi 2006). The latter trend is replicated in Uganda, with 90 percent of the staff holding masters and bachelors' degrees.

Accreditation and Regulations

Current data show that the private sector institutions continue to be regulated in all the country studies. The form of regulation varies from being weak to extremely rigid (Thaver 2003). In the case of institutions that have been recently established, proposals have been submitted to the relevant accreditation bodies. Thus, at the time of this study, not all the institutions had been granted full accreditation. For example, while the Ugandan case displays rapid growth, with almost eleven universities being established since 2004, under half of the institutions are not licensed (Tumwesigye 2006). Moreover, the conditions under which the unlicensed private universities operate are not clearly defined.

Research

There appears to be limited research being conducted at private institutions. At the expense of not over-generalising, the programme/course offering at institutions in the country studies are primarily at undergraduate level. However, within countries a small number of institutions are offering postgraduate programmes, which then opens up the possibility for research. Examples are two institutions in Ghana and the Pan-African University in Nigeria. It seems though that the primary knowledge focus is either religion or business (as in the case of Masters in Business Administration). In terms of faculty-based research, there is limited data as to whether academics in private institutions are engaging in fully-fledged research projects. In the instance of Zimbabwe, funding constraints and low capacity levels are cited as reasons for academics in private institutions not being able to conduct research (Chivore 2006). Some of the evidence in the country studies suggests that there is limited infrastructural capacity of the standard required to conduct scholarly research. Given the aforementioned trends, what kinds of themes are emerging?

Themes and Overall Tendencies

Debates and reasons regarding the conditions that lend themselves to the proliferation of private higher education institutions in Africa have been made by scholars writing internationally (Altbach 2005; Levy 2005) as well as those writing from within the African country studies (Varghese et al. 2006). One of the key factors cited is the demand-absorption thesis (Geiger 1986; Levy 1986) which culminates in the view that private higher education institutions are meeting the social demand which cannot be provided by public sector institutions. The latter phenomenon, buttressed by the retreat of the state in terms of welfare provisioning globally, is also being reproduced in post-colonial African countries. The question therefore is to what extent are the private institutions meeting this demand? In other words, is it serving its social function? In light of this, I shall address certain thematic issues as these have arisen from the empirical data.

The first point is about the aspect of scale. The nature of enrolments in all the country studies suggests that while it is necessary for meeting the condition (of supply), their small scale suggests that these are not sufficient ones. But, while they represent a small share of the total higher education enrolment in the six countries, this in itself does not rule out a social function, albeit on a limited scale.

It strikes me that that the current growth of private higher education institutions in the six country studies signal possibilities for meeting the mid-level skills required by national economies. The developmental nature of the econo-

mies positioned in the interstices of national priorities and global imperatives, by implication, require a set of skills that are wide-ranging (and at various levels) in order to poise (or catapult) countries into a more modern project. With the recent trend in the under-investment of resources in the public higher education sector (Kiamba 2004) that in all likelihood will place limits on their expansion into more modern forms, this opens up possibilities for private growth. From this perspective, the current data shows that some of the private institutions are beginning to adapt and respond to these market needs, by making small inroads into the type of curricula required of more modern economies. Coupled with the two main streams, namely theological and business administration degrees, there is also evidence of programmes such as law, health sciences. Furthermore, engineering technology is evident in one of the institutions in Nigeria. In addition, in responding to the service sectors of the economy, some of the institutions, more specifically in East Africa, are offering courses in the hospitality industry. This could be a response to the service and tourist sector. Institutions are thus beginning to diversify beyond the narrow theological and business offerings. In fact, in Kenya, as part of a policy framework, institutions are reviewed regularly and curriculum diversification is one of the areas that are assessed in order to remain competitive (Abagi 2006).

Given these possibilities, a key question has to be about the flipside of enrolment, namely, that of throughput. Clearly, any discussion in terms of impact on the employment market has to address outcome factors. It is here that the benign nature of private institutions becomes somewhat murky, as there exists limited empirical data on throughput rates which makes it difficult to effectively assess social/educational outcomes. In light of this, it is important to understand the employment destination points for graduates from private institutions. Given traces of training programmes that are beginning to be aligned with (modern) economic imperatives, it would be important to understand how and where graduates are making a 'dent'. The point made about the need to conduct tracer studies in Uganda (Tumwesigye 2006) is a research challenge applicable across other countries.

For the purpose of this article, therefore, the key issue about private institutions is its relationship to the economy and society in the different countries. In light of this, how do private institutions ensure that their educational project remains rooted in the national soil? This question assumes significance given that most of them are operating within a framework of international capital, either in the form of philanthropic donations or through direct and indirect financial support from international economic institutions. Arising from this phenomenon is one suggestion that even though these institutions are run by

local (national) individuals, their allegiance appears to be either to the international sponsor or shareholder.

Furthermore, the higher education field is also a market for international providers. For example, in the case of both franchise colleges and international providers, these institutions, with strong international capital linkages, have made it easy for the foreign providers to move through the African higher education market at limited cost. The evidence seems to suggest that the colleges (as franchised operations) appear to be a mechanism for foreign providers to expand their market share.³ Thus, the challenge for private institutions is about how to navigate this tension at different dimensions of the system. However, an over-determination of the profit motive could compromise the potential for indigenous knowledge production insofar as course offerings and academic systems (Altbach 1987); these are imported and transplanted without cognizance of local realities. The knowledge linkage thus has the potential to be tenuous, a phenomenon that is further compounded by the tenuous employment status of academic staff in these institutions.

As highlighted earlier, the academic staff profile in private institutions is characterized by a complement of part-time academic staff. Several of the part-time staff is tied mainly to public sector institutions or industry. This means that not all the academic staff have a sense of long-term loyalty to private institutions which effectively then compromises those traditional elements of the academic project. Moreover, the development of an innovative curriculum which is also premised on research principles is thus tested. Besides academic autonomy (Altbach 1987), there are also quality assurance components that are compromised. In Nigeria, Ajayi (2006) reports that a recent monitoring report of private universities showed that with the exception of the Pan-African University, none of them met the National Universities Commission's minimum standards in terms of quality including the required number of academic staff. Furthermore, there is also the difficulty of attracting highly-qualified staff at certain institutions, given that the selection criteria tend to prioritise a commitment to Christianity (Wesonga et al. 2007).

Equity and Access

In the six countries, private higher education, tends to be expensive and beyond the reach of many students. Due to the high fees charged by private universities, access to these institutions is limited to students from the richer segments of society (Munene & Otieno 2007; Alani 2004; Wesonga et al. 2007). Some of the evidence suggests that traditionally under-represented groups remain excluded from private universities. While this is the trend, it is worthwhile mentioning the case of the Kiriri Women's University of Science and

Technology, which is exclusively for women. It would be interesting to further probe how the different groupings position themselves in the private higher education market, by drawing on some of the work in the public sector in Nigeria (see Lebeau 2000).

Financial Dependency

As highlighted earlier in this article, one of the features in relation to the institutions' sources of financial resources is the general reliance on either tuition and/or general sponsorship. This overwhelming dependence on limited revenue sources (in most cases one source) could present these institutions with significant resource dependency complications should there be a problem with these sources. Clearly, the private institutions are operating in an environment characterized by much flux and uncertainty. Thus, one of the key questions is the extent to which for-profit private institutions are able to generate both funding resources as well as, in the case of for-profits, generating a profitable surplus. The Tanzanian cases appears interesting in terms of how low profitability factors experienced by a for-profit institution subsequently culminated in a conversion from its former status to one of not-for-profit. In light of this, evidence suggests that there is 'no private university that has been able to make profits from its academic activities' (Kuhanga 2006). Following this line of argument, 'investors who established their institutions for profit-making have already wound up the business or have changed their original thinking and are now providing higher education as a social service.' This is an interesting case in terms of how institutions transform/convert their status from one of a for-profit to that of a not-for-profit.

Having identified these trends for the six country studies, the following section gives some broad insight into the private higher education sector in South Africa.

A Private Glimpse into South Africa

The rise of the sector in South Africa has been identified as a phenomenon of the mid-1990s (Thaver 2001; Mabizela 2002; Subotzky 2002; Kruss 2002). At this point, private higher education institutions began to mushroom under favourable constitutional conditions. This culminated in a practice whereby local and transnational institutions engaged in twinning and a variety of partnership arrangements. As highlighted, some of this prolific growth was wide-ranging in terms of qualification level, spanning both first and advanced business administration degrees. This growth included a significant concentration (albeit not exclusively) on the cusp of the higher education level. The latter phenomenon has made it difficult to map the size of the sector, which is

estimated to range between 86 and 99 institutions (Mabizela 2006). At the time of writing this article, approximately 25 percent (of the 99 institutions) were either not registered or at different stages in the accreditation process. In terms of institutional type, all of these are primarily (but not exclusively) recorded as for-profit institutions. It is interesting that the institutional type for-profit is marked by a strong corporate/conglomerate presence, with several being listed on the stock exchange.

In a similar vein to the six country studies, there are methodological problems around defining the scale of the sector. In light of this, it is difficult to pin-down the size of enrolments which is compounded by the extensive nature of private/public partnerships. Notwithstanding the latter, the current enrolment figure is at fewer than ninety thousand, with an estimated two-thirds being registered in partnership programmes with public sector institutions. Effectively, private higher education institutions that own programmes (without any partnership arrangements) comprise an enrolment figure of approximately 30,000 (Mabizela 2006). Effectively, it occupies a rather small share (fewer than 5 percent) of the overall higher education enrolment figure in South Africa.

In just over a decade, as private higher education institutions (both local and transnational) sought to establish themselves through '*part-twinning*' arrangements, they were simultaneously subject to the visible hand of the state. Direct regulation and monitoring have taken different forms not least of which has been – paradoxically – a type of restrictive welcoming. Other forms have included the provision of window-periods; de-accreditation of certain masters in business administration programmes; and moratoriums being placed on new partnerships, including the use of the terminology '*university*'. This has culminated in overt tensions between private institutions and government. Yet, the interface has also been characterized by complementarity between private and public institutions, generating relatively productive relationships (Levy 2005; Kruss 2002).

The above-mentioned private/public resource nexus has posed resource challenges for the government. In light of this, a pressing issue has revolved around the extent to which private (i.e. for-profit) institutions 'feed-off' the infrastructural base of public institutions. Some of the evidence suggests that tuition fees are one point of accumulation for the for-profit institutions. Thus, the profit motive appears to be the over-determining one, with accountability resting mainly with those of the shareholders.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion I would like to comment on a recurrent theme which is about the shape and form of the relationship between the private higher education institutions in the country studies and the role of international bodies. There are different ways of assessing this, one of which is to see a direct and linear relationship starting from the (international) centre and then working its way down and across the national contexts (Altbach 1987). From this angle, the higher education domain is perceived as a free market with private programmes being the tradable 'goods'. As I tried to show earlier, the franchise operations provide the mechanism for this trade. In this regard, the corporate owners of institutions (inside countries) are active agents in advancing this trade, subject to the vagaries of the market. Given at times the limited capacities of national governments it becomes difficult to monitor the pace of this type of trade. As I tried to show, this is very evident in the South African case resulting in direct government intervention. This problem is further exacerbated by the fact that private institutions are not fully accountable to the national social system. Effectively, therefore, the social responsibility (on the part of private higher education institutions) towards students (and in turn, society) is compromised and disadvantage is reproduced nationally. At the expense of not entirely discounting this phenomenon, it is also apposite to reframe the relationship as an interconnected web of economic and cultural networks that are wired through pockets within countries. In other words, I am making an argument for how capital both as a commodity and as culture (in the form of religion) works its way through the systems and then subsequently is legitimized inside countries. Whilst one cannot prevent this global rush more especially in the face of limited bureaucratic capacities, it may be worth our while to understand the dynamics and forces that lie beneath the phenomenon which strikes me as a convulsion of modernization. Following this line of argument, therefore, the recent trends in the country studies suggest to me that there are small (modern) inroads being made by these institutions. These modern educational products fall somewhat between on the one hand, the international economic and cultural rush, and on the other, the pressure for increased accountability to national governments (and in turn society). It is worthwhile to mention that their educational advantage is that they do not have the imprint of the colonial legacy in the same way as public sector institutions and as such have a forward-looking orientation. But herein lays the rub.

In their efforts to be more forward looking, the institutions in all the country studies, including South Africa, are constrained by the over-reliance on a cohort of part-time staff. The primary staff complement is one that is tied to public sector institutions, with individuals who 'moonlight' in private institu-

tions. This practice not only undermines institutional loyalty but places intellectual and resource limits on the extent to which they are able to develop and innovate around curricula. In light of this, the split loyalty and time spent by academic staff means that they may either transpose existing and at times outdated curricula from public institutions, or transport certain elements from foreign contexts. Effectively, this cross-cutting practice has implications for the distinction between public and private institutions. It is worthwhile to note that this blurring already operates along the dimension of tuition fees, with countries in the East African region recruiting fee-paying students alongside those that are government-subsidised (Kiamba 2004).

It may be timely to unhook the dichotomy of what constitutes private and public higher education institutions in the existing country studies in order to understand what lurks behind productive and generative higher education institutions. In particular, and for the purpose of this article, further research is necessary to show how specialised, private institutions acting as educational islands in Africa negotiate their way around a contested and convulsive process, mindful of what it takes to expand and organically situate both the knowledge and economic base of Africa.

Notes

1. I would like to thank Gerald Wangenge-Ouma for his research assistance.
2. At the time of the earlier study (Thaver 2003) there had been a paucity of literature and data on the private higher education sector in Africa. Given the comparative nature of the article, it necessitated a follow-up of the existing country studies. Subsequent studies (Varghese 2006) have yielded important data for other countries, which could be the focus for further research. Where the data is available, similar trends appear to be at work.

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