

Myths and Realities of Higher Education as a Vehicle for Nation Building in Developing Countries: The Culture of the University and the New African Diaspora

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Abstract

The thesis of this paper is that the African university, like its counterpart in the advanced developed world, has maintained a stubborn resistance to change in spite of external pressures and internal transformations. The university strives to remain protected from external interference from the local community and it is unwilling to break the cultural mystique and behavioral codes built over time since the birth of universities in twelfth century Italy and France. When colonies in the Third World started clamoring for political independence, politicians of the West demonstrated to the world that newly independent countries could sustain development if they adopted Western strategies. Two of the strategies, the “human capital” and “modernization” theories became so attractive that since independence in the late 1950s and 1960s, developing nations have placed much emphasis on education as a vehicle for modernization and socio-economic development. Because the movement to expand educational opportunities in the developing world was strongly tied to economic development and technocratic visions of societal reconstruction, higher education has remained an area in which most developing countries maintain a strong commitment although it continues to fail to produce the desired results. Changes in political and economic environments do not deter governments from continuing to invest in higher education. There is a belief that such an investment would generate direct benefits to the state in the form of providing the necessary high-level manpower and carrying out development-oriented research. Investment in higher education would also in many ways serve the needs of society by rendering various services and advice to policy-makers. Since the 1980s, however, there has been a new wave of brain drain of African scholars—a new diaspora to the advanced industrialized world. In reality, the artificial environment of the African university helps only to serve the interests of the former colonial powers. It is not my purpose in this paper to challenge the strong commitment to higher education. Rather, it is my intention to analyze how the myths surrounding higher education as a *sine qua non* for development as embedded in the so-called theories of development hold promise for economic and social development in the third world countries in the twenty-first century, and to examine the effects of the new wave of the brain drain of African scholars to the advanced industrialized world.

Introduction

During the 1960s, when most colonies became independent, governments of the newly independent countries began to establish undergraduate and college-type programs in all fields of education in response to the modernization theory. Universities, especially as they developed in Africa, were on the lines of universities in advanced industrialized countries. These institutions have been deeply embedded in educational philosophies and ideologies whose purpose has been to train and sponsor privileged elites that would take over the realms of colonial administration. Sherman (1990) contends that the African university is a modern invention that does not provide practical solutions to the needs and challenges of its traditional agrarian environment—an environment that is “caught in change from external forces—centuries of economic exploitation, colonialism, intellectual and cultural dominance” (p. 371). Similarly, Hetland (1984) calls for universities to serve their societies by contributing to their countries’ cultural and socio-economic development and stop being “‘ivory towers’ detached and sheltered from the current problems and immediate needs of the poor countries to which they belong” (p. 72). In this paper, I analyze the concept of development and discuss the theories of development to throw light on how they may hold promise for developing countries. Next, I highlight how the culture of the university has created a new group of educated and talented Africans that serve the needs of industrialized advanced countries.

Concept of Development

The term “development” is an elusive concept with several meanings, lending itself to a contextual definition. That is to say, researchers define development in the actual context in which they use the term. Some researchers use the terms “development” and “growth” interchangeably (Malchup, 1970). Others use words such as social change, evolution progress, advancement, and modernization as synonyms of development only when they refer to underdeveloped countries or regions, and others use the term “development” to mean fundamental changes in social attitudes and institutions. Machlup (1970) concludes that in reference to developing countries, the concept *economic development* means economic growth. Therefore, the term *development* implies change in a specific direction that the researcher regards as potential and highly important to the welfare of society (Fagerlind and Saha, 1989).

Some philosophers, scientists, social scientists, and planners incline to identify development with social structures found in countries that are highly industrialized and advanced in education, science and technology (Rowstow, 1990). Some writers (Harrison, 1988; Inkeles and Smith 1974) regard development as the process of changing a basically traditional society into a modern one. Harrison (1988) contends that development is the same as modernization. According to Harrison, development is “a far-reaching, continuous, and positively evaluated change in the totality of human experience” (p. xiii-xiv). However, Harrison sees development as what is actually happening in modernization. According to Harrison, “Development, then, is always a valued state, which may or may not have been achieved in some other social context, and which may not even be achievable” (p.xiii-xiv).

The international community adopted the term *development* to describe the sequence of economic growth of the nations of the Third World (Huq, 1975). The developing nations and the international community now recognize the term as a multi-dimensional concept. A landmark for the definition of the term “development” was the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly during the proclamation of the Second United Nations Development Decade on January 1, 1971 (UN, 1971). The UN declared the following elements are basic to development: (1) a minimum standard of living compatible with human dignity; (2) underpinned improvement of the well-being of the individual; (3) sharing of benefits by society at large; (4) more equitable distribution of wealth and income and wealth; (5) a greater degree of income security; and (6) the safeguard of the environment. Although some of the indicators such as “minimum standard of living compatible with human dignity” seem to be vague, it is clear that the United Nations’ indicators comprise the whole gamut of a country’s economic, social, and cultural life. Therefore, one could conveniently refer to development in multi-dimensional terms. That is, one cannot measure development by using only economic growth or by any other exclusive indicator (Huq, 1975; Fagerlind and Saha, 1989; Myrdal, 1972). Accordingly, the term “development” may imply a condition of wellbeing for society as a whole.

About two decades after independence de Souza and Porter (1974) argue that much did not happen to modernize poor countries. As they put it, “The economic and social changes which have occurred in poor countries in the past two decades have been as much cause for despair as for hope for those who want to see these countries develop” (de Souza and Porter, 1974: 4). Therefore, the degree of emphasis a researcher places on the indicators of development depends on the school of thought and the orientation of the discipline of the researcher. The specific role of development theories in the establishment of higher education in Africa has been significant. In what follows I highlight the various perspectives on development and examine whether they hold promise for the development of African nations.

Theoretical Perspectives on Development

Among the many perspectives on development, the modernization, human capital and dependency theories supply an ample framework for educational objectives in developing countries.

Modernization Theory

Modernization theory was the response scholars gave to nation building and institution building after World War II. The Western world became interested in modernization when colonies in the Third World started clamoring for political independence. This interest was mainly for politicians of the West to demonstrate to the world that newly independent countries could sustain development if they adopted Western strategies (Harrison, 1988; Webster, 1984). Modernization theory originated in the early 1960’s mainly from the work of David McClelland (1961), a social psychologist who attempts to explain the differences between societies in social and technological advancement. McClelland asserts that some societies are more advanced than others because of differences in cultural and personality styles.

According to McClelland, advancement is caused by the need for achievement. He claims that children can develop the need for achievement through literature that stresses the significance of self-help, competition and general extroverted behavior. Therefore, societies that wish to encourage their young to become entrepreneurs can impart them with the values of the need for achievement at the right age. So, for McClelland, modernization is closely linked with the acquisition of modern values.

Alex Inkeles, an American sociologist's modernity scale became widely used in the 1960's and 1970's. From their study of individual modernity in six developing countries, Inkeles and Smith (1974) provide a rationale for the modernization theory. They stated that because people become modern through their daily experiences and bureaucratic organizations, it is important to modify places of employment to allow people to "move from the more traditional to the more modern pole in their attitudes, values and behavior" (p. 6). Inkeles and his followers believe that to modernize is to develop, and society cannot develop until the bulk of its population absorbs modern values. In an attempt to define modernization, Inkeles and Smith write:

The socio-psychological approach to modernization treats it mainly as a process of change in ways of perceiving, expressing, and valuing. The modern is defined as a mode of individual functioning, a set of dispositions to act in certain ways. It is in other words an 'ethos' in the sense in which Max Weber spoke of 'the spirit of capitalism' (p. 16).

Inkeles and Smith assert that societies can create modern values through certain social institutions such as family, school, and factory. For them modernization is closely tied with industrialization and the personal qualities that are likely to result from working in factories, and "perhaps more critical, which may be required of the workers and the staff if the factory is to operate efficiently and effectively" (p. 19). Therefore, the basic assumption underlying the modernization theory is that there is a direct causal link between five sets of variables in the process of modernization, namely, modernizing institutions, modern values, modern behavior, modern society, and economic development (Fagerlind and Saha, 1989).

In *The Stages of Economic Growth – A Non-Communist Manifesto*, Rostow (1990) identifies five stages of economic growth that lead to development; they are: (1) the traditional society; (2) the preconditions of take-off; (3) the take-off; (4) the drive to maturity; and (5) the age of high mass consumption. Rostow describes a *traditional society* as an agrarian-dependent society with limited access to science and technology. In traditional society, religion and natural laws dictate the mode of production. There is virtually lack of diversification in the economy. A social hierarchy controls the means of production with family and clan affiliations playing a greater role in society. In traditional societies, political power is usually vested in landowners who maintain considerable influence on society members.

The *preconditions for take-off* stage is a transitional period to modernity, a period when developing society becomes aware of the need for advancement. The society at this period introduces innovations in education, develops infrastructure such as banks and other economic establishments for capital mobilization, encourages investment, broadens the scope of commerce internally and externally and finally, encourages the establishment of modern manufacturing industries. Rostow views the third stage, the *take-off*, as the most critical period of the development process. He refers to this stage as the period of rapid industrial and technological growth. The fourth, the *drive to maturity* stage, is a period of long sustained growth. It is a period when society modernizes all economic activities through technology. The final stage, the *age of high mass consumption*, is characterized by a period of economic growth when society moves toward demanding durable consumer goods and services. Accordingly, for Rostow, development is unilinear and in order for traditional societies to develop, they have to change their economies, values and social structures.

Human Capital Theory

In the 1960's, social scientists became interested in studies related to the economic value of investment in education. This interest was generated by the human capital theorists' notion that the most productive course to national development of any society lies in the advancement of its population, that is its human capital (Schultz, 1961; Denison, 1962; Becker, 1964). In other words, human capital theory contends that because an educated population is a productive population, education contributes directly to the growth of the national income of societies by enhancing the skills and productive abilities of employees. Human capital theorists argue that economic growth and development should only take place when technology becomes more efficient and when societies utilize human resources in the use of technology. Human capital theorists assume that improved technology leads to greater production and that employees acquire the skills for the use of technology through formal education. Thus, when societies

invest in education, they invest to increase the productivity of the population. In his address to the American Economic Association in 1960, Theodore Schultz declared that education was a productive investment and was not merely a form of consumption (Schultz, 1961). He maintained that apart from improving individual choices available to people, education provides the category of labor force required for industrial development and economic growth. In his book, *Investing in people – the economics of population quality*, Schultz (1981) identifies the acquired abilities of people as the most important economic resource available to societies. He maintains that human capital is decisive in improving the welfare of poor people throughout the world. Schultz maintains that education is an investment that produces the quality of the population that can propel economic development and welfare of a nation.

Several studies (Michaelowa, 2000; Psacharopoulos and Woodhall, 1985; Saha, 1991; Fagerlind and Saha, 1989; Schultz, 1961, 1980, and 1981) have demonstrated the relationships between education and economic levels of development among societies. For example, Becker (1964) found the return of investment in college education in the U.S. higher than the rate of return on alternative investments. Griliches (1988) asserts that increased educational achievement accounted for one-third of an unexplained increase in the output of the U.S. economy. Denison (1979) observes that education accounted for 0.5 percent of the 2.4 percent of the growth in national income per worker in the nonresidential business sector in the U.S. Schultz (1980) reinforces his original thesis by arguing that the modernization of the economies of both advanced and less developed countries was due to the decrease in farmland and an increase in the mobilization of human resources. Also, Schultz (1981) asserts that because of improved farm technology, farmers cultivated less acreage for more agricultural productivity. Therefore, Schultz stresses the significance of upgrading the quality of the population through education in order to improve the economic conditions of poor societies.

Rates of Return to Education

In a study conducted in 44 countries using the human capital approach, Psacharopoulos (1981) (cited in Fagerlind and Saha, 1989) substantiated Schultz's argument by conducting a survey on the rates of return to educational investment. He found that first, primary education reveals the highest social and private returns. Secondly, private returns are higher than social returns, particularly at the university level. Thirdly, all rates of return to investment in education exceed the rates of return in alternative investment in capital. And finally, developing countries' rates of return to investment in education are higher than those of advanced industrialized countries at comparable levels.

Accordingly, from the early 1960's up to the mid 1970's, governments in developed and less developed countries encouraged investment in education to enhance the quality of human productivity. However, by the late 1970's, lack of economic growth in most parts of the world slowed governments' investment in education, especially, as researchers started to question the feasibility of human capital theory as the basis for a possible development strategy (Webster, 1984; Psacharopoulos and Woodhall, 1985; Fagerlind and Saha, 1989). Researchers no longer accepted that increased educational expenditure with a related increase in participation rates was enough to enhance economic productivity both in developed and less developed countries (Fagerlind and Saha, 1989).

Thus, criticisms of the human capital theory have usually centered on the assumptions underlying the theory itself. First, the theory assumes that there is a perfect market for labor. In other words, it assumes that better educated and more skilled people obtain better jobs and are eventually more productive—a condition that does not prevail in the real world. Second, the human capital theory does not consider factors other than education, such as job satisfaction and working conditions, which could contribute to higher worker productivity. Third, the human capital theory fails to recognize education as a screening or filtering device (Psacharopoulos and Woodhall, 1985). That is to say, employers merely use education to identify workers with superior ability and personal attributes; while education may identify productive capacity of employees it may not directly improve workers' skills and productivity (Psacharopoulos and Woodhall, 1985). Thus, the assumptions underlying the human capital theory suggest that development depends only on education.

Blaug (1985) also criticizes human capital theory that boosting the level of education in a society may increase inequalities in the distribution of income. Fagerlind and Saha (1989) note that although human capital theory is naturally appealing, it is fraught with methodological problems such as the difficulty to measure how education contributes to labor quality. Therefore, it is difficult to use the theory as an approach to the study of the economic value of schooling.

The human capital theory considers individual change rather than structural change as a prerequisite to development. By emphasizing individual change against structural change, the theory entirely neglects the effects that international relations may have on development (Fagerlind and Woodhall, 1989). Therefore, while the human capital theory has been instrumental in shaping policies regarding education and development strategies for governments and more recently for international organizations such as IDA, OECD and UNESCO, more and more researchers dispute the theory, and the relationship between education and development becomes more obscured. However, the theory continues to appeal to individuals and politicians alike because while individuals think education would provide personal economic success and achievement, politicians think the encouragement of investment in human capital would result in rapid economic growth for society.

Dependency Theory

Researchers trace the origins of dependency theory from Marx and Lenin. Marx's idea of the exploitation of the proletariat by the bourgeois class and Lenin's concept of imperialism are used by dependency theorists to describe the process whereby capitalism dominates and exploits the poor countries. Dependency theory has its origins in the 1960s through the writings of scholars who were particularly concerned over the persistent economic crisis of Latin America countries. They reject the idea of modernization theory that development would occur by exposing the modern values of the advanced industrialized countries to the Third World. Instead they argue that the persistent poverty in the Third World countries is caused by exposure to the economic, political and social influences to the advanced industrialized countries. Dependency theorists also assert that the growth of the advanced industrialized countries in the world today means the concurrent underdevelopment of those countries whose economic surplus the rich countries exploit (Head, 1991). Therefore, given time, poor countries would develop, but as long as they are subjected to the exploitation of the rich countries, their poverty would persist.

Andre Gunder Frank, one of the major proponents of the dependency theory is closely associated with the view that the persistent poverty of the Third World is an image of its dependency. According to Frank (1972), merchants and colonial powers forced Third World countries to become exporters of primary products to satisfy the raw material needs of the imperial powers. In doing so, these merchants and colonial powers incorporated the Third World elite into their system of exploitation. The elites became mere intermediaries between the rich merchant buyers and the poor producers. Thus, the elites' lifestyles were more and more bound to and seriously dependent on the activities of the economic elite in the advanced industrialized countries. While the elite in the Third World enjoy a high standard of living from their relationship with the advanced countries, the masses experience persistent deprivation as the elite take their surplus production from them in the local rural region and transfer the products abroad. This form of dependency he calls "lumpenbourgeoisie" and "lumpendevlopment. According to Frank, dependency relationships occur when the elite of the poor countries bear attitudes, values and interests consistent with those in the wealthy countries. The elites, "lumpenbourgeoisie", are principal agents of the dependency relationship.

Similarly, as Dos Santos (1973) writes, "Dependence is a conditioning situation in which the economies of one group of countries are conditioned by the development and expansion of others" (p. 76). Don Santos claims that relationships of interdependence between countries can become dependent "when some countries can expand through self-impulsion while others, being in a dependent position can only expand as a reflection of the expansion of the dominant countries which may have positive or negative effects on their development" (p.76). Dos Santos (1973) further illustrates states that dependent countries remain in a state of helplessness that causes them to be both backward and exploited. As Dos Santos writes:

Dominant countries are endowed with technological, commercial, capital and socio-political predominance over dependent countries--the form of this predominance varying according to the particular historical moment--and can therefore exploit them, and extract part of the locally produced surplus. Dependence then, is based upon an international division of labor which allows industrial development to take place in some countries while restricting it in others, whose growth is conditioned by and subjected to the power centers of the world (p.76-77).

Accordingly, in contrast to modernization theory, dependency theory highlights the social, political, cultural and economic relationships both between and within societies. The theory assumes that the underdevelopment of a country or region is linked to the development of another country or outside

region. Fagerlind and Saha (1989) contend that “the term dependency is used to emphasize that the causal relationship between the development of central or metropole societies and the underdevelopment of peripheral or satellite societies is an historical and at least an indirect process” (p.22).

Therefore, dependency theory assumes that the world is divided into a core and peripheral countries dominated by a capitalist economic network, whereby the rich core countries exploit the poor peripheral ones. In other words, the theory assumes that the rich countries of the North dominate and exploit the poor countries of the South (Head, 1991), a situation in which the rich countries transfer resources from the poor countries to their countries through colonial or neo-colonial relationships, plunder, or the operations of multinational corporations.

Social scientists criticize dependency theory in many ways. First, Webster (1984) argues that there is nothing in dependency that is distinctively peculiar to the Third World. According to Webster, since the world economy is a system, both the rich and poor countries are interdependent as in the example of Canada, being a developed economy is still dependent on US capital. However, dependency in Frank’s terms does not necessarily mean that the rich country physically dominates the poor. It is that the elite and leaders of the poor countries hold attitudes, values and interests consistent with those in the rich countries. Moreover, many social scientists accept that less developed countries with a history of colonization by advanced countries were exploited for further industrialization of the advanced countries. As the economist Keynes (cited in de Souza and Porter) writes of the exploitation:

Indeed, the booty brought back by Drake in the Golden Hind may fairly be considered the foundation and origin of British Foreign Investment. Elizabeth paid off out of the proceeds the whole of her foreign debt and invested a part of the balance (about 42,000 pounds sterling [sic]) in the Levant Company; largely out of the profits of the Levant Company there was formed the East Indian Company, the profits of which during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were the main foundations of England’s foreign connections (p. 20).

Some social scientists (Webster, 1984; Fagerlind and Saha, 1989) further argue that the dependency theory’s implication that the Third World economies are static is erroneous. They assert that post 1970 analysis of economic growth indicates that many Third World countries including Latin America experienced growth. For this reason, dependency theorists have failed to account for the fact that some dependent nations have become wealthy while others have remained. But Frank (1972) argues that countries that were rich before domination are becoming poorer while the poor ones are becoming richer.

Another criticism of dependency theory is its failure to provide a workable strategy for independent development without establishing some degree of dependency in the poor country.

Education and Nation Building

The common view among many modernization theorists between the 1950s and the 1970s was that education was directly linked with socio-economic development. Sociologists claim that education causes a change that promotes greater productivity and work efficiency in the individual. They believe that education enhances productivity by modernizing the values, beliefs and behavior of people. So, for sociologists, the assumption underlying modernization theory is that a society can develop socially and economically when it acquires modern values, beliefs and behavior, and the bulk of the population becomes modern. Inkeles and Smith (1974) assert that schooling is possibly the most important agent in transforming a society into a modern one. Inkeles and Smith (1974) argue: “In large-scale complex societies no attribute of the person predicts his attitudes, values and behavior more consistently or more powerfully than the amount of schooling he has received” (p.133). So, for modernization theorists, social and economic development could not take place unless a seemly proportion of the population adopted modern values, attitudes and beliefs about work, quality of life and other related values. Among other things, modernization theorists believe that education is the most powerful factor in bringing about modernity because it develops the individual. Inkeles and Smith (1974) contend that the individual is the most important in the development process because the modernity of a nation depends on its people and that the nation economy cannot be “highly productive, or its political or administrative institutions very effective, unless the people who work in the economy and staff the institutions have attained some degree of modernity” (p.9).

Accordingly, sociologists interpret modernization theory on the premises that education, and especially schooling, is possibly the most important vehicle for transforming traditional societies into modern ones. Researcher's backing of the notion that schooling has a modernizing effect on the way people think and behave, has made many governments and international development agencies regard education as the most feasible strategy for continued advancement of developed countries and propelling power to the development of the Third World.

Modernization theory has received much attention from researchers because many governments, national, and international organizations depend greatly on its findings for much of their development funding. Fagerlind and Saha, 1989 argue against the modernization theory for a number of reasons: 1) studies do not support the causal linkage between modern values and modern behavior as Inkeles and others presuppose. In other words, while research indicates that modern institutions can lead to modern values, it does not show that modern values can lead to modern behavior. 2) The notion that modern attitudes and values are incompatible to traditional ones is erroneous. For example, in Japan, traditional forms of organizational behavior seem to have encouraged economic growth while the same forms of organizational behavior proved to be a hindrance in the West. 3) The underlying assumption of the theory that modern values and behavior by individuals would eventually lead to socio-economic development is unrealistic because society is not the sum total of individuals who live in it. Fagerlind and Saha (1989) contend, for example, that professionals in less developed countries who leave their countries exhibit a form of modern behavior. However, one could not classify the behavior of these professionals as necessarily contributing to socio-economic development in those countries. They conclude that by selecting economic development as the end-point for the modernizing process, and by assuming that for a society to become modern, it must also become Western, the theory is ideologically prejudiced and ethnocentric (Harrison, 1988; Webster, 1984).

Webster (1984) also argues that first, modernization theory fails to acknowledge the impact of colonialism and imperialism on Third World countries; and secondly, it also fails to accept the impact of power relations involved in economic growth. That is to say, the theory fails to recognize that the ability to control resources is perhaps more important than the "ambition" to do so.

Fagerlind and Saha (1989) argue that while modernization theory regards education as an internal modernization process, it fails to account for the external influences on education that may lead to negative contributions of development. Fagerlind and Saha, 1989 further argue that although modernization theory may link education with the formation of modern values, attitudes and behavior, it fails to link these characteristics to social and economic development. They assert that contemporary research shows that less developed countries that have access to Western ideas neither exhibit modern values nor show economic development. Similarly, Webster (1984) argues that the relationships between the variables of modernization are more complex than the theory presupposes. According to Webster, "The relationship between values and the economic context is, therefore, a dynamic process inadequately conceived by the traditional values/traditional economy – modern values/modern economy dualism of modernization theory" (p. 63). Webster (1984) also argues that while high qualifications make people eligible for jobs, it is erroneous for modernization theory to assume that high qualifications are compatible with worker proficiency. Therefore, the association between modern values, attitudes and behavior on one side, and the development on the other may be more complex than the modernization theory assumes.

From the foregoing, it is clear that the modernization and human capital theories have been major guiding principles for educational expansion in both the developed and less developed countries. Both theories are similar in a number of ways. First, they provide excuse for governments to spend large sums of money on education in both developed and less developed countries (Psacharopoulos and Woodhall, 1985). Second, like modernization theory, human capital theory attributes the basis of underdevelopment or economic decline to elements within the countries themselves rather than elements outside the countries. Third, both theories are in agreement with the ideologies of democracy and liberalism found in most Western countries. In most developing countries, one could notice ideas of modernization and human capital theories influencing post-independent governments to rapidly expand education in order to enhance national development. Society has viewed education both as a modernizing institution and as a provider of access to the job market. Thus in developing countries, the human capital theory appeals to politicians and individuals alike because, while politicians regard investment in human capital theory as a vehicle for economic growth, individuals believe education would provide personal economic success and achievement.

Fagerlind and Saha (1989) contend that a dialectical process occurs between education and society. Simply put, education is a product of society and at the same time, acts continually upon society to effect change. Each of the principal dimensions of development, such as the economic, political, and social dimensions acts upon education, and education in turn acts upon each of these dimensions. So, the contribution of education to the development process depends upon the nature of the other dimensions of development in a given society at a particular time.

In his work, *Asian drama: An inquiry into the poverty of nations*, Myrdal (1972) also examines three aspects of the problem of development, namely, underdevelopment, the process of development, and planning for development and applies this model to his study of the educational system of South Asia. Myrdal asserts that researchers must view development as multi-dimensional, both in ideals and in reality. The study of development should include both economic and non-economic factors such as health, education and other social needs. Myrdal's model assumes that countries are social systems and development occurs when the whole social system moves upwards. The social system consists of many interrelated conditions and a change in one condition would cause a change in others. Thus, Myrdal's model is an attempt to synthesize the many different thoughts espoused by the theories of development, as most of these theories focus on one direction and, therefore, appear confusing.

The Culture of the University

From its birth in twelfth century Italy and France to its colonization of the modern developing world, the university's meaning and purpose have changed from period to period and from generation to generation (Perkin, 1984; Altbach, 1992). However, the uniqueness of the university lies in its polymorphous capacity to change its form and purpose to suit its ephemeral and sociopolitical environment while preserving its culture. Like all human institutions, the university maintains a tenacious endurance over time with a stubborn resistance to change in spite of external pressures and internal transformations (Perkin, 1984). By tradition, universities strive to remain protected from external interference and therefore unwilling to break the cultural mystique and behavioral codes built over time. The university, traditionally an elite institution, has provided social mobility to previously disenfranchised groups (Altbach, 1992). Nevertheless, the university continues to maintain some form of internal social differentiation with some members being valued or rewarded than others. The degree of such differentiation and its significance for the way individuals live their lives varies dramatically across institutions. Moreover, there are many different bases or criteria for such differentiation. Among the most common are age, race, ethnicity, regional origin, sex, lineage, and income (Quinnan, 1997). Both across and within institutions of higher education, there is considerable variation in which one of these, or which a set of them, is most powerful as a determinant of how students live their lives. Set against this backdrop of academic culture, it is clear that African universities are endangered and can hardly exonerate their countries from the economic doldrums that plague many of the countries. The artificial environment of the African university has a profound effect on the relationship between the university-educated person and the rest of the society, which constitutes the basis of the conceptions the educated elite have of themselves.

The African university, like its counterpart in the advanced developed world, has maintained a stubborn resistance to change in spite of its inability to meet the socio-economic demands of the nation states. The university strives to remain protected from interference from the local community because it is unwilling to break the cultural mystique and behavioral codes characteristic of universities in the advanced industrialized world. As Smillie (1986) writes: "Many Third World universities were founded in the shadow of European affiliates, most pursue academic programmes based on international standards and on perceptions relating more to the international than to the domestic academic community" (p. 65). This role of the university should not be surprising since the political and economic vestiges of colonialism are still present in today's independent countries.

Many writers (Sherman, 1990; Saha, 1991; Ahmed, 1985; Altbach, 1990) have repeatedly alleged that because of their quest for modernity, universities in developing countries do not perform functions that are relevant to the national development of their countries. Saha (1991) claims that developing countries' universities produce graduates in the sciences who, either do not understand, or are not dedicated to the solution of the problems of the Third World. As Saha puts it:

"Because they look to scientists and technologists in the developed countries as their reference group, they choose inappropriate research topics, publish in overseas journals, and where possible, take higher paid and possibly more prestigious jobs overseas. Their own countries lose the very talent that it has appropriately educated and trained (p. 253).

The New African Diaspora

The term African diaspora is simply the dispersal and settlement of peoples of Africa beyond the African continent. In his article, *African diaspora: Concept and context*, Shepperson (1993) notes that the term *African diaspora* came into existence in the late 1950s and 1960s at the same time that African nations were seeking independence from their colonial masters. According to Shepperson, “the expression *African diaspora* began to be used increasingly by writers and thinkers who were concerned with the status and prospects of persons of African descent around the world as well as at home” [italics his] (p. 41). Okpewho (1999) states that the “*diaspora* represents a global space, a worldwide web, that accounts as much for the mother continent as for wherever in the world her offspring may have been driven by the unkind forces of history” [italics his] (p. xiv). *Diaspora* is essentially a Greek word for dispersal as maintained in the *Book of Deuteronomy* (28:25). According to Shepperson, “...until it [diaspora] began to have the adjective *African* or *black* attached to it, was used largely for the scattering abroad of the Jews” (p. 41). The term *African diaspora* first originated at the First International Congress of Negro Writers and Artists in Paris in 1956 (Shepperson, 1993). Okpewho (1999) designates three phases as precursors for the African Diaspora in the New World: The first phase was the period of the labor imperative. This period characterized the source of the diaspora of enslavement when slaves were transported from Africa from the 16th century onwards to exploit their labor in building the New World. This was a period of wasted brain drain. The second phase was the period of the territorial imperative or the era of colonialism. The Monroe Doctrine in 1823 and the founding of Liberia became a precursor for the scramble for, and the partition of Africa. The third phase is termed the extractive imperative, a period when Africa’s natural resources became the focus of the imperial powers.

In contrast to the labor imperative that was wasted brain drain, the 20th century labor movements, labor globalization, were characterized by voluntary brain drain. It is here that I discern a definite break between the old and the new African diaspora. For while the aforementioned imperatives were precursors to the African presence in the New World, the new African diaspora stemmed in part from the results of the 20th century labor globalization. The migration of African immigrants to the United States since the 1980s has been influenced by two reasons. The first is the changing immigration policies of colonial powers that hitherto had historical and political ties with African countries (Djamba, 1999). Colonial ties encouraged early migration of Africans to the United Kingdom, France, and Belgium until these countries started experiencing a long period of economic recession that made them to implement restrictive immigration policies that debarred Africans from entering without visas. The second is the more relaxed policies of the United States towards immigrants from developing countries. McClelland (1961) warned that the United States would do well to focus on accepting immigrants from developing countries as a way of improving the American economy. McClelland emphasized the acceptance of immigrants from the developing countries at the expense of immigrants from the advanced industrialized countries as the former were indicated to have higher achievement motivation than the latter. By 1965, the U.S. introduced the family reunification and refugee law that were greatly in favor of African immigrants (Djamba, 1999). Since then there has been a steady influx of Africans into the New World.

The 1980 U.S. Census indicated that there were 225,000 Africans in the United States of whom 60 per cent were whites, 29 per cent were blacks and 11 percent identified as others (Djamba, 1999). The 1990 Census indicated that there were about one half million Africans in the United States of whom 47 percent were blacks, 44 percent whites and 9 percent classified as others. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, about one million Africans live in the United States. Most of the African immigrants in the United States are highly educated and skilled. According to Djamba (1999), the 1980 and 1990 censuses indicated that there were more people among Black Africans age 16 and older with college education than white Africans and Native Blacks.

Conclusion

The debate on socio-economic development of African countries has for too long centered on a stale ideological debate between the competing virtues of Western strategies and traditional forms. Can we learn the lessons of the past and shape a more compassionate strategy for the future development of Africa? The human capital theorists’ idea of education as a vehicle for economic growth and national development that has dominated educational planning and development strategies of governments in African countries since the 1960’s and the early 1970’s has been demonstrably weak on fulfilling the ideals of socio-economic development and nation building. Both the human capital and modernization theories have made

hundreds of thousands of educated and talented Africans vulnerable to a “modernization temptation” that has produced a mass influx of these men and women to the advanced industrialized countries. While critics do not question the contribution of education to development, they question whether education in its present form can contribute to social and political equality that they consider important to the continued advancement of less developed countries. In Africa, where the models of universities have been adopted from advanced industrialized countries, there is a pressing need for devising a strategy that could utilize traditional resources in greater harmony and cooperation with Western strategies.

Dependency theorists, with their neo-Marxist background accept the notion that education helps to perpetuate inequalities in advanced capitalist societies by serving the interests of those in power. Historically, the ideological and institutional underpinnings of schooling have geared towards expanding opportunities for the upper classes rather than the children of the middle and working classes (Fagerlind & Saha 1989). The dependency school contends that since schooling in the former colonial societies has been an importation from the Western world, it only continues to benefit the dominant social group as it did for the colonial system as a whole (Sherman, 1990). Therefore, many neo-Marxists (including the dependency school) believe that in most developing countries, schools are merely a new form of colonialism and imperialism. They argue that by adopting selection procedures and curricula structures of former colonial powers, schools continue to serve the interests of the elite of these former powers. Frank (1972) notes that schools in developing countries, particularly in Latin America, produce a local elitist class, the Lumpenbourgeoisie, who serve overseas interests rather than the interests of their own societies. Thus, neo-Marxists basically address their criticisms at the capitalist model of education and its spread to the Third World.

What then are the prospects of higher education as a vehicle for development under these inauspicious circumstances? In contrast to development strategies based on modernization, developing countries need to adopt Marxist or neo-Marxist strategies of development to direct educational reforms and outcomes towards restructuring of the school systems to conform to the needs of society. Educational reforms should initially attempt to eliminate privilege and elitism in the school system. The cultural dislocation of higher education from the traditional societies of developing countries has led to the movement of the most virile and talented young men and women to the advanced capitalist countries. The common ethos of this movement is that Africa is losing the best of its human capital to the developed world. The devastating effects of this brain drain can be termed as a neo-colonial domination of the developing countries.

An argument made, often forcefully and convincingly by social theorists is that universities in developing countries would almost certainly fail if their particular goals are not specified carefully and tailored to suit their culture and environment (Sherman, 1990; Saha, 1991). If the present trend of emigration of trained academics from the developing countries to advanced countries continues, we may expect a continuing lopsided growth and increasing emigration of people to the advanced countries. This represents a vicious circle of loss of human capital that can further slow the attainment of nation building objectives. However, socio-economic development is only one aspect according to which one can access the role of universities in nation building. Although the socio-economic considerations are certainly important, there are other intangible aspects of the contributions of higher education to society that cannot be measured quantitatively. One of these is that the African university needs to become closely related to its local environment and draw inspiration from it because “in it [the local environment] are embedded the roots of African culture and civilization--worldview, values, customs, and traditions, creative works, knowledge, skills, and technology” (Sherman, 1990, p. 371). The African university must therefore aim at preserving the traditional environment and enhancing pride in Africa’s cultural heritage (Sherman, 1990).

For education to act as a propeller to socio-economic growth, there is the need for the following:

- 1) adequate links between universities and the job market and offering appropriate training for skills needed in the labor market;
- 2) a balance between enrolments in disciplines that would act as the engine of growth;
- 3) eradication of gender inequalities by encouraging the enrolment of women in higher education;
- 4) making universities less costly by adopting higher priorities in educational policy planning;
- 5) promotion of international cooperation;
- 6) effective links to the cultural and social environment to enhance nation building; and
- 7) emphasis on the institutional management that would lead the nation on the path to development.

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