

# Transnational Education and African Universities

## (Keynote Address)

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### Abstract

*The paper examines the implications of the emerging GATS regime and other forces behind the internationalization of higher education. It suggests that in the immediate future, as in the recent past and present, universities in different parts of the world will be unequally integrated into the new global system of transnational higher education. The challenge for Africa is to stem current and forestall future international educational inequalities and hierarchies by revitalizing its own universities and building regional centers of excellence and systems of intra-continental and international academic mobility, exchange, collaboration, connectivity, and regulation that generate and sustain empowering knowledge networks. The paper is divided into four parts. First, it briefly explores the old patterns of higher education internationalization. Second, it examines the new patterns that have emerged in recent years. Third, it interrogates the implications of the trade in higher educational services. Finally, it offers some suggestions on how African institutions of higher learning might meet the new challenges by constructing their own Pan-African networks rooted in regional integration schemes and the Diaspora option and by actively participating in international forums and agencies setting agendas and structures for transnational education at the global level.*

### Introduction\*

It has become a cliché of our times that we live in a globalizing indeed a globalized world marked by the rapid flows of commodities and capital, ideas and institutions, practices and people, visions and viruses, a world of unprecedented transnational connectedness and competitiveness. Even if there is much hyperbole in these characterizations, there is a strong sense that everything in our contemporary world is in an apparent state of flux, that old certainties and conventions are crumbling, yet the contours and content of the new remain fuzzy, whether we are talking about life in general or specific sectors including higher education.

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I have been asked to offer a few reflections on the theme of this conference, “Transnational Provision and Higher Education in Africa.” You will have to forgive my professional predisposition, as a historian, if I begin by discussing the past, the history, of transnational education before I talk about current and future trends as increasingly framed by the new regime of trade in educational services, itself part of an ambitious global drive to liberalize trade in services in general. And I trust you will further forgive me if my remarks and modest recommendations barely scratch the surface of this complex subject on which you know far more than I do as leaders of higher education institutions on this beloved continent of ours.

Currently African universities and indeed universities everywhere, are undergoing unprecedented change and confronting multiple challenges brought about by the vast and complex processes of globalization, technological change, and the emergence of new knowledge economies and economies of knowledge, not to mention the epistemic reconfigurations in the production and organization of knowledge within the academy itself. Powerful internal and external forces—political, pecuniary, and paradigmatic—are transforming all aspects of university life constituted around the triple mission of teaching, research, and service. The universities’ constituencies and competitors are more plural than ever as expectations of access and accountability expand at the same time as the universities lose their monopoly of knowledge production and public fiscal support diminishes.

The need for redefining the role and defending the importance of universities has never been greater. Questions abound: How are African universities trying to balance the demands of autonomy and accountability, expansion and excellence, equity and efficiency, diversification and differentiation, representation and responsibility, privatization and the public purpose, community service and consultancy, internationalization and indigenization, global visibility and presence and local anchorage and relevance in the face of liberalization, and as they address the new challenges of knowledge production and dissemination, of Africanizing global scholarship and globalizing African scholarship? What innovative approaches can they adopt to facilitate their own renewal from at least two decades of debilitating crisis and contribute to the sustainable development of African economies, societies, and polities?

If one were to summarily capture the import of the pressures facing universities, the challenge of internationalization would loom large. It is driven internally by the growing complexity of knowledge and externally by the increasing commercialization of knowledge. It is quite evident that universities are becoming more interconnected internationally for both epistemic and economic reasons, the first because universities have always been, or aspire to be, universalist and universalizing institutions an imperative reinforced by growing global reflexivity and the explosion of knowledge that makes transnational collaborations more important than ever, and the second because trade in educational services is expanding rapidly and becoming subject to global trade rules and negotiations under the legally-binding auspices of the General Agreement of Trade in Services (GATS) of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The implications of the emerging GATS regime and other forces behind the internationalization of higher education vary not only for different institutions within countries but also among different countries, especially along the enduring North-South divides of global development and underdevelopment. This is to suggest that in the

immediate future, as in the recent past and present, universities in different parts of the world will be unequally integrated into the new global system of higher education. The challenge, then, is to stem current and forestall future educational inequalities and hierarchies by fostering systems of international academic mobility, exchange, collaboration, connectivity, and regulation that generate and sustain empowering knowledge networks that are guided less by the polarizing and profiteering pressures of the market and more by the developmentalist and democratizing demands of global “public good.”

My presentation explores these issues in four parts. First, I briefly explore what I call the old patterns of higher education internationalization. Second, I examine the new patterns that have emerged in recent years. Third, I interrogate the implications of the trade in educational services for higher education. Finally, I offer some suggestions on how African institutions of higher learning might meet the new challenges by going back to the future of a reconfigured Pan-Africanism.

### **Old Patterns of Internationalization**

Intellectual mobility and networking across variously constituted borders—political, cultural, or geographical—is as old as the first Islamic universities established in northern Africa between the eighth and tenth centuries and those founded later in medieval western Europe. It could in fact be argued that the ancient universities were transnational communities of scholars far more than the modern national universities founded in many parts of the world in the twentieth century. But if the latter were not always international in the composition of their students and faculty, they were in their missions and conventions. This was particularly true of the universities founded in the colonial and ex-colonial countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, most of which were modeled on universities in the imperial metropolises of Europe, themselves partly adapted from the Islamic legacy. Almost everywhere universities in their mission statements have defined themselves in terms of the triple mandate of teaching, research, and public service.

Internationalization has largely entailed three things: first, unregulated mobility of students and faculty; second, formalized inter-institutional exchanges and collaborations; and third, incorporation of foreign subjects, themes, topics or languages in the curriculum. There were, and still are, great regional imbalances in the relative development and importance of each of these tendencies. Three pertinent observations can be made. First, the patterns of academic mobility are unequal. At a global level, the physical flows of students and faculty have predominantly been from the rest of the world to the West, from the global South to the global North. Before independence, for example, far more students from the colonies flocked to Britain and France than British or French students studied in the colonies, not least because there were so few universities in the colonies. In recent decades more foreign students from Asia, Africa, and Latin America have gone to study in the United States for longer periods than American students have studied in these regions where they often spend much shorter periods—a semester or an academic year at most—than the former who earn their degrees in American institutions.<sup>1</sup>

Second, the processes of knowledge exchange are uneven. On the one hand, knowledges of the West from languages to theories have been incorporated more in the rest of the world than the West has incorporated knowledges from the rest of the world. For

example, the average student in an African university is far more exposed to European phenomena than the average student in a European university is exposed to African phenomena. Yet, outside each of the respective regions knowledges from Africa, Asia, and Latin America are more readily available in the West than in the other regions. Asia or Latin America do not constitute a regular feature of teaching and research in African universities and the opposite is equally true in Asia or Latin America. Again to use the example of the United States, while American students are notorious for their ignorance of foreign cultures and languages, American universities boast of the most extensive area studies programs in the world where courses on Africa, Asia, and Latin America are regularly taught by sizeable numbers of faculty to numerous students, although they constitute minorities on their campuses.<sup>2</sup>

Third, the structures of institutional collaboration are unstable. This is particularly so for networks outside powerful regional blocs such as the European Union that has developed some of the world's most effective programs including ERASMUS for student and faculty exchange, COMETT created to support university-industry cooperation through training partnerships, LINGUA, designed to boost the learning of foreign languages in educational institutions and the workplace; and TEMPUS formed in 1990 to promote university cooperation with Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>3</sup> Research linkages between universities in the developed and developing countries tend to be particularly lopsided given the vastly unequal endowments of scholarly cultures, capacities and commitments. Whereas scholarly visitors from the South to the North tend to be predominantly natural scientists, from the North to the South they are mainly social scientists.<sup>4</sup> There are few incentives for scientists and scholars in wealthy research universities to work with colleagues in poorly resourced institutions. This often means it is academics from the less prestigious universities or from the relatively marginalized area studies programs that tend to engage in overseas collaborations, although the relations they foster are not always mutually beneficial.<sup>5</sup>

Clearly, the inequalities inherent in the old patterns of higher education internationalization are rooted in the historical dominance enjoyed by the West or the global North more generally over the last few centuries that has dictated imitative modernizations elsewhere. Relations between universities in the rich and poor countries or developed and developing regions are marked by complex connections, contestations, and challenges that recent developments connected to the growth of knowledge economies and societies are reinforcing and recasting in new and complicated ways. Western hegemony is as much economic as it is epistemological as western scholars often set the terms, themes, topics and theories of intellectual discourse and research.

Within Africa the scale of academic mobility pales in comparison to the highly structured programs that have been established in the European Union and other world regions since the mid-1980s, or the flows from Africa to the global North. Intra-African academic linkages have historically revolved around four axis: first, the regional universities that were established during the twilight years of colonial rule and nationalized after independence; second, distance education; third, inter-university links; and fourth, unregulated movements by students and faculty. Foreign institutions and old style correspondence colleges once dominated distance education. Now the main providers of distance education include universities, non-governmental organizations, and private entrepreneurs, while the programs are themselves becoming more diverse reflecting growing

demand for a broad range of skills beyond those required by teachers and civil servants who were previously the major patrons of distance education, and the print medium of instruction is gradually giving way to more technologically advanced multi-media systems, including the development of open and virtual universities.<sup>6</sup>

As might be expected given uneven levels of economic and educational development among African countries, the patterns of academic exchanges across the continent have been quite uneven. Egypt is dominant in North Africa, Nigeria was the magnet in West Africa during the oil boom years, and postapartheid South Africa has become the hub in Southern Africa. Egyptian universities have signed hundreds of academic cooperation agreements involving student and faculty exchanges and secondments, joint degrees, and curricula, research and technical collaboration with universities in North Africa and the Arab world more generally. Cairo University and Al-Azhar University also attract many students from West and East Africa.<sup>7</sup> For its part, in the 1980s Nigeria even earmarked 5 percent of total university enrollment for foreign students and entered into bilateral education agreements with about thirty countries, most of them on the continent, although the number of foreign students never came remotely close the target.<sup>8</sup> As for postapartheid South Africa, the number of international students rose from 5,000 in 1994 to 40,000 in 2003, mostly from the SADC region and elsewhere on the continent.<sup>9</sup> The inflows of thousands of African students and faculty triggered contentious debates for a country inclined to both xenophobia and regional hegemonic ambitions as it came out of long years of isolation and tried to address the nefarious legacies of apartheid education and come to grips with its African identity.<sup>10</sup>

### **New Patterns of Internationalization**

The changes associated with globalization, which as a process refers to more intensive and extensive global interconnectedness in an ever widening range of spheres from the economic, political and cultural to the technological, discursive and iconographic while as a project it largely serves as synonym for global capitalism and neo-liberal restructuring or what some critics call free-market fundamentalism, have altered the systems and stabilities of higher education in general and the possibilities and problems of internationalization in particular. Besides the acceleration of the old trends including the increased mobility of students, professors and researchers and the internationalization of curricula and extra-curricular activities, two major relatively new trends can be identified: first, the growth of what is variously referred to as “transnational,” “crossborder,” or “borderless” education; and second, the development of new international partnerships, networks and consortia.

“Borderless” education, the term that seems to be gaining currency, is of course not new—as noted earlier distance education programs have a long history—but it is now growing at an unparalleled rate facilitated by the new information technologies, massification of demand, pressures for knowledge commodification and commercialization, and the internationalization of the professions and skilled labor migration. To its proponents it is hailed for its ability to expand tertiary enrolments at relatively low costs and to reach groups traditionally excluded from the universities, whereas its detractors are wary of the lack of local quality control. The institutional mechanisms of distance education encompass dual-mode and single-mode, franchised and nonfranchised programs. Dual-mode programs

offer both classroom and distance instruction, while single-mode programs only offer the latter. In franchised international programs foreign operators form partnerships, often on a commercial basis, with local tertiary institutions to offer instruction on a joint basis, while in nonfranchised programs the former operate on their own without local intermediaries as “virtual universities.”<sup>11</sup>

Online education has changed the dynamics of distance education delivery. Since the 1990s universities all over the world have established online programs through which they are able to reach new students at home and abroad. There are currently countless networks and platforms sponsored by universities, governments, donor agencies, publishers and private businesses that seek to encourage multiple-level partnerships among universities and research centers. Numerous national and regional virtual universities have been created as well as e-libraries and e-books have emerged. There can be little doubt that the new information technologies support flexibility in curriculum design, enhance access and learning opportunities, and support research and innovation. They have also opened new possibilities for international scholarly communication and networking, a fact appreciated by universities even in our poor countries, which face enormous obstacles such as low levels of infrastructural development, unfavorable policies and regulatory frameworks, and scarcity of specialists in telecommunications but are anxious to bridge the digital divide and create e-quality with the rest of the world.<sup>12</sup>

It has not all been rosy of course. There have been some spectacular setbacks as several renowned online institutions in the United States and Europe were forced to close “due to falling enrolments, weak stock market performance, or regulatory problems.”<sup>13</sup> Various technical, organizational, pedagogical and regulatory challenges involved in transnational online education—course development, teaching, and certification—still remain. The need for standardized platforms, an international quality assurance framework and effective assessment of learner outcomes is pressing. Moreover, some disciplines are more favored than others—the professional fields such as business and computer studies and engineering over the humanities and social sciences. All too often, online education is used by institutions in the developed countries to export curricula and instructional expertise to the developing countries, rather than to develop truly cooperative and coordinated ventures that revolutionizes the curriculum among the institutions involved and the processes of knowledge acquisition, transmission, and validation.

Thus, online education has delivered less than its cheerleaders and more than its hecklers predicted. Although some of the expectations for pedagogy and profit have not been met,<sup>14</sup> a recent report concludes: “Over the next decade, advancement in e-learning is likely to be slow, best described as plodding.... Yet despite the difficulties of the recent years, we count ourselves among the optimists who believe electronically mediated instruction can eventually become a standard mode of instruction.... Ultimately, the lure of learning anytime anywhere will prove irresistible.”<sup>15</sup>

As the world has become more interconnected, the interrelations of events and the range of phenomena that involve multiple regions have increased. Correspondingly, popular and scholarly awareness and anxiety has risen about the global challenges, both natural and social, facing humanity. Out of this existential and epistemic angst has emerged some of the impetus for educational internationalism, the quest for collaborative research and knowledge production, the belief that no amount of research in any one country can fully comprehend

let alone resolve global problems. Accompanying it is the notion that no discipline by itself can do so either. Transnationalism meets transdisciplinarity, a marriage that is increasingly sanctified by the intrusion of business practices in academia as knowledge production ceases to be a monopoly of universities, thereby enabling academics in many countries both to enjoy mobility between campuses and corporations and become subjected to the collaborative problem-solving preoccupations of industry.

Thus, new epistemological and organizational forms of knowledge production and acquisition are emerging, predicated on interdisciplinarity and partnerships and collaborative ventures between the academy, industry, governments, NGOs and foundations as part of the marketization and eroding boundaries of higher education, as well as the need for “complex thinking” to deal with the greater complexity in the structure of contemporary knowledge engendered by what has been called knowledge explosion and epistemological explosion.<sup>16</sup> In effect, disciplinary knowledges are not so much as being replaced, indeed cannot be discarded certainly in teaching without disastrous consequences, but are being combined and complemented with interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary knowledges in complex and dynamic ways.<sup>17</sup>

All these developments and the new institutional arrangements of transitional or “borderless education” are quite evident across Africa although they vary in their specific configuration not only from patterns in the other world regions, but also among the African countries themselves. Let me underline three trends and challenges centered round the expansion of distance education, the growth of academic networks, and changes in the contexts and composition of knowledge production.

As noted briefly above, the number of institutions offering distance education within and to Africa is growing. The providers include traditional universities and colleges as well as newly established “open” universities and virtual universities. Among the recently established open universities are the Open University of Tanzania and the Zimbabwe Open University. The best known example of an online educational institution is the World Bank-sponsored African Virtual University, which was created in 1997 and by 2001 had established 31 learning centers in 17 countries and had trained 23,000 people in various professional fields.<sup>18</sup>

Many of Africa’s distance education institutions and initiatives, however, are focused on and operate inside their own national boundaries, within some of which new foreign players are increasingly becoming a factor to reckon with. This refers to the establishment of “local branch campuses” or “subsidiaries” by foreign institutions. Thus, African universities and colleges face a two-fold challenge in this regard: first, to become effective providers of transnational education within the continent itself, and second to compete effectively against foreign providers setting up shop in their respective countries and regions.

Academic cooperation across the continent is expanding, principally through research networks, but needs to be broadened and deepened, and to a lesser extent through library networks. There has been an explosion of transnational research centers and networks that seek to promote and coordinate research among African scholars and sometimes to provide graduate training. They include such institutions as the International Center of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE) in the natural sciences (focuses on human, animal, plant, and environment health), the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in

Africa (CODESRIA) in the social sciences in general, and African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) in economics, all of which maintain active links with universities and have been critical in building research capacities and promoting knowledge production on the continent.<sup>19</sup>

Also crucial for academic research networking is the establishment of integrated national and regional library networks with efficient document delivery mechanisms. African libraries need not only to move from conventional to electronic libraries, but to improve library cooperations at national, regional, and international levels. Needless to say, this requires expensive investments in retooling library staff and establishing information and communication technology infrastructures.<sup>20</sup> Cooperative library networks or projects at regional or continental levels are still grossly underdeveloped. The few initiatives have been led either by South African institutions, the Association of African Universities (AAU), or external donors. The perilous state of academic libraries in many African countries is one of the most tragic manifestations of the crisis facing higher education on the continent today.<sup>21</sup> African institutions cannot expect to become serious players in transnational education if the crisis of libraries is not addressed urgently, for it cannot be overemphasized that libraries are knowledge banks from which intellectual investments are derived and knowledge products are deposited.

As in other parts of the world, the processes and practices of knowledge production in Africa are undergoing profound transformations. Two interrelated tendencies can be noted: the pluralization of the sites and the reconfiguration of the disciplinary architecture of knowledge. The first refers to the fact that knowledge production is no longer a monopoly of universities as it has spread to numerous private and public sectors, including business, government agencies, and civil society organizations “that seek social legitimation through recognizable competence.”<sup>22</sup> Academics increasingly enjoy mobility between universities and other sites outside universities engaged in research.

In the African context this has been spawned largely by the inability of the universities to reproduce academic labor power. In many countries faculty working in multiple sites is a reality, which, in principle, offers them new opportunities to form networks, partnerships, and alliances that can simultaneously enhance their research capacities and protect them from the iniquitous tendencies of the academy. Undoubtedly, the proliferation of independent research networks and the “consultancy syndrome” has saved many African academics from the penury and repression of their structurally adjusted universities. But this institutional porosity has also undermined basic research and academic freedom. The “consultancy syndrome”, as the phenomenon is sometimes called in academic circles with resigned contempt, is here to stay; the challenge is to develop effective mechanisms to ensure universities and their new interlopers or partners in knowledge production share their human and intellectual resources most productively.

The appropriation of some academic functions by institutions outside the universities including business is paralleled by the appropriation in academia of some business practices. This is manifested, for example, in the growth of corporatist management styles in university governance and in the commercialization of learning and commodification of knowledge.<sup>23</sup> The liberalization of universities that this entails combined with epistemological transformations within academe has led to the reconfiguration of the

systems and structures of knowledge production as seen in shifting hierarchies and eroding boundaries among disciplines and the emergence of new interdisciplinary fields.

The African university of today has many more interdisciplinary institutes, centers, programs—the designations vary—organized on thematic and other bases than when I went to college in the early 1970s, all vying for prestige and resources with the traditional departments. Pressures for the restructuring of the epistemological and organizational forms of knowledge have been particularly pronounced in countries such as South Africa, where many initially accepted the thesis popularized by Gibbons that Mode 2 interdisciplinary study is more conducive for development than Mode 1 disciplinary training. Several scholars have increasingly come to the view that this model is too narrow and dichotomous to account for the broader and heterogeneous range of knowledge production activities being generated out of the interactions between the academy, the corporate sector, government, NGOs and donors, in which disciplinary knowledges are not so much as being replaced, indeed cannot be discarded in teaching without disastrous consequences, but are being combined and complemented with pre-disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledges in complex and dynamic ways.<sup>24</sup>

Clearly, we need to know more about knowledge systems that are generated, taught and consumed in African universities. How are these universities and their scholars responding to the emergence of transdisciplinary modes of study and research deemed necessary to deal with complex and interrelated global problems? What is the state of the infrastructures of knowledge production in various parts of Africa—research and publishing—and how do they relate to the structures of scholarly authority and legitimation? To what extent are African universities still replicas of western universities when it comes to their theories, themes, and terms of knowledge production? Has globalization loosened or tightened the tentacles of what Ali Mazrui once called the cultural multinational corporation represented by the western university?<sup>25</sup> How are the afflictions and affectations of the unproductive culture of scientific consumerism, to use Paulin Hountodji's damning indictment of African intellectual production, changing?<sup>26</sup> How do African scholars and scientists communicate with each other and import and export research methodologies, concepts and discourses in different fields from the ubiquitous “posts” of the humanities (postmodernism, poststructuralism, and postcoloniality) running amok in the western academy, to the mathematization of Economics, the “queen” of the of the social sciences and the quantification of Political Science, to the new high-tech interdisciplinary frontiers of the sciences—information technology, biotechnology, nanotechnology and environmental technology? What indeed are the connections, contradictions, and contestations between “indigenous” and “international” knowledges in the African academy in this era of globalization and transnational education?

### **Implications of International Trade in Educational Services**

The contexts in which these questions and issues can be and are being addressed are changing, not least because of the emerging regime of international trade in educational services that the World Trade Organization seeks to regulate through GATS. All indications point to the fact that this trade is growing rapidly although it is difficult to measure its full scale and value because of data problems. Rough estimates for OECD countries put the

monetary impact of trade in international educational services at \$30 billion in 1999, equivalent to 3 percent of their total export services.<sup>27</sup> The largest “exporters” of educational services are the United States, followed by the United Kingdom, Australia, Italy and Canada, all countries with well-established and prestigious university systems, and with the exception of Italy, speakers of English, the lingua franca of international business and scholarship, whose worldwide dominance has risen on the backs of U.S. global supremacy and the Internet. Asia is the largest “import” region of educational services accounting for 40 percent of all internationally mobile students in 1999, followed by Europe with 30 percent, Africa 12 percent, North America 3 percent, South America 3 percent, and Oceania 1 percent.<sup>28</sup>

But it is important to note that foreign students, whose flows constitute much of the basis of the available statistics on trade in educational services, only constituted 1.8 percent of tertiary education enrolments globally in 1999, up fractionally from 1.5 percent in 1985. Clearly, despite the exponential growth of international education, the bulk of the world’s students are educated and will continue for the foreseeable future to be educated at home. This is true of most firms and jobs as well: they are local, not global. Nevertheless, these students will increasingly be subject to a global regime of educational provision, regulation, delivery, and certification. If the exploding academic and policy literature and anti-GATS resolutions by university and student associations in various parts of the world, both developed and developing including Africa, are anything to go by, there is already great anxiety, and for some excitement, about the implications of “borderless education” in general and GATS in particular.

The inclusion of the services sector in the Uruguay Round of global trade negotiations was spawned by recognition of the growing importance of services in the world economy, which by the late 1990s accounted for close to 70 percent of national output in the developed countries and more than fifty percent in many developing countries including Africa. After protracted negotiations, in which fierce resistance was expressed by many developing countries concerned that trade liberalization in services would erode the pursuit of developmental goals, undermine public policy, and infringe on their sovereignty, GATS came into force in January 1995. It laid out a comprehensive legal framework of rules and disciplines covering 161 service activities across 12 classified sectors including telecommunications, financial, maritime, energy, business, environmental, distribution, tourism, and education services.

Under the GATS classification four different modes of services trade are distinguished: (1) “crossborder supply” (services that do not require physical movement such as distance education, e-learning and virtual universities); (2) “consumption abroad” (people or firms that make use of educational services in another country such as students studying abroad); (3) “commercial presence” (commercial establishment of facilities to provide services in another country by education providers in the form of subsidiaries or branches); (4) and “presence of natural persons” (individuals who go to another country to provide educational services on a temporary basis as teachers or researchers, for example).

GATS contains general rules and principles and invites commitments in specific sectors and across sectors. The rules contain many exceptions and ambiguities in their application.<sup>29</sup> The process by which countries commit themselves to liberalizing services is voluntary and flexible in so far as they are free to decide which service sectors they wish to open up and they can specify the limitations and exceptions they want to maintain. But there

are several problems with the commitment structure including that of “overlap between market access and national treatment commitments... For instance, limitations on national treatment such as preferential treatment of domestic service suppliers via taxes or subsidies or government procurement policies also affect market access conditions for foreign service suppliers.... Another problem is that given the choice in selecting sectors for commitment, specific sectoral interests and modal preferences are likely to dominate the negotiating process.”<sup>30</sup>

It is these ambitions and ambiguities that have made GATS so contentious. Most of its supporters trumpet the economic benefits of liberalized trade, arguing that increased competition leads to lower prices, more innovation, increased investment, technology transfer, and employment creation. In short, that it is conducive for national competitiveness and prosperity and importing educational services improves the capacity, quality, and innovativeness of domestic educational institutions, minimizes the brain drain and reduces costs incurred in study abroad programs, while exporting these services generates income, fosters international recognition, opens markets for other services, and both imports and exports serve to promote cultural, political, and economic alliances. Critics emphasize the dangers that liberalized trade in educational services pose for the public good, educational quality, equitable access, research capacities, public support, state sovereignty and authority, cultural autonomy, and national and regional development agendas.<sup>31</sup>

Under GATS education is classified into five categories (primary, secondary, higher, adult, and other). Specifically, signatories to GATS have to accede to several unconditional and conditional obligations, among them the most favoured nation treatment (a non-discriminatory principle that requires equal treatment for all trading partners), the national treatment rule (applies when a country has made a commitment to allow foreigners to operate and requires treating the latter and nationals equally), and the progressive liberalization provision (which involves extending GATS coverage to more sectors and allows for negotiations across sectors, say transport and education).

The range and level of commitments made thus far vary among countries and according to sector. In the Uruguay Round the developed countries scheduled 45 percent of their service sectors and the developing countries only 12 percent.<sup>32</sup> But even for the former only 25 percent of the scheduled services had no limitations, for the latter it was 7 percent. Altogether, of the 155 service activities that could be scheduled, by 1999 forty-four countries had committed themselves to 20 or less, another 23 to between 21 and 40, and 32 countries had made more than 40 commitments and another 33 more than 100.<sup>33</sup> The distribution of sectors in terms of the number of countries scheduling commitments was as follows: tourism (125), business (100), financial (99), communications (94), transport (81), construction (71), recreation (60), environment (51), distribution (49), health (45), and education (43). In terms of distribution by mode, the bulk of the commitments are for mode 2, followed by mode 1 and mode 3. Commitments for mode 4 are almost negligible.

It is quite apparent that there are notable differences in the levels of commitment among countries, sectors, and modes as well as variations in the levels of commitments within countries and sectors. Trade liberalization is least evident in the health and education sectors. This could be attributed to the fact that these sectors remain the heart and soul of public policy and provision, central to the claims of citizenship, to the social contract of national identity, development, and well being. It is perhaps for these reasons that

constituencies associated with these sectors have mounted the most spirited resistance against GATS, thereby curtailing its intrusive tentacles.

Opposition to bringing education under the trade rules of GATS has been voiced across the world, among developed and developing countries and by faculty and student unions. The Accra Declaration on GATS and the Internationalization of Higher Education in Africa adopted by the Association of African Universities in April 2004 is quite typical. It reaffirms the development of higher education is a “public mandate” not simply a tradable commodity “subject primarily to international trade rules and negotiations” and proposes continued support for mutually beneficial and multiple forms of internationalization.<sup>34</sup>

The numbers of countries that have submitted requests or offers in education are clearly low—43 out of 146. Few of them are from the developing world, which could reflect the fact that these countries are trying to come to terms with the complex technical negotiations under GATS, or they have deliberately adopted a “wait and see” attitude, or they are actively trying to resist GATS rules that are against their fundamental interests.<sup>35</sup> The latter seems quite plausible when it is recalled that during the WTO ministerial meeting in Cancun in 2003 a “group of twenty-two developing countries led by Brazil, Argentina and India took a firm stand on the issue of agricultural subsidies... and the GATS rules which have particular relevance to developing countries.”<sup>36</sup>

Debate about international trade in educational services centers on four key issues: first, the terms of discourse are themselves in dispute; second, there is the question of international quality assurance and accreditation; third, the impact of commercial values on education as the latter becomes ensnared in the sanctions and seductions of trade; and fourth, the developmental consequences for countries in the global South, and in our case the implications for Africa.

The migration of terms from the business to the education sector is a clear sign of the ubiquitous, some would say insidious, creep of business rhetoric and models in contemporary social discourse and policy-making. And so education mutates into an industry, students into consumers, learning into a service. As Jane Knight has noted, this has been a source of conceptual confusion in so far as the terminology used may have vastly different assumptions and meanings for the two sectors.<sup>37</sup> Related to this is the fact that there is no generally agreed taxonomy or typology of the various forms of “borderless” higher education given the growing diversity and differentiation of providers, delivery modes, media and locations, curricula and content, expected outcomes, and institutional configurations.<sup>38</sup>

The tendency is increasingly to use the GATS classification that distinguishes between four different modes of services trade outlined above. GATS seeks to promote trade liberalization in educational services by encouraging the import and export of what are described as educational services and products. A major exception is made for services provided in the “exercise of governmental authority,” which has been a source of intense debate as to whether this means education provided and funded by governments can be exempted. In fact, the very term “services” and other concepts such as “national treatment,” “commitments,” and “transparency” to mention a few some of which are grafted from previous agreements on trade goods, are not well-defined.<sup>39</sup>

Even more heated than the terminological debates are concerns about the absence of an international regulatory framework and the implications of the GATS regime in the

construction of such a framework that needs to deal with the international registration of providers, recognition of foreign qualifications, and quality assurance and accreditation. Much of the attention has been focused particularly on the question of international quality assurance out of concerns for the protection of the rights of learners against fraudulent providers and bogus degrees, the academic integrity of local educational systems, as well as national identity and sovereignty. Four trends and models have been identified in the international quality assurance movement and literature, each expressing rising aspirations for and degrees of integration. They encompass informal exchange and cooperation or formal mutual recognition agreements among national agencies, the creation of an international system of meta-accreditation or global accreditors.<sup>40</sup>

Currently, the first model is the most developed. It seeks to promote convergence by strengthening or transforming national quality assurance and accreditation systems to deal with the new developments. In much of the world quality assurance policies and mechanisms were established from the 1980s to deal with the challenges associated with skyrocketing enrolments, cutbacks in government funding, expansion of private and foreign providers, increased mobility of students and faculty, the growth of distance education and e-learning, and mounting public and ideological demands for accountability and transparency in higher education systems. Some countries borrowed from the American model, the oldest accreditation tradition in the world, but not always successfully given the varied contexts.

Indeed the export of accreditation models from the developed to the developing world, sometimes as part of codes of “good conduct” or “practice” to safeguard the quality of transnational programs, often elicits charges of cultural imperialism and dependency in many quarters. While the distance education sector has developed some innovative guidelines and models and some progress has been made especially in regions sharing common traditions or integration schemes and trade agreements, comparability and compatibility remains a daunting problem given the wide variations in national systems and legislation and differences over the very definition and measurement of “quality” and diversification in quality assurance methodologies and systems, not to mention the stubborn protectionist claims of national autonomy.

Far less common are formal bilateral and multilateral agreements of cooperation and mutual recognition. The recognition can either be for the “equivalence” or “acceptance” of academic qualifications (degrees and diplomas or study periods and credits), or for professional qualifications conferring the right to work in nationally or internationally regulated professions such as law, accountancy, medicine or engineering. Europe boasts the most examples of these formal agreements, while the Washington Accord signed in 1997 between engineering organizations from Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States, and later joined by South Africa, Hong Kong, and Japan, among others, is the first major international professional recognition agreement.

Meta-accreditation academic agencies are still in their infancy largely confined to associations with non-binding powers such as the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), the Commission on Global Accreditation of the International Association of University Presidents (IAUP), which has been planning a “global quality label” for quality-assurance and accreditation agencies, and the proposed Worldwide Quality Register for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agencies. An attempt to create a global accreditor ended in failure when the Global Alliance

for Transnational Education, formed in 1995, was rocked by conflicts and corporate takeover. Altogether, by 2002 there were apparently no less than seven major global accreditation initiatives.<sup>41</sup> Africa needs to take these developments seriously and participate in them actively.

These initiatives are largely driven by the universities themselves and their networks. For many, therefore, “intellectual globalization is alive and well now and does not need the straitjacket of GATS and the WTO. We should be moving toward a globalization based on equality rather than a new neocolonialism.”<sup>42</sup> The GATS regime represents a new phenomenon that to some reinforces and to others subverts university-led internationalization efforts. Certainly it raises both economic and ethical questions. For example, the ethics of public institutions that become private providers when they set up branch campuses in foreign markets (whereby students in poor countries effectively subsidize institutions in developed countries) have been questioned.

As Mala Singh has forcefully argued an ethical framework for higher education internationalization is essential because education is not simply an instrumentalist enterprise for the acquisition of marketable skills but is equally responsible for forging social values and citizenship, as well as being a social process and practice embedded in specific cultural traditions, and is critical for promoting development.<sup>43</sup> In a world already divided into centers and peripheries, some warn, “globalization in higher education exacerbates dramatic inequalities among the world’s universities.” While developing countries are likely to be the worst affected, as universities everywhere become “subject to all of the commercial pressures of the marketplace—a market place enforced by international treaties and legal requirements,” the very idea of higher education as a relatively autonomous and creative space of intellectual production and the future of academe as a vocation of critical contemplation is threatened.<sup>44</sup>

### **Globalizing African Higher Education: A Modest Proposal**

African universities can neither afford to blissfully ignore the new forces of transnational education nor embrace them blindly. They must engage them as critically, creatively and collectively as possible. The GATS agenda must be contested vigorously, while pursuing more productive paths of internationalization, both old and new. But for internationalization to succeed the national revitalization of African universities is imperative. The reform agenda for African universities is an exceedingly complex and demanding one. This is a subject I have written on extensively elsewhere and with which many in AAU circles are preoccupied and are much more knowledgeable than I am.<sup>45</sup> In any case space does not allow me to go into detail, except to underscore the currently low international standing of most African universities.

It is indeed a travesty of monumental proportions that not a single African university made it into the list of the world’s top two hundred universities recently released by the Times Higher Education Supplement, whatever one may think about the methodology, accuracy, pitfalls and usefulness of such rankings and international comparisons.<sup>46</sup> As the editorial to the report put it, “higher education has become so international that it is no longer enough for the leading universities to know they are ahead of the pack in their own country.”<sup>47</sup> Underrated African universities will find it difficult to compete not only for

foreign students but the best of their own nations' students. According to some estimates, already more than 130,000 African students study overseas.<sup>48</sup> To be sure some do so because they cannot gain entry into local universities, but many are also attracted by the prospects of getting a better education in the world's top universities for which they are prepared to spend a fortune.

Moreover, unless African universities are revitalized and strengthened and their international standing and presence raised they cannot expect to effectively compete against foreign institutions riding on the prestigious brands of their home institutions or national systems and eager to set up shop in African countries, even if their offerings maybe shoddy.<sup>49</sup> In short, Africa runs the risk of falling further behind in the rapidly growing and competitive international education market unless urgent action is taken to rehabilitate the continent's universities. As South African President Thabo Mbeki wrote recently with poetic urgency, "our entire continent remains at risk until the African university, in the context of a continental reawakening, regains its soul."<sup>50</sup>

Beyond national rehabilitation, raising the international brand names of African universities, if you would permit my usage of that marketing term, requires specific interventions at regional, continental, and global levels. First, the systems of intra-regional and intra-continental mobility and exchanges for students and faculty, and quality assurance and accreditation bodies must be set up, strengthened, streamlined, and synchronized for each of the five regions and at the continental level. Second, centers of excellence must also be established where some of the continent's best students and faculty can study, work and do research. These can include existing institutions or entirely new institutions designed to recall Africa's once great regional universities that were consumed by postcolonial nationalisms and to reflect contemporary regional integration projects and possibilities. Third, African academic diasporas, both the historic and contemporary, many of whom are domiciled in the global north and positioned in some of the world's greatest universities must be mobilized aggressively.<sup>51</sup> Finally, African institutions of higher education must play a more active role in international higher education forums and agencies from GATS and UNESCO to associations such as the Association of Commonwealth Universities and they must seek to establish new linkages, where none exist, with universities in the global South and especially Asia, the emerging frontier of global economic power in the twenty-first century.<sup>52</sup>

None of these ideas is new. In fact, at its Tenth General Conference, held in February 2001 the AAU recommended, among other things, the need to explore ways of creating regional centers of excellence and to market their degree programs abroad, as well as setting up regional university accreditation bodies to oversee standardization in the five regions so as to facilitate student and staff exchange.<sup>53</sup> Africa's malady is indeed not the absence of good ideas, let alone prescriptions of which it probably gets too much from both friends and foes and foes pretending to be friends, but often the lack of the political will and economic wherewithal to act.

This is a call for a renewed Pan-Africanism, a new Pan-Africanism for higher education that seeks to build on the nationalist project that gave Africa its postcolonial universities and to realize the age-old dreams of regional integration and continental unification.<sup>54</sup> The imperatives of the present require us to support national universities through greater transnational cooperation within Africa itself and the creation of new

regional systems of institutional collaboration and accreditation, as well as new regional universities and colleges that tap into the vast human resources of Africa's own academic diasporas that can compete with the best in the world.

The AAU has a responsibility to take the lead in promoting modes of transnational education that benefit Africa. But it cannot be expected to shoulder this mammoth task alone. The African Union, NEPAD and the regional bodies including SADC, ECOWAS, the Maghreb Union, and COMESA must be centrally involved in the process of revitalizing and internationalising African universities within the continent. Only then can they face the world and the emerging regimes of transnational education with greater confidence and competitive capacities. The revitalization and transnationalization of African universities is too serious a matter to be left to higher educational institutions and associations alone. All the organizations mentioned above must as a matter of urgency convene a conference involving all the key players from heads of state and universities and leading diaspora academics and benefactors to work out a plan of action for the renewal and internationalization, on African terms, of African universities, including the adoption of a common platform on GATS and higher education.

## Conclusion

Transnational higher education is here to stay. For Africa, the challenge is to minimize its costs and maximize its benefits. In so far as GATS is an evolving process it is imperative that African and other developing countries participate actively in constructing its legal, conceptual and operational architecture in order to take advantage of any opportunities it holds and limit its perils. At the global level this requires the creation of an international quality assurance and accreditation agency and regulatory instruments negotiated jointly by both the developing and developed countries that can promote and monitor transnational provision to ensure the development of networks of collaboration among the world's universities that are more equitable. As one writer has argued, "higher education organizations in the developed and developing world need to mount a united engagement around this issue, seeing as it touches on many issues of common concern, including the right to conceptualize and operationalize education as more than a private good, issues of academic freedom and university autonomy, the problematic equation of companies vending education products with universities, the possible tensions between credible quality assurance on the one hand and marketing and advertising claims on the other."<sup>55</sup> And since "the GATS trade mode framework only covers commercial trade types of activities," another reminds us, it is important "that the education sector begin to develop its own classification system and language to categorize cross-border education in a manner which includes all forms of mobility and all types of activity not just commercial ventures."<sup>56</sup> "Instead of taking the view," to quote yet another author, "that a world academy already exists, with actual interchanges and universalised production, it seems to me it should be seen as a task yet to be performed, a goal, requiring both critical reflection on the present and the mediation of the particular in the direction of the universal."<sup>57</sup>

The future of higher education linkages requires bold visions of internationalism, of alternative globalization, that transcend the edicts of market accountability and narrow commercial calculations and embrace the ethics of social accountability and an expansive

humanism that will elevate and empower all our people, enabling us to face the enduring and fresh challenges of our existence on this delicate, dwindling, but delightful planet with greater confidence. We must resist the temptation to naturalize contemporary trends and ideologies that debase rather than elevate human dignity. We will have failed the future if we do not vigorously pursue the dreams of university education as an ennobling adventure for individuals, communities, nations, and the world at large, if we do not strive to create universities that produce ideas rather than peddle information, critical rationality rather than consumer rations, and knowledge that has lasting value.

For Africa the keys to productive and progressive internationalization in higher education lie in a renewed and reconfigured Pan-Africanism, historically the anchor of Africa's globalization and the Africanization of globalization. But for this new Pan-Africanism to blossom it must mediate the centripetal forces of nationalism and the centrifugal forces of globalization. Transnationalism provides that mediation. And so the question is: What systems and structures of transnational higher education must we create for Africa that meet the imperatives of national development, the interests of regional integration, and the interventions of neo-liberal globalization? In the answers we provide lie the possibilities of transnational education in Africa, for Africa, and from Africa.

### **End Notes**

<sup>1</sup> In 2002-3 there were 586,323 foreign students in the United States. Five of the top 20 countries (India, China, South Korea, Japan and Taiwan in that order) and ten countries altogether were from Asia, one from Africa (Kenya), three from Latin America (Mexico, Brazil, and Columbia in that order), and five from Europe (Turkey, Germany, Britain, France and Russia in that order), and Canada. See, Jennifer Jacobson, "Foreign-Student Enrollment Stagnates: New security measures lead to declines among Muslim countries," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 50, 11 (November 7) 2003: A1. In contrast, available figures for 2002-2 indicate that there were only 160,920 American students studying abroad, most of them in Europe—ten of the top 15 countries (led by Britain, Spain, Italy and France)—only two were from Asia (China and Japan), two from Latin America (Mexico and Costa Rica), and Australia. See, Burton Bollag, "Report Urges Federal Effort to Triple Number of Students Studying Abroad: Educators' Panel says Americans' Ignorance of the Outside World is a 'National Liability,'" *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 50, 13 (November 21), 2003: A33, and Jen Lin-Liu, "China Sees Rapid Growth in American Students Studying Abroad," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 50, 13 (November 21), 2003: A34.

<sup>2</sup> To use only one example from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where I taught and directed the Center for African Studies between 1995 and 2003, besides Africa there were centers covering Latin America and the Caribbean, East Asia, South Asia and the Middle East, as well as Russia and Eastern Europe, Western Europe, and there was a Center for Global Studies. In 2001-2 the Center for African Studies boasted of 67 faculty members who taught 159 courses to 6,218 undergraduate and 508 graduate students in 29 departments in 9 colleges, including six African languages (Arabic, Bamana, Lingala, Swahili, Wolof and Zulu that were offered to 714 students). See Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, "African Studies Proposal

2003-2006: National Resource Centers and Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowships. Title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965.” Proposal Submitted to the U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C., October 2002.

<sup>3</sup> ERASMUS stands for the European Community Action Schemes for the Mobility of University Students; COMETT for Community Program for Education and Training in the Technology Field; LINGUA for European Cooperation Programmes for Language Teacher Training; and TEMPUS for Trans-European Mobility Scheme for University Studies. See the chapters by Gisela Baumgratz-Gangl, “Developments in the Internationalization of Higher Education in Europe,” Ladislav Cerych, “East-West Academic Mobility Within Europe: Trends and Issues,” Tamas Lajos, “The Hungarian Experience of Academic Cooperation with North America and the European Community,” Karl Roeloffs, “Academic Mobility Programs in a Regional Context. A German Viewpoint,” and Alan Smith, “Regional Cooperation and Mobility in Global Setting. The Example of the European Union,” all in Peggy Blumenthal et al., Academic Mobility in a Changing World. Regional and Global Issues. London and Bristol, Pennsylvania: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Also see, Brian Frost-Smith, “European Union: Fresh Tracks for Academic Exchanges.” Science 266, 5186 (1994): 743-745.

<sup>4</sup> The movement of scholars generally lags far behind that of students. Of the 70,501 visiting scholars in the United States in 1998-99, 83 percent were primarily involved in research, 11 percent in teaching, and 8 percent in both teaching and research. Their leading fields of specialization were the health sciences (26 percent), physical sciences (15 percent), life sciences (15 percent), engineering (13 percent), social sciences (4 percent), agriculture (3 percent), mathematics (3 percent), and computer and information sciences (3 percent). See, The Chronicle of Higher Education, 10 December 1999.

<sup>5</sup> I have examined this subject at length for Africa in Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, Manufacturing African Studies and Crises. Dakar: Codesria Book Series, 1997 and in Rethinking Africa’s Globalization. Vol.1: The Intellectual Challenges. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Chapters 2 and 4.

<sup>6</sup> According to the findings of one research study on 125 institutions in 36 countries, 36 of the institutions are universities, another 36 are NGOs, 29 are public post-secondary institutions, and 24 are private organizations. See, Gbolagade Adekanmbi, “Toward the Globalization of Tertiary Distance Education in Africa,” in Paul Tiyambe Zeleza and Adebayo Olukoshi, eds. African Universities in the Twenty-First Century. Volume 1: Liberalization and Internationalization. Dakar: Codesria Book Series, p.223.

<sup>7</sup> See Nkrumah, Gamal. 2001. “Building Cultural Bridges.” 24-30 May. Al-Ahram Weekly Online. <<http://www.ahram.org.eg/weekly/2001/535/fe3.htm>>

<sup>8</sup> For example, in 1989-1990 there were only 678 foreign students enrolled in nine of Nigeria’s universities. If the five target had been met there should have been 8,600 foreign students at all Nigerian universities that year. See A. Jones Akinpelu, “Policy Expectations and Shortfalls. Nigerian Views and Experiences.” In Lalage Bown, ed. Towards a Commonwealth of Scholars: A New Vision for the Nineties. London: Commonwealth Secretariat: pp. 108-115.

<sup>9</sup> David Jobbins and John O’Leary, ACU: SA to assist foreign students,” The Times Higher Education Supplement, 5 September 2003.

<sup>10</sup> Of the 21,000 international students in 1999, 52 percent were registered at the historically white universities, 43 percent at the distance education universities, namely the University of South Africa and Vista, and a small proportion of 5% were at the historically black universities. Interestingly two-thirds of the foreign faculty employed at South African universities came from Europe. See Michael Cross and Sepideh Rouhani, “Vanishing Borders and New Boundaries: Student and Staff Mobility and the Internationalisation of South African Higher Education,” in Paul Tiyambe Zeleza and Adebayo Olukoshi, eds. African Universities in the Twenty-First Century. Volume 1: Liberalization and Internationalization. Dakar: Codesria Book Series, pp. 234-249.

<sup>11</sup> See William Saint, “Tertiary Distance Education and Technology in Sub-Saharan Africa.” In Damtew Teferra and Philip Altbach, eds. African Higher Education: An International Handbook. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003, pp. 93-110.

<sup>12</sup> For the development of online education in Africa, for example, see Maria A. Beebe, et al., Africa dot edu: IT Opportunities and Higher Education in Africa. New Delhi: McGraw-Hill, 2003.

<sup>13</sup> Stamenka Uvalic-Trumbic and Zeynep Varoglu, “Survey of the 2002 Breaking News and the UNESCO Global Forum on International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications.” The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education, 2002-2003. [www.obhe.ac.uk](http://www.obhe.ac.uk). p.7. One of the most spectacular failures was the demise of the e-University in Britain in which the government sank £62 million to promote online education to a global audience, see Martin Weller, “Facing a byte-sized future,” The Times Higher Education Supplement, 22 October 2004. An analysis of financial data suggests “that on average e-learning and related firms are edging closer to profitability,” see R. Garrett “Mapping the education industry, Parts 1 and 2,” The Observatory on borderless higher education. London: UK, 2003.

<sup>14</sup> A recent study argues that “e-learning’s early promise was most often reflected in three basic beliefs, each of which turned out to be wrong: [1] If we build it, they will come...[2] the kid’s will take to e-learning like ducks to water... [and 3] e-learning will force a change in how we teach... What’s the reality? For the most part, faculty members use the electronics to simplify tasks, not to fundamentally change how they teach their subjects.” See Robert Zemsky and William Massey, “Why the E-Learning Boom Went Bust,” The Chronicle of Higher Education, 50, 44 (July 9), 2004: B7-7. Their full report is Thwarted Innovation: What Happened to E-learning and Why. A Final report for the Westerhststation Project of the Learning Alliance at the University of Pennsylvania in cooperation with the Thomson Corporation. <http://www.thelearningalliance.info>. Accessed on July 13, 2004.

<sup>15</sup> Zemsky and Massey, “Why the E-Learning Boom Went Bust,” p.B8.

<sup>16</sup> See Michael Gibbons, “Globalization in higher education: a view for the South.” SRHE International News, 46 (November), 2002: 4-12, and Carlos Tünnermann Bernheim and Marilena de Souza Chaui, “Challenges of the university in the knowledge society, five years

after the World Conference on Higher Education,” UNESCO Forum Occasional Paper series, Paper No. 3, Paris December 2003.

<sup>17</sup> See George Subotzky and Gabriel Cele, “New Modes of Knowledge Production: Peril or Promise for Developing Countries,” in Paul Tiyambe Zeleza and Adebayo Olukoshi, eds. African Universities in the Twenty-First Century, Vol.2. Dakar: Codesria Book Series, 2004, pp.341-362.

<sup>18</sup> The fields are Journalism, Business Studies, Computer Science, Languages, and Accounting. More than 40 percent of the students were women. The AVU has its critics. For example, assessing its operations of in terms of rationalization, relevance, access, cost, pedagogy, sustainability, and spillover effects, Maurice Amutabi finds the current AVU model falling short of its possibilities, although he maintains that distance education, of which online education is the latest incarnation, does have the potential and capacity to contribute to growth and expansion of high quality university education. For the AVU, and similar projects to work, he suggests, there is need to abandon SAPs and increase investment in education as a whole. Maurice Amutabi, “The African Virtual University and the Paradox of the World Bank in Kenya,” in Paul Tiyambe Zeleza and Ibulaimu Kakoma, eds. In Search of Modernity: Science and Technology in Africa. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2003, pp.309-331.

<sup>19</sup> For example, ICIPE collaborates with 27 African universities and it has directly trained nearly 300 Ph.D. and M.A. students. CODESRIA offers numerous research grants and training opportunities to students and faculty in universities across the continent every year. Similarly, AERC has done much to advance training and policy research in economics through its programs that have benefited hundreds of students and faculty in economics departments in African universities. For more details on these institutions see their websites, for ICIPE at <http://www.icipe.org/icipe/index.shtml>, for CODESRIA at <http://www.codesria.org/>, and for AERC at <http://www.aercafrica.org/home/index.asp>.

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, Helena Asamoah-Hassan and Valentina Bannerman, “From Conventional Libraries To Electronic Libraries: The Role of the African University in the Transformation.” AAU Newsletter 7, 1 (2001): 3-6.

<sup>21</sup> Needless to say, the state of academic libraries varies quite considerably among countries African. See for example, the following country studies, Muyoyeta Simui, “The Povision of Scholarly Information in Higher Education in Zambia”; Innocent Afuh Awasom, “Academic and Research Libraries in Cameroon: Current State and Future Perspectives”; and Njoku O. Ama and H.O. Ama, “Students Persceptions of Teacher and Library Quality in Tertiray Institutions in Namibia: A Factor Analysis Approach,” all in African Universities in the Twenty-First Century, Vol.2.

<sup>22</sup> (Gibbons, 2001:5)

<sup>23</sup> zeleza book

<sup>24</sup> George Subotzky and Gabriel Cele, “New Modes of Knowledge Production...” explain quite convincingly the political, policy, and paradigmatic contexts in which the Gibbons thesis was initially appropriated and the subsequent critical responses to it questioning its

accuracy in describing the purported changes taking place in higher education and their efficacy. They base their critique on a survey of “strategic” collaborative projects at four institutions in South Africa.

<sup>25</sup> Ali Mazrui, “The African University as a Multinational Corporation,” in Political Values and the Educated Class in Africa. London: Heinemann, 1977, pp.285-319.

<sup>26</sup> Paulin Hountodji, “Introduction: Recentering Africa.” In Paulin Hountodji, ed., Endogenous Knowledge: Research Trails. Dakar: Codesria Book Series, 1997: 1-39.

<sup>27</sup> See Kurt Larsen, John P. Mortin and Rosemary, “Trade in Educational Services: Trends and Emerging Issues,” OECD Working Paper, May 2002. They discuss in detail the problems associated with existing data sources for each of the four modes covered under the GATS regime (cross-border supply, consumption abroad, commercial presence, and presence of natural persons), noting that much of the existing data usually covers students studying abroad (mode 2), and how they arrived at their estimate, which they believe is probably an underestimate for it largely covers mode 2 trade.

<sup>28</sup> In 1996 there were an estimated 714,500 tertiary students from Asia Pacific studying abroad led by China (121,372), South Korea (71,749), Japan (64,284), Hong Kong (36,481) and Indonesia (22,136) in 50 host countries led by the United States (40.7 percent), the United Kingdom (10.0 percent), Germany (8.4 percent), Russia (6.9 percent), Australia (5.5 percent) and France (4.4 percent). See Mathew W. Phillips and C. W. Stahl, “International Trade in Higher Education Services in the Asia Pacific Region: trends and Issues,” Paper presented at the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council, Human Resource Development Task Force, 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, 21-22 October 2000, Hualien, Chinese Taipei. Most recently, India has overtaken China as the largest source of foreign students in the United States, with 66,836 students in 2001-2 compared to 63,211 for China, 49,046 for South Korea, 46,810 for Japan, and 28,930 for Taiwan. See, The Chronicle of Higher Education, Almanac Issue 2003-4, p.18. In 2003-4 the distribution was as follows: India 79,736, China 61,765, South Korea 52,484, Japan 40,835, and Taiwan with 26,178 was bumped into sixth place after Canada with 27,017. Altogether, Asia accounted for 56.6 percent of foreign students in the U.S., followed by Europe with 19.9 percent, Latin America 12.2 percent, Africa 7.1 percent, Canada and Bermuda 4.8 percent, Middle East 5.6 percent and Oceania 0.8 percent. The total enrolment of 572,509 represented a decline of 2.4 percent from the previous year; the largest drops were recorded for the Middle East (-8.5), Oceania (-5.8 percent), Europe (-5 percent), and Asia (-2.4 percent), while the numbers of the other regions rose slightly by 1.6 percent for Canada and Bermuda, 1.2 percent for Africa, and 1 percent for Latin America. See The Chronicle of Higher Education November 19, 2004.

<sup>29</sup> For a concise and cogent evaluation of the GATS provisions, implications and debates, see Rupa Chanda, GATS and Its Implications for Developing Countries: Key Issues and Concerns. DESA Discussion Paper No.25, November 2002. <http://www.un.org/esa/esa02dp25.pdf>.

<sup>30</sup> See Chanda, GATS and Its Implications for Developing Countries, p. 9. Market access refers to a negotiated market commitment in specific service sectors. Countries can make “full commitment,” “partial commitment” or “no commitment” across the four modes of

supply. The commitments they make may be subject to various limitations such as “the number of foreign service suppliers; the value of transactions or assets; the total quality of services output; the number of natural persons who may be employed; the type of legal entity; and the extent of foreign capital participation,” see Chanda, p.8.

<sup>31</sup> For a brief and vigorous defense of the advantages of GATS for higher education see J.R. Shackleton, “You’re your minds to see benefits of free trade,” The Times Higher Education Supplement, 2 January 2004, and for a longer version see, “Opening Up Trade in Higher Education: A role for GATS? World Economic, 4, 4 (2004): 55-77. He accuses academics of behaving like producer groups by being afraid of competition and bemoans the fact that despite its possibilities, GATS has so far had little impact in higher education. Chanda argues that some of the concerns of the anti-GATS critics are genuine and others less so. There is real concern about the ambiguity of several key clauses of GATS including the exclusion clause for governmental services and the co-existence of public and private service providers, which future negotiations need to clarify. The notion that GATS will force the opening up of all service sectors to foreign competition is a misapprehension, which she believes it is not likely to happen because of the voluntary and flexible nature of the system. Equally incorrect, she insists, are contentions that GATS prohibits the use of government subsidies, and that it primarily represents the export interests of the developed countries. Chanda may be correct in theory, but in practice developing countries have been subjected to pressures that undermined their economies and societies—such as structural adjustment programs—that did not even have the imprimatur of a negotiated global agreement.

<sup>32</sup> See B. Hoekman, “Assessing the General Agreement on Trade in Services,” in W. Martin and A. Winters, eds., The Uruguay Round and the Developing Economies, World Bank Discussion Papers, 307. Washington, DC: World Bank, 1995.

<sup>33</sup> See, Rudolf Adlung, “Services Trade Liberalization From Developed and Developing Country Perspectives,” in P. Sauvé and R.N. Stern, eds, GATS 2000—New Directions in Trade Services Liberalization. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2000. The only African countries that have committed to between 60 and 100 sectors are Egypt, Lesotho and South Africa.

<sup>34</sup> Association of African Universities, “Accra Declaration on GATS and the Internationalization of Higher Education in Africa,” in AAU, Proceedings of WTO/GATS for Higher Education in Africa. Accra: AAU, pp. 257-9. Anti-GATS resolutions have been passed at many other international conferences including the Third World Congress of Education International (representing 309 national teachers’ unions from 150 countries including the American Federation of Teachers) held in Jomtien, Thailand in 2001; the International Conference Against Deregulation and Privatization attended by more than 400 participants representing popular organizations including trade unions from 51 countries held in Berlin, Germany in February 2002, see Dan Kaplan, “Education is not a commodity: fighting the privatization of higher education worldwide.” <http://www.ieps.org.uk.cwc.net/kaplan2003b.pdf>. Various international, regional and national university associations have also voiced opposition. Particularly vociferous has been the opposition from the developing countries. At the meeting of the Association of Commonwealth Universities in September 2003, university leaders from “the developing

world favor[ed] all-out opposition to the Gats process,” see David Jobbins and John O’Leary, “ACU: Delegates split over free trade in courses,” The Times Higher Education Supplement, 5 September 2003. For Latin America see Carmen Garcia-Guadilla, “General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) And Higher Education in Latin America, Some Ideas to Contribute to the Discussion.” Paper prepared for the Convention of Universities Members of Columbus, Paris, July 2002. <http://www.columbus-web.com/en/partj/gatsal.doc>. But associations from the developed countries have also been quite vocal in their hostility to GATS. For example, the International Association of Universities, the European University Association, the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, the American Council on Education, and the US-based Council on Higher Education Accreditation issued a joint declaration insisting that “higher education exists to serve the public interest and is not a commodity, a fact which WTO member states have recognized through UNESCO and other international or multilateral bodies, conventions and declarations.” They expressed their commitment to “reducing obstacles to international trade using conventions and agreements outside of a trade policy regime” and urged their respective countries not to make commitments in higher education services “in the contexts of the GATS. Where such commitments have already been made in 1995, no further ones should be forthcoming.” See AUCC, ACE, EUA, CHEA, Joint Declaration on Higher Education and the general Agreement on Trade in Services, September 2001. [http://www.aucc.ca/pdf/english/statements/2001/gats\\_10\\_25\\_e.pdf](http://www.aucc.ca/pdf/english/statements/2001/gats_10_25_e.pdf). Also see David Jobbins, “Gats fear spurs action on quality,” The Times Higher Education Supplement, 13 November 2004. The Canadian association also called for “a freeze in GATS negotiations in trade in education services and, instead advocates establishing mechanisms for cooperation to address any barriers encountered within an international education policy framework rather than within a trade policy regime.” See, Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, The GATS and Higher Education in Canada, May 2003, p.1. [http://www.aucc.ca/pdf/english/reports/2003/gats\\_update\\_e.pdf](http://www.aucc.ca/pdf/english/reports/2003/gats_update_e.pdf). For its part, the European University Association has attacked the European Commission for endorsing GATS. In Britain higher education “union leaders have warned that including universities in the General Agreement on Trade in Services could lead to the ‘McDonaldization of higher education’,” see Caroline Davis, “Unions fear Gats impact,” The Times Higher Education Supplement, 2 November 2002. In Australia the National Tertiary Education Union has also expressed strong concerns especially about the possible entry of American universities, see Geoff Maslen, “Union fear trade deals with US,” The Times Higher Education Supplement, 20 February 2004 and Carolyn Allport, “Building the public interest: GATS and Higher education and research,” paper presented at “Shaping the European Area of Higher Education and Research” EI/GEW Forum, April 10-12, 2003, Berlin. [http://www.gew.de/berlinkonf\\_0403/pdfs/german\\_paper.pdf](http://www.gew.de/berlinkonf_0403/pdfs/german_paper.pdf) Students have not been silent either. The National Unions of Students in Europe has expressed its strong reservations by rejecting “the notion of students as consumers. Students are not consumers but partners in the process of Higher Education” ESIB, “GATS and Education.” <http://www.esib.org/>. In Switzerland, the national union of students fears “the ratification of the Gats treaty would be a step towards privatization of the public service sector.” See Tania Peitzker, “Swiss: do not leave us in the dark about Gats,” The Times Higher Education Supplement, 23 August 2002.

Similar concerns have been expressed by the National Union of Students in Britain. See Owain James, "Gats protection," The Times Higher Education Supplement, 5 April 2002.

<sup>35</sup> Among African countries Congo, Lesotho and Sierra Leone "have made full unconditional commitments in higher education, perhaps with the intent of encouraging foreign providers to help develop their educational systems," see Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, The GATS and Higher Education in Canada, p.8

<sup>36</sup> Jane Knight, "Crossborder Education in a Trade Environment: Complexities and Policy Implications," Paper presented at the Workshop on Implications of WTO/GATS for Higher Education in Africa, African Association of Universities, Accra, Ghana, 27-29 April, 2004, p.20.

<sup>37</sup> Knight herself uses the term 'trade in educational services' primarily "in the trade and GATS sense, that is commercial and for-profit. The term 'crossborder education' is used to depict a broad range of education activities which move across borders some of which are commercial trade in nature and purpose and most of which are not." Jane Knight, "Crossborder Education in a Trade Environment: Complexities and Policy Implications," p.6.

<sup>38</sup> Several typologies are noted by Dirk Van Damme, "Trends and Models in International Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education in Relation to Trade in Education Services," OECD/US Forum on Trade in Educational Services, 23-24 May 2002, Washington, D.C., USA. They include the one provided by a British 'borderless education' report that distinguishes "the following seven categories: corporate universities, 'for-profit' education, media/publishing businesses, professional associations, educational services, virtual universities, and 'traditional' higher education, but with many overlaps between these categories" (p.4)

<sup>39</sup> See the penetrating critique by Paschal B. Miho, "GATS and Higher Education in Africa: Conceptual Issues and Development Perspectives," Paper presented at the Workshop on Implications of WTO/GATS for Higher Education in Africa, African Association of Universities, Accra, Ghana, 27-29 April, 2004.

<sup>40</sup> Van Damme, "Trends and Models in International Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education..." discusses each of these models in great detail. Also see UNESCO, First Global Forum on International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education, UNESCO, Paris 17-18 December 2002.

<sup>41</sup> See Peter Williams, "Get label conscious," The Times Higher Education Supplement, 5 April 2002.

<sup>42</sup> Philip Altbach, "Knowledge and Education as International Commodities: The Collapse of the Common Good," International Higher Education, 28 (Summer 2002), p.5.

<sup>43</sup> See Mala Singh, "International Quality Assurance, Ethics and the Market: A View from a Developing Country," Paper presented at the CHEA International Seminar, San Francisco, U.S.A., 24 January 2002, and "Higher Education in Africa, International Co-operation and GATS," Council on Higher Education: Higher Education Committee, Pretoria, South Africa, 24 June 2004.

<sup>44</sup> Philip G. Altbach, “Higher Education and the WTO: Globalization Run Amok,” *International Higher Education*, Spring 2001 [http://www.bc.edu/bc\\_org/avp/soe/che/index.htm](http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/soe/che/index.htm) accessed July 3, 2004.

<sup>45</sup> See the relevant chapters in Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, *Rethinking Africa’s Globalization*, and Paul Tiyambe Zeleza and Adebayo Olukoshi, eds., *African Universities in the Twenty-First Century*, Vols. 1 and 2.

<sup>46</sup> One commentator complained, for example, about comparing the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa, where he used to teach, and Queensland University in Australia, where he currently teaches, noting that “while the quantity and quality of my work has in some respects improved because of the much better resources available in Australia, I cannot say that the difference is as great as the relative ranking (or non-ranking) suggests.” Queensland was ranked 49<sup>th</sup>. See, Philip Machanick, “Rankings don’t tell the whole truth,” *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 12 November 2004.

<sup>47</sup> John O’Leary, “Top Performers on the global stage take a bow,” *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, World University Rankings, November 5, 2004, p.2.

<sup>48</sup> See Wachira Kigotho, “Students told to pay their way,” *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 7 November 2003. Currently “more than 2 million undergraduates now study outside their own country worldwide, and this number is growing at about 20 percent a year,” see Martin Ince, “Elements that paint a portrait of global powers,” *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, World University Rankings, November 5, 2004, p.6.

<sup>49</sup> Concerns have been expressed in Britain, for example, that “unscrupulous providers passing themselves off as adjuncts of famous universities have sullied the reputation of UK higher education,” see Editorial, *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 31 October 2003.

<sup>50</sup> Thabo Mbeki, “Our wisdom is a seedbed for a new era of hope,” *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 12 November 2004. Such is the urgency of the matter in President Mbeki’s view that he has apparently “signaled to Tony Blair that the rehabilitation of Africa’s run-down universities should be high on the agenda at next year’s Scotland summit of the Group of Eight.” See Karen MacGregor and David Jobbins, “G8 ‘must help with African rebirth’,” *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 12 November 2004.

<sup>51</sup> I have suggested in considerable detail in *Rethinking Africa’s Globalization* (Chapter 3) and in “The African Academic Diaspora in the United States and Africa: The Challenges of Productive Engagement,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*, 24, 1 (2004): 265-278, how this might be done across the range of activities that make up the academic enterprise from teaching and research to publishing and dissemination. One strategy is to pursue joint academic appointments, joint research projects, joint teaching ventures (using both conventional methods and online technologies), and joint publishing (both between Africa-based and foreign-based authors and publishers). This can help turn the much-bemoaned brain drain not just into a potential “brain gain,” but also into “brain mobility.” For a series of concise essays on the question of Africa’s “brain drain” to the global North, see *African Issues*, Special Issue The African Brain Drain to the North: Pitfalls and Possibilities, xxx, 1 (2002), edited by Paul Tiyambe Zeleza and Cassandra Rachel Veney.

<sup>52</sup> In 2000, nineteen countries along the shores of the Indian Ocean including three from Africa (Tanzania, Mozambique and South Africa) reportedly formed the University Mobility in the Indian Ocean Region, see Geoff Maslem, "Exchange network for Indian Ocean area," The Times Higher Education Supplement, 16 June 2000. And in 2002 "more than 50 universities in Africa, Latin America and Asia have formed the Southern Universities Network to prepare for competition in the higher education market.... The network, which has temporary headquarters in Kenya, will monitor student mobility in developing countries and help to establish links between universities, faculties and researchers," see Wachira Kigotho, "Developing nations join as market beckons," The Times Higher Education Supplement, 27 September 2002. At its February 2003 conference the Commonwealth Secretariat explored the establishment of "a more unified system of qualification recognition among the Commonwealth's 54 nations" to ease student mobility, see Tony Tysome, The Times Higher Education Supplement, 11 April, 2003.

<sup>53</sup> See AAU Newsletter, March 2001, p.3. Also see Wachira Kigotho, "VCs plead for help to combat crisis," The Times Higher Education Supplement, 23 February 2001.

<sup>54</sup> For a brilliant critiques of conceptions of Pan-Africanism that ignore the realities of the nation-state in Africa, see Thandika Mkandawire, "Rethinking Pan-Africanism," paper presented at the African Union Conference on "Intellectuals from Africa and the Diaspora," Dakar, Senegal, October 7-9, 2004.

<sup>55</sup> Mala Singh, "International Quality Assurance, Ethics and the Market..." p.8. South Africa has established strict regulations for the entry of private and foreign providers, while Brazil reportedly "announced in 2000 that degrees from programs fully or partly sponsored by foreign institutions would not be recognized," while Thailand "decides whether to recognize the credentials of distance education graduates on a case-by-case basis." See Frank Newman and Lara K. Couturier, "Trading Public Good in the Higher education Market," The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education, January 2002. [www.obhe.ac.uk](http://www.obhe.ac.uk) p.8

<sup>56</sup> Jane Knight, "Crossborder Education in a Trade Environment: Complexities and Policy Implications," p.41.

<sup>57</sup> Carlos Tünnermann Bernheim and Marilena de Souza Chaui, "Challenges of the university in the knowledge society, five years after the World Conference on Higher Education," UNESCO Forum Occasional Paper series, Paper No. 3, Paris December 2003, p.7

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