

# **Internationalization in Higher Education: Opportunities and Challenges for the Knowledge Project in the Global South**

Paul Tiyambe Zeleza  
Presidential Professor of African American Studies and History  
Dean, Bellarmine College of Liberal Arts  
Loyola Marymount University  
Los Angeles, California

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In recent decades, internationalization has emerged as one of the defining issues of higher education globally. A vast literature has grown as scholars debate the conceptualization, characteristics and challenges of internationalization, and as they seek to unravel its rationales, realities and implications for universities and countries in various world regions.<sup>1</sup> As might be expected, views differ widely on the forces that drive internationalization, the activities that constitute it, the competencies it promotes, the values it creates, the processes that sustain it, the respective roles of key constituencies within and outside the universities, and its effects on the core functions of the higher education enterprise, namely, teaching, scholarship, and service.

Scholars are not agreed on the meaning of internationalization because of the diversity and complexity of its rationales, activities, stakeholders, and providers at the national, sectoral, and institutional levels. In fact, other terms are used interchangeably with internationalization including transnational education, borderless education, offshore education, and cross-border education. Perhaps the most succinct and nuanced definition is that provided by Jane Knight (2003: 2; 2004; 2005: 13) who sees internationalization as the “process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education.”

Equally contested are the forces that have given rise to the internationalization of higher education. Emphasis is variously placed on the labor needs of globalizing and liberalizing economies and the development of knowledge societies; the rise of new information and communication technologies; and the massification of demand for higher education.<sup>2</sup> These forces have given rise to unprecedented mobility of students, academics and programs, greater diversification of providers, the privatization and marketization of institutions of higher education, and the emergence of new forms of transnational knowledge production.

Privatization has developed in response to ‘excess demand’ and ‘differentiated demand’ and encompasses the rise of private universities, privatization of public institutions, and the exponential growth of for-profit institutions (Tilak 2008). Marketization has entailed the corporatization of university management, weakening of faculty governance, commodification of knowledge, and commercialization of learning. Many argue this has led to the decline of academic quality, and shifts from the basic disciplines to professional education and from teaching to research in measuring institutional excellence (Altbach et al. 2009).

No less controversial are the challenges and consequences of internationalization. For many while internationalization has opened new opportunities, it has also served to reinforce and reproduce unequal divisions in the political economy of global education. Moreover, it has engendered intense pressures for institutional competition and collaboration, convergence and fragmentation, and hierarchization and homogenization within and across national higher education systems (Bleiklie 2005; Powell and Solga 2008). Cross-border education also raises serious questions about quality control, the development and enforcement of quality assurance mechanisms, and transferability and recognition of qualifications.

Less disputed are the manifestations of internationalization. Most obvious is the exponential growth in cross-border student mobility as students seek opportunities unavailable at home, seek the prestige of foreign qualifications, and gain competitive employment advantage in the increasingly globalizing knowledge economies.<sup>3</sup> International students have become a critical source of income as financing of higher education shifts from state subsidies to cost-sharing and other private revenue streams (Sanyal and Martin 2008). Evident also the providers of transnational education and the range of activities are more diverse than ever. The former include traditional non-profit universities, new commercial for-profit providers, and virtual universities.

The activities encompass internationalization abroad and internationalization at home and the delivery methods now include e-learning from hybrid course to fully online courses.

The complexity and rapidly changing dynamics of internationalization are now such it is difficult for individual countries let alone institutions even in the most developed countries to maintain control (van der Wende 2007). This makes intra- and inter-regional and cooperation imperative especially for universities and nations in the South. Historically, national and transnational educational systems have been firmly tethered to the asymmetrical international division of labor in which the developed countries have dominated the provision of models, services, and knowledges. Consequently, students, faculty, institutional practices, intellectual paradigms, and ideological influences have tended to flow from the North to the South.

In this presentation, I intend to do four things. First, I will briefly explore the dynamics behind the growth of internationalization in higher education. Second, I will examine the different regional dimensions of internationalization. Third, I will outline some of the implications of internationalization for different regions. Finally, I will share a few thoughts on how the knowledge project in Africa might be promoted. One of the objectives of this project is decentering the hegemonic stranglehold of the Eurocentric epistemological order, to construct more empowering knowledges for the South and symmetrical forms of internationalization in higher education. It will be argued that the African academic diaspora provides a critical, if underappreciated, resource in the process of decolonizing and globalizing African knowledges.

### **The Contemporary Dynamics of Higher Education Internationalization**

The internationalization of higher education is of course not new. Indeed, the ancient universities of Africa, Asia, and Europe were designed and served as regional communities of learning and scholarship. But the bulk of the world's universities were established in the 20<sup>th</sup> century—three quarters since 1900 and half since 1945—and were largely national in scope and nationalist in orientation (Scott 2000). While in their 'public life,' to use Martin Trow's (1973) term, modern universities were confined to the national stage; in their intellectual role or 'private life' they saw themselves in internationalist terms as producers of borderless knowledges. Internationalization, some suggest, is bringing about the convergence of the private and public lives of universities. In other words, universities are recovering their 'internationalist past' (Gacel-Ávila 2005).

The growth in the scale, complexity, and demands for educational internationalization in recent decades is often attributed to the all-encompassing phenomenon of globalization. Internationalization of higher education is seen both as a consequence and a catalyst of globalization. The concept of globalization was popularized from the 1990s to capture the growing interdependence, interconnectedness and flows of all types across the globe. Some scholars seek to differentiate between globalization as a process that erases national boundaries from internationalization that recognizes and reinscribes them (Scott 2000; Kreber 2009; Altbach 2007). Distinctions are also drawn between globalization and internationalization as historical processes and globalism and internationalism as ideological projects (Turpin et al. 2002: 328).

As historians never tire of reminding us, the world has of course been globalizing for a long time and there have been previous cycles of globalization. However, the current moment of globalization has its own distinctive features. It has emerged in the contexts of a world that is simultaneously postcolonial, post-Cold War, multipolar, and neo-liberal, a world in which new information and communication technologies compress distances and redefine transnational mobilities. If globalization provides the overall context in which the internationalization of

higher education is taking place, it is propelled by the massification of demand for higher education and the commercialization of universities. Transnational education offers an important outlet for unmet and specialized demand in the rapidly growing developing countries with their bulging youthful populations as well as critical financial and positional resources for the increasingly underfunded universities in the aging countries of the North.

But the motivations for internationalization go beyond such developmental and demographic dynamics and the logics of supply and demand. They also betray various idealistic, instrumentalist, and ideological imperatives (Stier 2004). Thus various rationales have been advanced. Economically, internationalization is justified for preparing students for careers in a globalized economy, enhancing national development and competitiveness, and as a means of generating extra institutional income. Politically, it is claimed, internationalization can promote understanding so essential for peace and security in the post-9/11 world and the development of global citizenship. The sociocultural imperative lies in the need to cultivate interculturalism so critical for the social wellbeing of multicultural societies. The internationalization of teaching, research and service activities of universities, many believe, also enhances the quality higher education by compelling institutions to rise to international academic standards.

Also crucial, and often permeating these economic, political, sociocultural and academic rationales, is the consuming drive for international recognition and branding. Needless to say, the articulation of these rationales has shifted over time and varies across countries and regions as well as within countries at the national and institutional levels. On the whole, the economic rationale seems to have gained ascendancy. Its proponents trumpet its benefits for countries and institutions faced with dwindling support from the neo-liberal state. Its opponents are prone to see internationalization as a vehicle for exploitation and marginalization of the poorer classes and countries. Critics in the South are particularly suspicious of shoddy programs set up by unscrupulous providers from the North and the negative implications of the regime of trade in educational services under the General Agreement of Trade in Services (GATS) (Zezeza 2005).

At the national level, internationalization currently tends to be largely justified in terms of its potential to develop domestic human resources to enhance national competitiveness, create strategic geopolitical alliances and economic relationships, promote income-generating and commercial trading opportunities, and for nation-building. Socio-cultural rationales often rank quite low. At the institutional level, emphasis is usually placed on the need to enhance the institution's international profile and reputation, improve the quality of its programs, raise the international and intercultural skills of students and staff, and as a means of generating badly needed income, developing energizing linkages and networks, and strengthening capacities to deal with pressing global issues and challenges.

Clearly, emphases vary among countries and institutions depending on their histories, locations, resources, ideologies, and ambitions. But it is safe to say that even when the political, cultural, and academic benefits are proclaimed such is the grip of academic capitalism that these rationales are often trumped by economic rhetoric and realities. In the North, universities have become increasingly commercialized, their administration corporatized, students consumerized, knowledge commodified, learning credentialized, and faculty casualized. These trends reflect the growing importation of business practices, rhetoric, and values into academe. In the United States, this has translated into the exponential growth of business, vocational, and professional programs at the expense of the liberal arts (Stromquist 2007; Zezeza 2010). Professional and science education pulls international students, while American students abroad go for the

humanities and social sciences, a reversal of preferences that underscores the hierarchies in international education between the North and South.

The decline of public funding and growth of the for-profit sector have reinforced perceptions and expectations of the financial benefits of recruiting international students who in many of the developed countries are charged much higher fees than domestic students. Between 2000 and 2009, the number of foreign students worldwide grew by more than 75% to reach 3.43 million who brought billions of dollars to local economies. Countries in the North have been the main beneficiaries of the rapidly growing international trade in educational services.

For example, in the U.S. the 690,923 international students brought in \$18.78 billion in the 2009-10 (NAFSA 2010). In Australia, education has become the country's third largest export industry earning the country \$18.6 billion in 2009-10 (Australian Government 2012). Up to the end of the 1980s Australia used to provide scholarships to foreign students. From 1990 the country moved aggressively from educational aid to trade in educational services in which foreign students including many from poor countries subsidized Australian students (Turpin et al. 2002). Other dominant OECD countries such as Canada and Britain made similar transitions (Mallea 1998; Kunin and Associates 2009).

Although some of the major countries in the South such as China are becoming important players as exporters of international education, most developing countries are deeply concerned by their unequal access to higher education markets, the negative effects of competition on domestic higher education institutions, the influx of low quality foreign providers, and the potential for worsening of equity in access to higher education (Bashir 2007).

As more universities jump on the internationalization bandwagon, they devise strategies and plans of various levels of ambition, complexity, scale, and duration. Drawing and implementing these plans requires commitment by top institutional leaders, buy-in by faculty and students and other stakeholders, establishment of clear monitoring processes, and allocation of adequate resources. Internationalization plans are only as good as they deliver a transformative education for students and promote faculty scholarly engagement.

Claims abound about the benefits of internationalization for students learning and development. Internationalized curricula provide students what is variously called intercultural sensitivity, competence, maturity or literacy, and global learning, consciousness, or citizenship (Braskamp 2009; Gacel-Ávila 2009). Others set their ambitions even higher and urge the creation of curricula and experiences that cultivate what Haigh (2008) calls planetary citizenship, which he regards as the only true counterweight to 'Higher Ed. Inc.' Incorporating the principles of education for sustainable development and for democratic citizenship enunciated by the UN and other progressive agencies, such an education can produce cosmopolitan planetary citizens able to cope with an interdependent, multicultural, and environmentally vulnerable world.

When properly done internationalization can indeed help develop students' cognitive skills for critical, comparative and complex thinking, cultivate capacities for cross-cultural communication, adaptation, flexibility, tolerance, and empathy, and enhance their ability to recognize difference and deepen their understanding of themselves, their society, and learning styles. However, intercultural competence is often not clearly defined or measured by many institutions (Deardorff 2006; Crichton and Scarino 2007; Stier 2006; Stronkhorst 2006).

Designing such curricula needs academics that understand and value internationalization in their teaching, research, and service activities. Unfortunately, in many countries and some disciplines academics are untrained, unprepared, and uninterested in internationalization. Moreover, internationalization is not sufficiently rewarded and the challenges of international research collaborations and development work are not always recognized and supported. Michael

Stohl (2007) believes that faculty engagement is the chief challenge for developing and sustaining internationalization. Writing about the U.S. he documents how the country scores low on virtually all indicators of international knowledge, awareness, and competence. The American public and students are notorious for their ignorance of world events and geography. Foreign-language enrollments and study abroad participation rates are abysmal.

For academics in the U.S. and many other countries in the North internationalization rarely goes beyond attending the occasional international conference or haphazard academic tourist trips sponsored by their institutions that rarely get translated or incorporated into their teaching and research. The difficulties of generating and sustaining active faculty engagement are partly attributable to institutional barriers including excessive bureaucratic red tape, limited financial support, cumbersome compliance procedures, and variations in academic calendars (Dewey and Duff 2009). The academics also bear some responsibility. Schuerholz-Lehr (2007: 181-2) was struck when writing on a professional faculty development workshop project at a Canadian university by how much faculty “struggled with concepts such as internationalization, intercultural sensitivity, international education, global awareness and the nefarious overused concept of global citizenship” (also see Schuerholz-Lehr et al. 2007).

Clearly, faculty cannot teach global literacy when they are globally illiterate themselves. By the same token, students cannot be expected to become internationalized in their learning if their teachers are provincial in their personal experiences, professional interests, and intellectual horizons. At the institutional level, then, the establishment of effective internationalization programs requires developing productive synergies between institutional priorities and individual passion, systemic and systematic planning and coordination. The challenges and opportunities of internationalization are not entirely under the control of individual institutions. Universities operate in complex and rapidly changing national and international landscapes. For universities in the global South the global landscape is especially challenging.

### **The Regional Dimensions of Higher Education Internationalization**

Traditionally, the internationalization of higher education entailed study abroad experiences, enrollment in foreign universities, student and faculty exchange programs, and the enrichment of curriculum with foreign languages and subject matter through international and area studies programs. Many of these activities of course continue and have accelerated. Several new processes and practices have also emerged. Altogether, contemporary internationalization encompasses increased mobility of students and faculty; integration of international content in the curriculum and scholarship; development of interinstitutional collaborations and partnerships; and the provision of trans-border educational services that range from twinning to joint or double degree programs, franchised and validated programs, to the establishment of branch campuses and distance and online learning.

Increasingly the importance of both internationalization at home and internationalization abroad is recognizing as complimentary (Knight 2005). The former encompasses at the curriculum level infusing international, global and comparative dimensions, foreign language study, and joint or double degrees; at the teaching and learning level actively recruiting international students and scholars and effectively using students and academics who have returned from abroad; at the extracurricular level encouraging international and intercultural events on campus and liaising with local diaspora cultural and ethnic groups; and at the research level promoting international exchange programs, conferences and seminars, joint research

projects and publications, and building area and thematic centers. The latter includes the movement of people or providers both physically and virtually, the delivery of programs through linkage or partnership arrangements, and the establishment of international projects.

There range of actors and providers has also expanded. They now include traditional non-profit public and private universities, for-profit institutions, as well as universities and educational networks established by traditional corporations and new commercial IT and media companies, and professional associations. Besides the education sector itself other key stakeholders include the state sector and the private sector. Each sector places different levels of importance on the various rationales outlined earlier and the activities, competencies, ethos, and processes that define them (Quiang 2003).

The dynamics and implications of internationalization vary quite considerably among different regions and countries depending on the history and structure of their higher education systems, national and institutional resources, and their respective geopolitical locations and aspirations. Generally, internationalization processes and activities are mediated through and involve six sets of actors, namely, international actors, bilateral actors, interregional actors, regional actors, subregional actors, and national actors.<sup>4</sup> Each category can be further subdivided and the composition and relative power of the various actors varies among regions and countries.

Globally, the international actors include intergovernmental organizations such as the International Organization for Migration, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and various agencies of the United Nations including the UNDP, UNESCO, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization; international nongovernmental organizations such as the International Association of Universities, and International Association of University Presidents; private foundations that operate internationally among them the U.S.-based Ford, Rockefeller, Carnegie and Gates; and international programs such as the International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience (IAESTE) that operates in more than 80 countries and sponsors more than 700 student exchanges every year and the International Economic and Commercial Sciences Students Association (AISEC) that works in over 2,100 universities in 110 countries and sends 16,000 international exchanges annually.

The bilateral actors include national development agencies and bilateral programs. The dominant players are from the North. For African countries the most important development agencies include the Canadian International Development Agency, the Japan International Cooperation Agency, the Swedish International Development Agency, and the U.S. Agency for International Development, while bilateral programs include the British Council, EduFrance, the German Academic Exchange Service, the Canadian International Development Research Center, the U.S. Institute for International Education that administers Fulbright and MacArthur scholarships, and the Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation. The leading interregional actors for Africa comprise government agencies such as the European Commission, interregional nongovernmental organizations and networks such as the European University Association, the Association of Commonwealth Universities, and the Association of Universities of the Francophonie.

Regional actors range from intergovernmental bodies such as the African Development Bank and the African Union to regional nongovernmental organizations like the Association of African Universities and the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, while the subregional actors include organizations such as the Southern African Regional Universities Association and various regional programs. At the national level the most important actors comprise government departments and agencies including ministries of education,

international cooperation agencies, science foundations and councils, national export agencies, scholarship agencies, and quality assurance and accreditation agencies as well as nongovernmental organizations from university associations to international relations networks.

The internationalization of higher education has accelerated in all world regions although the primary driving factors and impact vary among and within regions. In Europe, internationalization is inspired by two principal objectives, first, to promote student mobility within Europe and, second, to harmonize European higher education systems in response to globalization and increase their attractiveness and competitiveness. These goals have been implemented through various programs and agreements. The Erasmus program launched in 1987 is a student exchange program that seeks to train European-minded professionals and foster common European identity and citizenship. The Bologna Process launched in 1999 sought to create an open European Higher Education Area to make higher education standards compatible and comparable among the participating states. In 2000, the European Union adopted the Lisbon Declaration, which aimed to “make Europe, by 2010, the most competitive and the most dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world.”

Critics argue that the impact of the Erasmus program has been quite limited because key actors do not agree on the rationales of the program, student participation rates remain low, and the limited levels of involvement by academics and institutional support. The program has not succeeded in reaching the target of 10% of mobile students; in some years only 1% of European students have taken part in Erasmus mobility schemes (Papatsiba 2006). The Bologna Process has entailed movement of the continental European higher educational systems, in which state-control was pronounced, to the more market-oriented American system. The Bologna reforms have had mixed results.

Observers have noted that on the one hand the reforms have created more product variety, flexibility for students, and greater transparency than before. But continental European universities have not yet succeeded in raising their global rankings because their employment markets continue to be relatively closed to outsiders, peer review mechanisms remain weak, and funding resources and formulas are grossly inadequate to the task of fundamental restructuring often envisaged (Jacobs and van der Ploeg 2006). By 2010, Europe had certainly not achieved its ambitious goal of creating the most dynamic knowledge economy in the world and the Lisbon Declaration was revised beyond 2010 (European University Association 2007).

In Asia, the pressures of massification and the need to improve academic standards lie behind much of the impetus towards internationalization both in terms of importing educational services into the region and exporting students abroad, although the range of motivations is quite varied among Asian countries and has shifted over time. Asia is arguably the most active region in transnational education. It boasts the largest numbers of students studying abroad and many of its universities are eagerly borrowing foreign, especially American, models of higher education (Shin and Harman 2009). Critics argue that this has “not only created a new dependency culture but also reinforced the American-dominated hegemony” and they warn, “Asian states should be aware of the differences between policy learning and policy copying” (Mok 2007: 438).

Among the policies and strategies that are being copied are the corporatization and marketization of universities and international benchmarking and stratification of universities. This has resulted in greater competition among universities and efforts to focus resources on creating a handful of world-class universities as evident in China’s 211 Project, 985 Project, and World Class Project that seek to catapult a few Chinese universities into the top ranks of world universities. Internationalization of the curriculum and student learning is pursued through the

expansion of student exchange programs, introduction of English as a medium of instruction, and adoption of curricula and importation of textbooks from the United States and other developed English-speaking countries (Huang 2003, 2006).

There are of course variations in the processes and patterns of internationalization in Asia. Futao Huang (2007) identifies three types, what he calls the import-oriented type, an import and export type, and transitional type. The first includes countries like Vietnam and Indonesia that import educational programs and institutions from other countries mostly from the West. The second applies to Singapore and Hong Kong that import higher education activities from Western countries and at the same time export their higher education activities to other Asian countries. The final type refers to countries such as China and Japan that tend to import more educational services than they export, but are keen to export their own higher education services. Chinese universities have worked hard to attract foreign students to China whose numbers rose from 44,711 from 164 countries in 2000 to 265,090 from 194 countries in 2010. Several have established branch campuses abroad and many more provide Chinese language and medicine and increasingly professional programs. Confucius Institutes have proliferated.

These differences have resulted in the adoption of distinct government-regulated, market-oriented, and transitional approaches as manifest in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, respectively. The legal status of transnational higher educational activities also varies. Foreign institutions operating in Malaysia and Korea are regarded as part of the private sector, in Japan incoming programs and institutions only received official recognition in 2005. By then, their legal status in China remained undefined but they tended to operate as separate programs in national universities. In some countries foreign higher educational services are incorporated into national systems of higher educational provision and subject to national regulation and regarded as separate. They tend to provide preparative education for local students for entry into national or foreign institutions. The variations in the forms of imported educational services range from branch campuses to joint programs. In the Gulf region branch campuses of major western especially American universities often concentrated in so-called university cities are flourishing. In China joint programs exploded from two in 1995 to 745 by 2004.

In Latin America internationalization has not enjoyed the same levels of national and institutional importance and support as in Asia despite the fact that Latin American universities are modeled on European universities and the long tradition of elites from the region going abroad especially Europe and later North America as well for their education (Avila 2007: 401-2). Until recently the rate of student mobility from the region remained among the lowest in the world. Latin America also ranked quite low in the mobility of its largely part-time faculty, internationalization of the curriculum, and import of cross-border higher education services. This reflected the marginality of internationalization as a priority for governments and universities in the region, lingering nationalist resistance to American hegemony and negative views of globalization, which was equated to imperialism and dependency, and weak intraregional networks of higher education collaboration and exchange. Consequently, there was little strategic planning and few resources were allocated to implement internationalization activities. In fact, internationalization was largely seen as an externally sponsored activity and a source of income rather than as an integrated and internally driven priority and process.

Many of the region's leading universities did not begin establishing formal international academic exchange programs until the 1980s, often in reaction to solicitations from foreign institutions. From the 1990s, the number of Latin American students studying abroad began to increase noticeably, American and European universities set up programs or branches in the

region, and intra-regional exchanges grew. The lead was taken by private institutions, which expanded and accounted for 40% of enrollments by the early 2000s, or by increasingly privatized public institutions following the deregulation and decentralization of the university sector (Holm-Nielsen et al. 2005). The regional preferences were split between Europe favored by Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Peru and the United States prized by Mexico. Thousands of agreements were signed but many were reportedly inactive. Intra-regional mobility remained unattractive and undeveloped. Also underdeveloped was internationalization of the curriculum.

The main rationales for internationalization have included, at the national level, nation building and repositioning in the global knowledge economy, improving national academic standards, and promoting regional connectivity and cooperation. At the institutional level universities are primarily motivated by the need to improve academic quality and prestige. Besides the private-public divide, there are differences among countries based on their relative wealth. Altogether, internationalization increasingly came to be seen as part of the efforts to elevate the management of higher education institutions by enhancing their accountability and incentives systems, improving their governance structures, and increasing flexibility for students, as well as a means to raise the capacity of the region's universities for research productivity and innovation. While total investment in research and development in the region doubled between 1990 and 2001, it remained low by the standards of the OECD countries. Public universities showed preference for international exchange agreements to improve research while the private mostly Catholic universities focused primarily on student mobility.

The numbers of Latin American students studying in the United States increased by 50% between 1993 and 2002, while in 2002 alone the number of visiting scholars from the region in the U.S. increased by 20%. Growing mobility of students and faculty raised the specter of brain drain and governments in the region introduced repatriation programs, which were largely ineffective and the region was also unable to develop successful strategies to attract foreign students beyond those coming for language study. In short, the reform programs of Latin American higher education, which led to increased enrolments, institutional diversification, and privatization and encompassed greater focus on internationalization, did not overcome the structural challenges of low academic quality, high social inequities, institutional fragmentation, inadequate funding, and the relevance of university education for the needs of the labor market.

Above all, Latin America remained "peripheral to the international centers of knowledge production" (Gacel-Avila et al. 2005: 341). This is evident in the highly unequal flows of students from the region to the North and of providers and programs from the latter to Latin America. The providers include traditional universities and new commercial providers such as the Apollo Group that owns the mammoth University of Phoenix, Sylvan International Universities, Oracle University, and Advent International and J.P. Morgan Partners that are buying or selling shares in local institutions. In contrast, by 2005 the region's universities could only boast of a handful of branches and offices in the U.S. and Spain. Their largest intellectual export, dependency theory, had long been engulfed by the globalization paradigm.

The trends in Africa mirror those in Latin America. From the 19<sup>th</sup> century the region's universities were largely modeled on European universities and African elites trekked to Europe and later the United States for undergraduate and increasingly graduate education. While the vast majority of African universities were established after colonial rule as locomotives of national development and intellectual decolonization, they continued to display strong tendencies of extraversion in their practices, programs, and paradigms; they remained trapped in the institutional and epistemic economies of Euroamerican models and Eurocentricism. Ironically,

decolonization and the proliferation of national universities led to the dismantling of the colonial regional universities and weakened intra-regional connections and collaborations, while reinforcing linkages to the North.

The ideological and financial assaults against African universities under structural adjustment programs in the 1980s and 1990s further weakened their intellectual and institutional capacities as academic infrastructures deteriorated and academic staff migrated to greener pastures at home and abroad and many abandoned scholarship in favor of consultancies. At the same time, demand for higher education exploded, and the processes of privatization of higher education accelerated with the rapid growth of private universities and privatization of public universities. Thus, from the late 1990s African universities, scholars, external donors, and even governments agonized over the challenges facing African higher education and the need for renewal if the continent was to achieve higher rates of growth and development and compete in an increasingly knowledge intensive global economy (Zeze and Olukoshi 2004a, 2004b).

The reform agenda centered on five broad sets of issues, in which internationalization did not feature high. First, there were vigorous debates concerning the philosophical foundations of African universities in terms of the principles underpinning public higher education in an era of privatization, the conception, content and consequences of the reforms currently being undertaken across the continent, and the public-private interface in African higher education systems. The second set of issues centered on management, how African universities were grappling with the challenges of quality control, funding, governance, and management in response to the establishment of new regulatory regimes, growing pressures for finding alternative sources of funding, changing demographics and massification, increasing demands for access and equity for underrepresented groups including women, and the emergence of new forms of student and faculty politics in the face of democratization in the wider society.

Third, there were pedagogical and paradigmatic issues ranging from the languages of instruction in African universities and educational systems to the dynamics of knowledge production—the societal relevance of the knowledges produced in African higher education systems and how those knowledges were disseminated and consumed by students, scholarly communities, and the wider public. Fourth, the role of universities in the pursuit of the historic project of African nationalism: decolonization, development, democratization, nation-building and regional integration was scrutinized. Included in this regard were questions of the uneven and changing relations between universities and the state, civil society and industry, as well as the role of universities in helping to manage and resolve the various crises that confront the African continent from civil conflicts to disease epidemics to environmental threats. Also, the part universities have played and can play in future to promote the project of Pan-Africanism.

Finally, and more tangentially, there was the question of globalization, the impact of trends associated with the new information and communication technologies, the expansion of transborder or transnational provision of higher education, and trade in educational services under the GATS regime. Critical in this context for Africa is the changing role of external donors from the philanthropic foundations to the World Bank and other international financial institutions and multilateral agencies, the role and possibilities of South-South linkages and the African academic diasporas as possible interlocutors of internationalization for African higher education, as critical mediators in the globalization of African knowledges and Africanization of global knowledges.

Thus, the flows of students and academics to and the borrowing of institutional and intellectual models from the North have dominated the historic patterns of internationalization

for African higher education institutions. The growth of transborder education through the establishment of European and American branch campuses, joint degrees, and collaborative programs has reinforced these trends. The providers include traditional western universities, professional associations, global and multilateral agencies, international financial institutions, philanthropic foundations, and increasingly commercial companies scouting for profitable prospects in African higher education. As elsewhere in the world, the processes and prospects of internationalization across the continent have increasingly been facilitated and structured by the new information and communication technologies.

As in other regions, the patterns of internationalization among African countries and institutions vary according to history, resources, geopolitical positioning, and leadership at national and institutional levels. While the number of foreign providers has been growing in many African countries, it has declined in South Africa because of stringent regulations and accreditation processes for quality control. On the flip side, in 2008 Egypt's ancient university, Al-Azhar, became one of the very few African universities to open an overseas branch campus in Malaysia and it announced plans to open branches in Thailand and China (Altbach and Knight 2007; Singh 2008). The two countries are the leading continental destinations of foreign students. The numbers of international students in South Africa more than quadrupled from about 12,600 in 1994 to 64,784 in 2010 equal to 7.25% of the total South African student body (Kishun 2007; IESA 2011). The majority, 46,496 or 77.8% of the foreign students in 2010, came from other SADC countries. This underscores the fact that "inter-regional flows are stronger than inter-regional flows" (Varghese 2008: 15).

### **Hierarchization in the Political Economy of International Knowledge Production**

International academic mobility, collaborations, and cross-border provision remain decidedly unequal. In fact, in many ways internationalization has reinforced historic inequalities. It stands to reason that since individual countries are positioned differently in the global economy, their understanding of what internationalization means and its implications will vary. For a country like the United States internationalization does not require any fundamental restructuring of the institutional and intellectual foundations of its higher education system. Nor does the United States have to be concerned about the imposition of inappropriate foreign models that may hamper its development as it sees it or fear the loss of its highly educated people through brain drain. Surveys show that most white American students, faculty, and administrators believe the U.S. is culturally superior so that others, not they, have much to learn from internationalization, which leads to foreign students facing the intolerance of what Lee and Rice (2007) call neo-racism. In contrast, for developing countries, the dangers of internationalization are real.

Clearly, the flows of people and programs, institutions and infrastructures, languages and literacies, models and methodologies between the North and the South are unequal and uneven. Students from the South flock to the North in much larger numbers and stay longer than students from the North going to the South. Similarly, there are far more programs and providers from the North in the South than the other way round. Internationalization has also given English, followed by a few other European languages, global supremacy as the language of instruction and scholarship in a way no language in the South can ever aspire to.

The inequalities and challenges for countries in the South are exacerbated by the explosion of higher education providers both domestic and international, which poses serious questions about quality assurance. Antony Stella (2006) argues that in many countries national frameworks for quality assurance for cross-border higher education are not well developed and

international cooperation among quality assurance agencies is limited. Except for the larger emerging economies such as South Africa, China, India, and Brazil regulatory systems in many developing countries are not sufficiently developed to ensure robust evaluation standards. For their part, regulatory agencies in the North often ignore the activities of their universities when operating outside their national purview, which leads reputable institutions to provide second-rate education abroad or rogue institutions to establish degree mill operations.

In fact, academic fraud seems to be on the rise (Hallak and Poisson: 2005) aided by internationalization and the Internet. It is particularly difficult to regulate the new providers of higher education services that are not subject to existing quality-assurance schemes. The rise of international and commercialized accreditation agencies poses its own risks. The UNESCO *Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education* seek to assist providers and recipients to overcome these challenges. UNESCO has joined the World Bank to create the Global Initiative for Quality Assurance Capacity (Altbach et al. 2009: xii).

One of the outcomes and instruments of internationalization has been the rise of what Deem et al. (2008) call the emerging global model (EGM) of the research university. ‘World class’ university invariably refers to comprehensive research-intensive universities. Mohrman et al. (2008) elaborate that this model has eight characteristics: they have a global mission; they are characterized by increased intensity of knowledge production; their professors work in team-oriented, cross-disciplinary, and international partnerships; they have diversified funding beyond government subventions and student tuition; they are adopting worldwide recruitment strategies for faculty and students; they require greater internal complexity and infrastructure to promote research activity; they are forging new relationships and partnerships with government and industry; and they collaborate with international non-governmental organizations and multi-government organizations to support their activities. The development of EGM is contributing to the decline of faculty involvement in governance, state control over universities, and the power of national educational systems as arbiters of quality and even viability.

International competition is sanctified and reproduced through increasingly influential global ranking and league tables. The Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJTU) and *The Times Higher Education Supplement* (THES) produce the most influential global rankings. They issued their first reports in 2003 and 2004, respectively. The JTSU focused largely on research performance, while THES placed high value on institutional reputation and levels of ‘internationalization.’ Teaching and learning are largely ignored (Marginson and Wende 2007). The rankings immediately achieved prominence and set the terms of global competitiveness despite their limitations. The chase for higher rankings became particularly evident in Europe and Asia as the European Union and major Asian countries like China and Japan scrambled to create world-class universities and even devise alternative ranking schemes.<sup>5</sup> They sought to reposition themselves by improving research infrastructures, performance and assessment, promoting international research linkages and benchmarking, and restructuring along the models of American and British ‘world class’ universities that dominate the top rankings.

The power of rankings lies in the material impact they have in influencing flows of students, faculty, and resources. Their effects on different institutions within and between countries have been complex and contradictory. Rankings have encouraged institutions to reorient their behavior, sometimes change their mission and priorities, and even manipulate data to raise their scores. Moreover, the valorization of research has come at the expense of quality teaching even as student tuitions rise to support the reputational aspirations of the universities. Humanities and social science disciplines lose out to the more prestigious natural sciences and

marketable professions such as business and engineering. National segmentation and hierarchies have been reinforced as resources are channeled to a handful of institutions with potential for repositioning for the all-coveted world-class status. The favored universities end up adopting the management and governance systems and styles of the much-envied marketized, privatized, and corporatized U.S. research universities. This forces the middling universities to follow suit in the mad rush to neo-liberal homogeneity in the name of globalization masking Americanization wrapped in westernization.

It is easy to rail against global rankings. But they are here to stay. A productive strategy would be to engage the debate on how the rankings are framed and for regional university associations to devise their own ranking systems that evaluate the educational activities they value the most. Efforts by UNESCO in this regard to develop principles and more comprehensive quality measures must be expanded and supported. Even more crucial is for universities in the South including Africa to develop internationalization strategies that strengthen their knowledge regimes, interests, and alliances.

Thus, the globalization of higher education is evident in the rise of an increasingly integrated, complex and contested worldwide system, which is simultaneously hierarchical, fragmented, and unstable. The global system of higher education is characterized by both cooperation and competition. At the same time, inter-institutional engagements and regional flows of educational activities remain uneven and unequal even as new patterns emerge. The unequal distribution of research capacity, dominance of the U.S., and the supremacy of English structure the system.

This explains why within the United States the impact of global competition is minimal, while American competition at the top levels defines global competition. It also accounts for the fact that universities around the world generally seem to prefer linkages with American universities than with universities in their own regions to boost their prestige, while for elite American universities international linkages do little to raise their status. In short, many outside the U.S. and certainly most within the country itself see the United States as the global standard of higher education. Regardless of what models of internationalization American institutions use, whether planned or opportunistic, U.S. hegemony in global higher education currently remains unrivalled (Edwards 2007).

World-class universities compete for and attract top faculty and graduate students from around the world. Graduate students are indispensable for establishing and sustaining vibrant research programs and profiles of universities and faculty (Horta 2009). In the great brain race, to use the title of Ben Wildasky (2010) book, global universities are indeed reshaping the world, but not always for the good. Competition among universities as producers of positional goods traps many in a zero-sum game. To quote Simon Marginson (2006: 4): "Given the absolute limit on the number of high value positional goods, there is an absolute limit on the number of high value institutions, and on the size of individual institutions within the prestige grouping."

The winner take-all market of positional competition, which is spreading from the United States, undermines the educational enterprise as a whole as wealth comes to define prestige and quality, the unequal distribution of social opportunities intensifies, and holistic education is compromised as resources are diverted to select programs with the greatest competitive potential in the international academic market. The danger for countries in the global South is that focusing their energies and resources excessively on global rankings, which are remarkably steady since the rankings were launched in the 1990s, is that they might end up sacrificing their role as catalysts of national development and intellectual leadership in their respective societies

and regions, thereby foreclosing any possibilities of restructuring the global system of knowledge production itself.

### **Promoting the Knowledge Project in a Globalizing Africa**

The pressures and imperatives of internationalization cannot be wished away. The question for African higher education institutions therefore is not whether to internationalize but how to internationalize most effectively, to pursue internationalization strategies that strengthen their internal institutional and intellectual capacities, qualities, reputations and competitiveness as well as their potential to contribution to the historic and humanistic agendas of the African nationalist project. To pursue this multilayered agenda most effectively, it is essential to develop internationalization strategies that are simultaneously realistic and ambitious, realistic in so far as they should be anchored in concrete contemporary conditions, and ambitious in recognizing and seizing opportunities in the rapidly changing landscapes of the global political economy and international education. SADC and SARUA (Kotecha 2011) are correct in recognizing the lack of a clear strategic vision as a key limitation in enhancing higher education in the region.

Underlying any internationalization strategy must be renewed commitment at the institutional, national, regional and continental levels to the revitalization of African higher education systems by robustly defending, supporting, funding and reforming them. African internationalization strategies must be double-pronged to promote, on the one hand, productive institutional engagements and, on the other, intellectual empowerment, and the production of knowledges for Africa's renewal, for the African renaissance (Zezeza 2009). Institutionally, there is need to forge stronger intra-regional links, South-South cooperation, and connections with the African academic diaspora in the North.

These engagements are likely to yield intriguing intellectual dividends by helping to restructure and reorient the construction, content, circulation, and consumption of African knowledges. Weaning African knowledge systems from the suffocating grip of the Eurocentric epistemological order will require determined intellectual efforts that involve both the retrieval of Africa's non-Europhone libraries and reimagining knowledges for Africa's future. The latter requires sustained futures and scenario planning as well as developing imaginative and bold visions of the future and the collective political will to realize them, tasks universities and academics are particularly well placed to undertake.

Various regional programs and associations exist throughout the continent that seek to promote collaboration. There is need to develop systems that are more comprehensive, integrated and robust. This would necessitate greater regional cooperation by creating regional standards, benchmarks, policies and regulations. Also imperative is the development of coordinated, proactive and explicit strategic and systematic policies on internationalization based on regional priorities. The key issues and initiatives would need to include the creation of credit transfer systems, establishment and coordination of national and regional accreditation and quality control mechanisms, the promotion of regional research consortia and networks, mobilization of industry and the philanthropic sector for funding support, increased investment in research and higher education participation in research and development, strengthening of graduate programs and academic staff development, and the improvement of facilities and working conditions for academics and freeing them from the consultancy syndrome.

The position of Africa as an object of study and center of knowledge production remains precarious in the international division of intellectual labor. Research expenditures and

productivity across Africa remains low and below world standards. In fact, 80% of research output in Africa comes from three countries—Egypt, South Africa, and Nigeria. Decolonization did little to dismantle Euroamerican economic and epistemic hegemonies partly because the nationalist assaults against it were compromised by structural adjustment programs which devastated both African economies and universities and embattled African scholars succumbed to the brain haemorrhage of the consultancy syndrome or the brain drain of migration to greener sectors at home or academies abroad (Zezeza 1997, 2003, 2007a, 2007b). African scholarship continues to be shaped by Euroamerican intellectual paradigms, preoccupations, and perspectives, and remains overwhelmed and impoverished by the universalistic claims of western scholarship. It tends to derive its impetus not from deep engagement with the real of the local, but from ritual obeisance to the theoretical and methodological fads of western scholarship.

The homage to Europhone knowledges is evident even among the most celebrated African philosophers of knowledge. In V.Y. Mudimbe's (1988, 1990) renowned books, *The Invention of Africa* and *The Idea of Africa*, and A.K. Appiah's (1992) *In My Father's House*, the existence of non-Europhone African knowledges outside the colonial library is not even acknowledged as Ousmane Kane (2011) has noted in his suggestive reconstruction of Africa's Islamic library in the history of ideas. In addition to the colonial and Islamic libraries, any comprehensive project of retrieval and valorization of African knowledges must incorporate the reconstruction of what some have called indigenous knowledge systems. This is to suggest internationalization that is not grounded and nourished by African epistemic roots is likely to reproduce indeed reinforce the production of mimic knowledges, pale copies of western knowledges of little value to Africa and no consequences to world scholarship.

Clearly, the intellectual and developmental promises of the early post-independence years were derailed in much of Africa with the demise of the nationalist project that drove Africa's historic pursuits for self-determination in all walks of life including the academy and scholarship. As neo-liberalism implodes in the aftermath of the Great Recession and Afro-pessimism gives way to Afro-optimism following rapid economic growth across the continent, new spaces are opening up for revisioning higher education as a public good and resurrecting the emancipatory imperatives of African scholarship (Zezeza 2008a, 2012a). However, it is not enough to pursue the quest for development within the national confines of the postcolonial state because of the very processes and projects of globalization that have unleashed transnational flows and forms of interconnectedness that recast the enduring impulses of Pan-Africanism.

It is in this context that the role of African academic diaspora comes into play. One of the key features of contemporary global migrations is the growth in the migration of skilled labor and professionals (Zezeza 2008b). The migration of African professionals including intellectuals is a product of conditions in both Africa and the North. Economic, social, political, and educational developments in Africa have conspired to generate emigration pressures, while the skill-selective and wealth-selective immigration policies of countries in the North have offered opportunities for highly skilled Africans to migrate. The migration flows have been sustained by the intricate and intense educational networks that link universities in Africa and those in the North, the recruitment drives and inducements of various institutions and organizations, and the cumulative traditions of migration that have emerged as skilled migration has expanded.

Like international migrants from other regions, African professional migrants including academics have increasingly become part of transitional communities involved directly and indirectly in both home and host countries, in ways that have an impact on "economic and political processes in the sending and receiving countries and relations between them which may

reinforce or challenge existing relations of power within and between countries” (Hamilton and Chinchilla 1996: 198). The migration of African intellectuals to the North is an outgrowth of complex processes and movements within the continent as well as the linkages and networks that have been established between educational institutions in Africa and the North, which facilitate and reproduce African academic migrations.

African states and institutions of higher education have tended to respond to the migration of African professionals including academics to the North in one of three ways. First, they bemoan the ‘brain drain’ and engage in mutual recriminations with the diaspora. Second, some have pursued the ‘brain gain’ option by encouraging the diaspora to return permanently. The third is the ‘diaspora’ option that recognizes the migrants as new diasporas and efforts are made to build effective strategies of ‘brain mobility’ or ‘brain circulation’ between them and their countries of origin and the continent as a whole. The latter requires devising creative strategies for knowledge and skill circulation, the formation of national, regional, and continental knowledge networks that facilitate brain mobility, from academic exchanges to consultancies and temporary return migrations.

Since the 1990s the formation of diaspora knowledge networks has skyrocketed, jumping from a handful in the early 1990s to 41 in the late 1990s tied to 30 different countries to 155 by 2005, of which 51 were African covering 10 countries (Mahroum 2006). There are more continental networks for Africa than the other regions, a lingering tribute to Pan-Africanism. Among the well-known networks and initiatives in Southern Africa are the South African Network of Skills Abroad (SANSA) established in 1998 through a cooperative venture between the Science and Technology Policy Research Center (STPRC) at the University of Cape Town in South Africa and a leading French agency for scientific cooperation, the Institute of Research for Development (IRD). In 2000 it was handed over to the National Research Foundation; the South African Diaspora Network established by the University of Cape Town’s Centre for Innovation & Entrepreneurship in 2001 with assistance from the World Bank Development Marketplace to develop knowledge and entrepreneurial connections between South African firms and well-connected and strategically placed individuals in the United Kingdom; and the Economic Research Southern Africa Activity (ERSA), which was established in 2005 to create a network of economic researchers based in South African universities and to expand and deepen economic research capacity in Southern Africa. ERSA runs several programs including the Academic Visitorship Program, Scholarship Program, Economics Prize Program and the Diaspora Fund.

The diaspora option needs to be based on a sober understanding of the mutualities of interest, that neither Africa nor the diaspora can succeed in this ruthlessly competitive globalizing world without the other, that the diaspora will continue to be confronted by racism and denigration as long as Africa remains underdeveloped, and Africa only stands to benefit and accelerate its prospects of development by maximizing the contributions of the diaspora, by recognizing that the diaspora constitutes a strategic asset possessing enormous social, financial, and intellectual capital, that in the case of the new diaspora it is already the continent’s biggest donor, whose remittances exceed foreign direct investment and official development assistance, and it is the only constituency in the North that has a profound emotive and cognitive commitment and the capacity to play a progressive role in Africa’s social transformation, and in the case of the historic diasporas that it has the political potential and propensity, which it has demonstrated historically in struggles against colonial rule and apartheid, to mobilize in support of a new civilizational compact between Euroamerica and Africa. In short, diaspora African academics have an important role to play in brokering relations between Africa and the North.

It is important to underscore that the African diaspora is a complex community divided by diverse intellectual and ideological tendencies, some of which are clearly not beneficial for Africa. Francis Nesbitt (2003) divides the African academic diaspora in the United States in its ideological inclinations into three groups, what he calls the comprador intelligentsia, the postcolonial critic, and the progressive exile. Members of the comprador intelligentsia cynically use their Africanity to authenticate the neocolonial and neoliberal agendas of the international financial institutions; they are infamous for defending the global order and condemning African countries for corruption, 'tribalism,' and ineptitude. The postcolonial critics see themselves in a mediating role, as expert interpreters of the African experience to the West and transmitters of the ever-changing panorama of Euro-American perspectives to Africa and to 'explain' the African experience. The progressive exiles seek to use their space of exile to develop a dignified Pan-African identity by unabashedly promoting African knowledges and participating in the liberation struggles of both the diaspora and their countries of origin.

Undoubtedly, one could come up with other typologies based on disciplinary, methodological, or research criteria. Whatever the classification, it is important to develop innovative and cost-effective exchange programs that facilitate the engagements of diaspora African academics in the North and Africa. African universities have established hundreds of international agreements with institutions in the North. But diaspora African academics have not always been as actively involved in these arrangements as they could be. There is need to devise programs that specifically target diaspora African academics, who constitute, I believe, an important, but under-utilized, link in the mediation of knowledges between Africa and the North, in the globalization of African knowledges and Africanization of global knowledges. The engagements ought to encompass all three critical areas of scholarly pursuit: teaching, research, and public service.

Time does not allow me to elaborate on the structures and systems of engagement that can and have developed in promoting engagements between Africa and its academic diasporas in the North, a subject I have examined a length elsewhere (Zezeza 2004). Suffice it to say, I am currently undertaking a major project examining the processes, patterns, practices and politics of engagement between African diaspora academics in North America and African institutions of higher education that explores how African institutions and diaspora academics perceive and deal with each other (2012b, 2012c). Specifically, the project seeks to ascertain the nature, dynamics, forms, and challenges of engagement between the African-born academics and African universities in the three major areas of the academic enterprise, namely, teaching and student advising, research and scholarship, and professional service and advocacy.

The academic diaspora, I believe, has much to contribute in mediating most productively the internationalization of African higher education and in realizing the decolonization and globalization of Africa's knowledge project. Together with regional cooperation within the continent itself and greater collaboration between Africa and other regions in the South, it is possible to change the global terms of engagement in knowledge production and for Africa, to strengthen the continent's research capacities, raise the quality and profile of African universities, and bolster their contributions to Africa's triple dreams of self-determination, development and democracy. THANK YOU!

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<sup>1</sup> For a succinct overview of the trends in research on internationalization in higher education see Kehm and Teichler (2007). They identify the seven dominant topics that have dominated research, namely, mobility of students and academic staff; mutual influences of higher education systems on each other; internationalization of the substance of teaching, learning, and research; institutional strategies of internationalization; knowledge transfer; cooperation and competition; national and supranational policies as regarding the international dimension of higher education. New trends include the mobility of programs, the role of supranational organizations, the entry of international consortia and networks as new actors, and the geographical canvas now encompasses all world regions.

<sup>2</sup> The growth of higher education enrolments is very uneven around the world (Altbach et al. 2009; Kotecha 2011). While the percentage of the age cohort enrolled in tertiary education worldwide rose from 19% in 2000 to 26% in 2007 and reached 30% in 2010, in low-income countries it rose from a low of 5% to 7% between 2000 and 2007. Africa has the lowest participation rates in the world. For Southern Arica the enrolment rate in 2010 was a mere 6.3% up from 4.2% in 1990 despite expenditures that exceed averages for the developing countries. Clearly, Africa needs to massively raise its participation rates by providing more access that is equitable. This will require increase the size and quality of the academic staff and improving their conditions of service, as well as increasing and improving higher education funding. In actual numbers, African tertiary enrolments rose from 2.7 million in 1991 to 9.3 million in 2006 and are projected to reach 20 million in 2015.

<sup>3</sup> The number of international students rose from 0.3 million in 1963 to 0.8 million in 1980, 1.2 million in 2000, 2.7 million in 2004 and 3.7 million in 2011 (Varghese 2008: 15; Hans de Wit 2012)

<sup>4</sup> This schema is derived from Jaramillo and Knight (2005), who offered a detailed analysis of these actors and programs for Latin American higher education.

<sup>5</sup> Sall and Ndjaye (2007-8) report a proposed African ranking scheme based on student and teacher mobility, coordinated teaching and research initiatives, communication in foreign languages, and usefulness to the community, which does not seem to have had any takers.