

The Intelligentsia and Academic Freedom: A Preliminary Study of Expatriate African Scholars in African Universities

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Introduction

The blame on the lack of academic freedom in Africa is often put on the state. Indeed, nobody can of course doubt the power and overwhelming role of the state in determining the structures and delimiting the content of intellectual production in the continent. The aim of this paper is not, however, to belabour this point, but to examine the extent to which the structures dominated by the intellectuals themselves have undermined the practices and pursuit of academic freedom in Africa. It is argued that these structures are themselves authoritarian and significantly undermined the development of academic freedom in Africa. Thus, the African intellectual community cannot be entirely absolved from generating many of the processes and practices that presently characterize the social production of knowledge in the continent.

The paper first, discusses this issue by focusing on the often forgotten phenomenon of African expatriate scholars. The experiences of these scholars throw into sharp relief the intellectual practices, contradictions and constraints prevalent in African universities today. Second, an attempt is made to examine the factors that motivate these African scholars to migrate. It seeks to demonstrate that intellectual considerations, such as research interests in a particular country do play an insignificant role. This has far-reaching consequences on the way these scholars are perceived and treated. Third, the constraints that these scholars face in the host countries compared to local researchers and western expatriate scholars are elucidated. Finally, the paper argues that the environment for expatriate African scholars in Africa has deteriorated as a result of the acceleration in the 'brain drain' to the West, because as scholars, who would otherwise prefer to work and live in other African countries outside their own, find it increasingly difficult to do so.

Intellectual Labour Migration

In the last two decades or so the African intellectual has discovered labour migration a phenomenon that had been long the preserve of ordinary workers. The migration of intellectual workers across national boundaries has in fact grown, while that of agricultural and industrial workers has declined. The labour migration waves of the colonial period have mainly been replaced by the flows of refugees. General labour migration in Africa has declined in proportion to the consolidation of the nation-state, jealously guarding its 'sovereignty' and 'national economy.' This has meant that only highly-trained manpower has found it relatively easy to migrate openly. But the African intellectual migrants are, structurally, not all that different from their less fortunate compatriots who flock to the refugee camps. For the most part the intellectuals are themselves refugees.

Most African intellectual migrants flee from their countries for a number of political and economic factors. At independence, most of the universities which were created by the newly-independent states as factories to churn out the personnel for Africanisation and emblems of nationhood in the modern world, enjoyed cozy relations with the new rulers, many of whom were themselves intellectuals, or at least aspiring ones. However, it did not take long for the honeymoon to turn sour. As liberal institutions, the universities would not easily be turned into echo chambers reverberating with praise songs for the *uhuru* (Kiswahili: freedom) leaders. They subjected the political slogans of nation-building and development to critical analysis. This did not enamour the universities to the new ruling class, which was not only materially weak, but also politically fragile, and therefore unduly concerned with the trappings and realities of power. The drive for centralization and control that this led to pitted the universities, as the vibrant interlocutors of civil society, against the state, that has increasingly been flexing its independence. The universities came to be seen as potential saboteurs of the national interest, defined narrowly according to the shifting ideological, religious, ethnic, regional and class predilections of whichever regime was in power.

The universities and intellectuals were accused of being purveyors of 'foreign ideology', a charge that had hypocritically been made by leaders who themselves worshipped at the altar of westernization, but nonetheless reflected the contradictory mandate of the African university as the vehicle of modernization and transmission belt of western culture and capital, on one hand, and as crucibles through which national culture and values could be forged, on the other. As reservoirs of concentrated critical consciousness and the ever-volatile students, the universities, almost by their existence, were frustrated and made a mockery of the post-colonial state's efforts to control and shape the political space. So they were watched constantly, carefully and nervously. Every attempt was made to brow-beat them into line through closure, and the arrests and detentions of 'troublesome' academics and students. In many countries, once one has been branded a 'subversive' through arrest and detention, it becomes virtually impossible to return to the university. In short, as relations between the universities and state deteriorated, particularly as the euphoria of independence evaporated into the thick clouds of persistent economic crises and authoritarian structural adjustment programs (SAPs), many intellectuals opted for migration perhaps for reasons of personal security and intellectual integrity among others.

The university is no ivory tower, living in splendid isolation from the society, wrecked, as is often the case, by political strife and social dislocation. Like the majority of refugees, the African intellectual migrants are usually displaced persons, who vote with their feet for the uncertain safety and security of other lands. The conflicts in the wider society are condensed and reproduced in the university. The polarizations in the society combined with the schisms in the university create authoritarian structures that generate and thrive on the persecution of those who do not stay within the prescribed intellectual and ideological boundaries. The university, as a haven of petty-bourgeois ambitions, aspirations and fantasies, engenders a culture of careerism and fierce competition, fertile breeding grounds for the mediation of political repression and intellectual persecution. Periods of civil strife and war reinforce the university community's fratricidal struggles for the limited spoils of academia. Political and intellectual witch-hunts rear their ugly heads. The victors and those supporting the successful forces, are rewarded with the transient privileges of promotion or bureaucratic

appointment until they, too, slip and fall in Africa's treacherous political quicksands. The victims, mostly those who belong to the 'wrong' ethnic or religious groups or subscribe to 'subversive' political or ideological tendencies, pay with their jobs, freedoms, and occasionally lives. Many of them end up joining the ranks and file of refugees into the wilderness of intellectual exile.

Unlike other migrants, however, who are pushed by the lack of employment opportunities at home, the intellectual migrants belong to the privileged end of the labour market in their home countries. After independence, there was an enormous expansion in university education throughout Africa. Consequently, university employment grew rapidly, but this has been followed by important structural and institutional changes in the politics of control of the university labour market. Practically all the universities established since independence have been national in character, unlike the regional universities (such as The University of Eastern Africa, Makerere, Uganda and University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland) established during the late colonial era. Indeed, the regional universities were dismembered into national universities soon after independence. The national universities were easier to control than the regional ones, and before long were subordinated to state structures and policies. Thus, the universities came to enjoy little autonomy from the state like the so many other sectors of civil society in independent Africa. Increased state intervention in university affairs meant that, regardless of the number of universities in a country, once one has run foul of the university and political authorities in a particular university, employment opportunities in the other national universities are practically foreclosed. The only realistic alternative is for one to look for a job outside the country. Thus, the nationalization and politicization of the university labour market has helped to produce and sustain intellectual labour migration.

The economic crisis that set in from the mid-1970s further compounded the problems of intellectual production and reproduction in Africa. The crisis has led to the deeper incorporation of Africa into the world capitalist system, the unravelling of its social and economic structures through 'economic reform' and 'structural adjustment' programs, and the demobilization of the ideologies of self-reliance. As part of the 'social sector' targeted for retrenchment, universities and education in general, have been forced to bear the brunt of these programs. In many countries teaching facilities have become overstretched to the point of collapse. Real wages have fallen drastically, thanks to ill-conceived devaluations. University research grants have dried up, and lecture halls have become more crowded, laboratories ill-equipped, and libraries starved of the latest publications particularly the international journals. Faced with deteriorating material conditions, African intellectuals have responded in several ways. Many have resorted to moonlighting or sought to exercise their entrepreneurial skills in the twilight world of the 'informal sector' to make ends meet; or they have tried to endear themselves to the state to get appointments to parastatal boardrooms as directors and managers. Others have sought refuge in consultancy services and tried to forge links with the increasingly omnipresent international research agencies. For the rest there is always the option of migrating overseas or to a neighbouring country where the economic situation is relatively better or more attractive.

It would seem that these political and economic reasons play an overwhelming role in generating intellectual labour migration in, and from Africa. Research interests are of marginal importance. Few Africans ever do research on other countries apart from their own. This is partly because they study in other African countries. Exchange of findings between countries is extremely limited. Scholars in one country are hardly aware of what their colleagues in the same discipline are doing in the neighbouring country. Northern universities are the first choice for sabbaticals. Pan-Africanism has never been emptier of substance as among the intellectuals themselves, its most vocal proponents. The underdeveloped nature of Pan-Africanist research practices can partly be attributed to the dismantling of the regional universities after independence. The earlier generation of African intellectual, trained in the regional universities, were far more Pan-Africanist in their orientations and practices than those trained after independence. This is one instance of nationalism devouring its progenitor, Pan-Africanism.

The process began as the post-colonial state sought to set the spatial and epistemological boundaries of research in pursuit of developmentalism. Since independence, scholars, particularly in the Social Sciences and Humanities, have been implored and committed to the problems of their nation, by studying its institutions and values in order to eliminate those that might promote the growth of a dynamic and developed society. In short, social science research has been expected to provide solutions to the national problems of economic development and political integration. Many African social scientists have responded to the call, and in so doing helped in advancing the ideology of nation-building. One of the consequences of this has been that African scholars are generally narrowly nationalistic in their objectives, analyses and expertise. Research on regional and continental issues has largely been left as a monopoly of Western scholars, who synthesize 'local' and 'national' studies into 'macro' packages that set the paradigmatic standards and the terms of debate. The typical African scholar migrating to another African country differs from the typical Western scholar, who often goes to a country of his primary research interest.

It can be emphasized that this has seriously affected the intellectual practices of African expatriate scholars and the nature of their relationships with the host universities.

For one thing, it has led to a situation whereby the expatriate African scholars are mainly considered with something to contribute to the national research program and agenda. This has helped to foster an unhealthy attitude whereby expatriate Western scholars are more readily accepted and respected than expatriate African ones. The few African scholars who actually have research interests on the host country suffer the consequences. Their work either receives little support or is occasionally ignored.

The Intellectual Migrant at Work

The intellectual migrant arrives into the new country relieved and apprehensive. The label 'refugee' is written all over him. He is often received in a manner befitting a refugee. There is little of the fanfare that accompanies the arrival of the Western expatriate scholar, who is usually given a better office, house and furnishings and the small favours that help one to settle down. The distinction is clear. The Western scholar is not a 'refugee', but an 'expat', making a sacrifice by coming to the 'Third World'; so making the transition much smoother.

He is given a generous package that includes 'inducement', leave and educational allowances, all of which turn his actual salary, nominally pegged to local levels, into an allowance. The African expatriate scholar is sometimes given the same privileges, but grudgingly, indeed, resentfully. After all, a refugee in popular perception is a liability not an asset. Occasionally, these privileges are denied to the African expatriate scholar, particularly if he is from a neighbouring country, on the pretext that he can easily adjust to the local environmental circumstances. Thus, the African expatriate scholar soon discovers that he is marginalized and valued only as a source of cheap pliant labour.

The African expatriate intellectual lack the material and ideological assets of the Western expatriate and local scholars. To the local scholars, the Western expatriate scholar can be a useful link to universities in the North for sabbaticals, conferences, visits and study, research foundations and consultancies. So he is carefully courted. The Western expatriate scholar is also seen as less of a threat, because he lacks the potential anonymity of the African intellectual migrant, who is hardly distinguishable from the local population, and whose very status as a 'refugee' makes his stay indeterminate. For his part, the local scholar can manipulate various constituencies, whether ethnic, regional, political, or religious that determine and mediate the allocation of resources within the university system. The African expatriate intellectual has little lucrative contacts to offer the local scholars, and neither has he any of the latter's protective mantles. Therefore, the alienation of his exile deepens.

The African expatriate scholar is confronted by authoritarian structures and chauvinistic tendencies at every turn. He is discriminated against when it comes to promotions, research grants, and leave. The problem starts with the recruitment process itself. The African expatriate scholar is often a recruit of last resort. Rarely is he recruited to the high ranks, even if he may have all the right qualifications. He is more likely to be slotted at the bottom of the scale, regardless of his previous position. It is all justified in the ubiquitous name of standards. As a refugee, the intellectual migrant often has little choice, and the recruiters prey on that, and so he takes up the job. With that the migrant's marginality and powerlessness are established. They are periodically reinforced each time there is a vacancy for promotion. The migrant is sometimes prevailed upon, subtly and not so subtly, not to apply. His contract, which has to be renewed every two or three years, is a sword that hangs over his head and is used to control him, keep him in line, and remind him that he is there temporarily.

The migrant is exceptionally vulnerable because of the discretionary decision-making process in many an African university. This is just one of the manifestations of the authoritarianism and arbitrariness that characterizes the African universities. The chain of discretionary appointments starts from the very top. The president of the republic appoints the vice-chancellor, usually for political rather than administrative or academic reasons. The vice-chancellor, in turn, appoints the deans of faculties or heads of departments. This patron-client network determines recruitment and promotion procedures, and the allocation of work loads and resources. In a system run through patron-client networks, the African intellectual migrant has disadvantages because he cannot be a good or useful client. Clients have to offer their patrons some material and ideological advantages, which the African intellectual migrant cannot because he has no base in the society's competing interest groups and social

forces. Migrants are only good for scape-goating, especially in times of crisis.

Many African universities do not have ample resources for research. Part of the problem is that they do not possess sufficient funds. The universities mostly depend for their financing on governments, which often have many other pressing needs to be fulfilled. Governments also tend to view universities primarily as teaching institutions. But the problem does not end there. The available funds are not always properly used. The universities have not been immune from the cancer of corruption that afflicts many public institutions in Africa. Corruption has been one of the principal means used by the aspiring national bourgeoisie to accumulate capital. At independence, this class was underdeveloped and has a weak material base. Being located in the neo-colonies themselves, the aspiring national bourgeoisie had no colonies or peripheries to loot or plunder, so they exclusively depended upon internal sources for the accumulation of monetary capital. Corruption became their salvation, and the state is one of their chief means of accumulation. Parastatals were created to effect the nationalization of the economy and the formation of the national bourgeoisie.

The universities have been operating much like parastatals. Indeed, the patterns of top administrative appointments for parastatals and the universities hardly differ. Little wonder that many top university functionaries see the university as a means of accumulation. So funds earmarked for research are diverted to private and conspicuous consumption. Large sums of money are wasted on providing the vice-chancellors, their deputies, registrars, deans and sometimes heads of departments with official cars and residences, and expense accounts. In the meantime, teaching facilities deteriorate. The misplaced priorities of many African universities can be seen in the institutionalization of the power imbalance between the administrative and teaching staff. The latter are often voiceless transmission belts for decisions taken by faceless bureaucrats.

Corruption and patron-client networks reinforce each other to undermine research. Research grants are often made on a discretionary basis by whoever is in charge of the research grants' committees. The partrimonialization of research funds does not end with the university's own funds, but extends to external sources. Heads of departments, faculties or institutes, through whom the information about external research funds normally comes, sometimes receive the information and the fund themselves when they are disbursed for their own personal use or for redistribution through their patron-client network. The same happens to invitations to attend conferences abroad or to write papers for special collections. Once again, the African expatriate scholar is left out in the cold. He is rarely entrusted with positions of power within the university hierarchy to be part of any network. Efforts to carve out an independent research career are easily frustrated by the lack of institutional support. Indeed, being too actively involved in research often provokes animosity and may endanger one's job. A migrant is supposed to work hard, but not too hard to threaten the locals. In a situation where most people are busy trying to make ends meet, through entrepreneurial endeavours, being actively involved in research is not always an asset for the migrant intellectual. On the contrary, that may expedite his day of departure. In any case, a good research record may not guarantee career mobility since patron-client networks often determine such matters.

The research of the African expatriate scholar suffers not only because of the content marginality, but also due to the marginality of his research interest. Funding, whether by the university itself or external agencies, concentrates on national topics in which the average African expatriate is not likely to have much expertise. The chance of getting funding for a research project on his area of expertise, usually his home country, that is, if he can even afford or dare to go back, are quite poor. So he gradually slides into intellectual inertia. Of course, he can develop research interests on the country of his residence, but that is a daunting task to anybody, and certainly a gamble to someone whose job security hangs by the thread of periodic contract renewals. Developing a local research interest might in fact raise the eyebrows of the local scholars, for that spurns the transience of his position upon which his relations with them are built.

The African expatriate scholar who actually conducts research on the country of his exile is an oddity. He is treated with bemused surprise, for he is trespassing the exclusive domain of local and Western scholars. The former lay their proprietary rights to local research by virtue of their birthright, while the latter won these rights through the power of their nations' colonial conquest and neo-colonial domination, for which they are both resented and followed, but never ignored. As a product of colonialism and neo-colonialism himself, the African scholar who occasionally chooses to study countries other than his own, defies the mould, thus reinforcing his image as a 'radical' or potential 'troublemaker'. He is particularly unwelcome because, unlike the Western scholar with his own sources of research funds, the expatriate African scholar competes with the local scholars for the limited funds available, especially from international research agencies that may seek to exploit his 'objectivity', as both a non-national and non-Western scholar. His interventions in controversial local debates are derived and dismissed. The accumulated grievances against expatriate African scholar metamorphose into a crusade against him and if he proves recalcitrant there is always the contract renewal.

One of the most important resources for research is time. In this, the African migrant intellectual receives the raw end of the stick. To begin with, as a worker on short-term contracts he is often excluded from sabbaticals, and if he takes unpaid leave of absence, he cannot be assured that his job will be available when he wants to return. So year in and year out, he toils, while the local members of staff come and go from their sabbaticals. He is also the first to be asked to shoulder more teaching responsibilities although the last to be rewarded. In a sense he becomes the academic housekeeper, taking the tabs of senior professors who are too busy being directors of parastatals, or going to numerous conferences recycling the same old paper written time back when they still had a few fresh ideas. The African migrant intellectual shares his misfortune with the helpless junior staff. But while for the latter this is a rite of passage to the secret society of academia, for the migrant intellectual it is almost his Sisyphean ordeal. Denied time, the migrant's services are fully exploited, but his potential is dulled, thus ensuring and reproducing his low status.

The African migrant intellectual comes to discover that his survival increasingly depends on the art of self-effacement and self-censorship. Collective self-censorship is, in fact, deeply embedded in the consciousness of the university community. It is generated by fear and the instinct of survival and careerism. There is the fear of repressive political system, as well

as upsetting the inherited university traditions and established intellectual orthodoxies. Self-censorship provides protection against possible political harassment and intellectual persecution. Collective self-censorship curtails the development of original and creative thought, which is a threat to authoritarian institutions. The university's bureaucrats and ossified intellectual elite are as threatened by probing thought and research as are the state functionaries. But it is important to maintain the myth of the university as a centre of intellectual enquiry, for the production and reproduction of ideas is the university's *raison d'être*. So blame for censorship is not placed on the institutional shoulders of the university itself, but externalized and heaped on state structures and policies. These structures and policies, real and imagined, give the intellectuals, individually and collectively, an alibi whenever they abscond from their intellectual enterprise. Thus, the universities themselves contribute significantly to the curtailment of academic freedom.

The African migrant intellectual is soon left in no doubt that exile is no haven, that many of the forces and pressures pushing him out of his homeland are no less powerful in the new country of residence. Many in fact wonder why they came, a question that gnaws and makes them question the wisdom of coming to the country. Like all exiles, they begin to miss home which is idealized at times and sometimes contemplate of returning home. Exile becomes an existential nightmare. The material benefits, imagined and acquired, suddenly become token, and the security of survival becomes less tangible. Despair and apathy often set in. The search begins for a new country of exile. To many, the seductive link of the West proves irresistible. The bags are packed once again. Innocence and hope are shattered one more time.

The 'Brain Drain'

Africa entered the 1980s in a precarious economic state. The rest of the decade was 'lost'. The causes and trajectory of the economic crisis, as well as the various remedial policies and programs pursued, have been widely debated (Zezeza, 1989). The economy cannot of course be divorced from politics. As economic conditions deteriorated in the 1980s so did political conditions, and the two reinforced each other to create an environment that has militated against economic development and political stability. The adoption of the reform programmes made matters worse, for their implementation required extreme coercion, since they entailed massive retrenchment and increased poverty. Thus, ironically, while the monetarist objective of adjustment has been the removal of 'political interference' from the economy, in order for this restructuring to be effected, the state has had to be reconstituted and made more authoritarian. The result has been increased state repression and control, economic decay and suffering, civil conflicts and struggles, all of which have uprooted and turned millions of people into refugees.

The vast majority of the refugees have been 'resettled' in Africa. But tens of thousands of others have migrated to the North. They include some of the continent's most skilled people. According to an ILO study in 1985, about 40,000 Africans with middle-and high-level skills left the continent. This figure rose to 70,000 by the mid-1987, which represented almost 30 percent of the continent's skilled human resources (quoted in Brister, 1988: 16-17). There can be little doubt that a significant proportion of these migrants were intellectual. Among

them were certainly those who had tried to 'resettle' in other African countries, but had finally been pushed out by some of the experiences discussed above.

The 1980s was a miserable decade for African migrant workers in the continent. They faced mass expulsions and harassment from their governments which were at the same time falling over themselves to attract foreign capital. The litany is a long and depressing one. For example, in 1983 and 1985 Nigeria expelled hundreds of thousands of migrant workers from neighbouring countries. In 1984 Libya expelled about 60,000 migrant workers from other African countries. In 1985 thousands of Ghanaians were expelled from Cote d'Ivoire, allegedly in reprisal for football violence against Ivorians in Ghana. Thousands of Ugandans were expelled from Kenya in the late 1980s, including over 2000 secondary school teachers (Zezeza, 1989). It cannot be overemphasized, therefore, that the prospects for migrant workers in Africa deteriorated sharply in the 1980s, despite the ritual incantations made by African leaders for African unity.

The universities have not been innocent bystanders in this saga. They have created conditions which have helped push some of their own members into involuntary exile. They have watched meekly as some of their members have been arrested and detained. And upon their release they have sometimes refused to rehire them until given the green light by the political authorities. The universities have also dutifully employed and dismissed exiled scholars from neighbouring countries, built and broke inter-university relations, depending on the vagaries of inter-state relations and the whims of political leaders. Academics have been refused permission by their universities to visit other universities for conferences or as external examiners because the presidents of the countries are not on relatively good speaking terms. Some university authorities have frequently not hesitated to cooperate with the security services to weaken or break students' movements. They have brazenly expelled student leaders following students' demonstrations and unrest. To the students, university administrations often appear as extensions of the repressive machinery of the state, rather than as a bastion of liberty and critical academic thought. Once expelled, the student activists either languish in jail or 'tarmac' the streets in search of jobs. The lucky ones manage to go abroad to finish their studies, where they sometimes decide to stay. The intellectual migrants make easy scapegoats for students' unrest. So university administrations, anxious to find sacrificial lambs and endear themselves to governments during times of students' protests, blame them for 'corrupting' the youth with 'subversive' ideas. They are usually deported, thus saving both the state and the university the embarrassment of introspection and reform. The deportees rarely go back to their home countries but find their way to the West as well.

The 'brain drain' has spared few countries in Africa, including those that were once net-recipients of intellectual migrants, such as Nigeria during the oil boom years of the 1970s. These countries have seen the exodus of top professionals, including academics, engineers, medical specialists, and sports stars. Not only are more African professionals migrating to the North, but fewer of those trained abroad are returning. This represents a crisis of confidence in Africa and its institutions. The mass migration of African scholars to the North represent less of what Mazrui calls 'counter-penetration' than collective intellectual escapism. While migration within Africa constitutes 'brain drain' for the countries that produce

the migrants, no African country gains when the professionals migrate to the North. That is the essential tragedy of the 'brain drain' waves of the 1980s. Only the poor refugees have no choice but to live and swelter it out in the overcrowded refugee camps. The professionals can vote with plane tickets and be swallowed in the industries and academics of the North.

The 'brain drain' is of course not simply a product of the 'push' factors in Africa, including those emanating specifically from the universities, but also generated by several 'pull' factors in the North, which is not the focus of this paper. The effects of the 'brain drain' on African development in general, and intellectual production in particular, are quite considerable. The 'brain drain' reinforces Africa's intellectual underdevelopment and dependence, which, in turn, undermines academic freedom even further; for academic freedom should not be mainly seen in relation to institutional structure, but also in terms of subordination to other peoples' ideological systems and intellectual traditions. The 'brain drain' saps Africa of its intellectual resources, which increases the continent's dependence on Western expatriates, who are much more expensive to recruit and maintain than the local experts. According to one source, 'at any given moment, sub-Saharan Africa has at least 80,000 expatriates working for public agencies under official aid programmes. More than half of the US\$7-8 billion spent yearly by donors goes to finance these people' (Timberlake, 1988:3). And yet, Africa sinks deeper into an economic and political quagmire. This should not be surprising. Many of these experts and their solutions are half-baked. The tragedy is that many African governments keep on recruiting the Western experts while at the same time exporting the local ones, whose understanding of African problems and commitment to their solutions may be much greater. However, qualified and well-meaning the Western experts may be, they are a poor substitute for local expertise, and hence cannot help much in the development of vibrant local intellectual traditions.

The 'brain drain' is not only robbing Africa of its skills base, which undermines the continent's development, but exacting other costs as well. It has done little, if anything, to loosen the authoritarian structures of the state and university for it is an escapist form of struggle. Indeed, it can be emphasized that the 'brain drain' has bolstered those structures because it provided both the state and university a safety valve through which the steam of internal resistance can be filtered so that the system does not implode. This might explain the ambivalent attitude of the state and university authorities towards the 'brain drain'. They deplore it, but do little to stem it by rectifying the policies and practices that generated it in the first place.

Conclusion

The university communities are part of the problem, and hold part of the solution, to the question of academic freedom in Africa. It is too easy to lay all the blame on state structures and policies which are dominated by the intellectuals themselves, such as the universities and research institutes, which are neither entirely subordinated to the state, nor are they unproblematic. As it has been demonstrated in this paper, the intellectual communities do not always operate in a manner that is conducive to research and free dissemination of ideas. Discriminatory practices on national, ethnic, regional, gender, or religious and ideological bases abound, sustained by authoritarian administrative structures, with their patron-client

networks. The academic institutions cannot claim immunity from the corruption and bureaucratic inefficiencies that cripple many public institutions in Africa. It is important for the intellectual communities to face up to the inadequacies and contradictions of their own organizations and practices, not only in order to make their critiques of state policies and practices morally justifiable or credible but also to create new structures and foster a more conducive milieu for academic research and freedom.

The paper has focussed on the African migrant intellectuals (the 'aims') because their situation vividly captures many of the practices that undermine academic freedom in Africa today. The phenomenon of intellectual labour migration has also grown rapidly in the last couple of decades or so. Unfortunately, the direction has increasingly been towards the North. This needs to be arrested. However, intellectual labour mobility within Africa itself should be encouraged, for it is indispensable for the construction of Pan-Africanism, the key to Africa's development, rather than the anachronistic nation-state. The African nation-state, which was mainly created by powerful colonial fiat, has no real future in the world dominated by powerful regional and global forces. If Africa is to be a significant player in the rapidly changing global village, it cannot afford to cling to the petty luxuries of the nation-state, which as a form of organizing political and economic space, has run its historical course. Intellectual mobility in Africa can help combat parochialism and national chauvinism, which probably have grown as the nation-state has attempted to consolidate itself.

The current forms of intellectual labour migration do little to promote Pan-Africanism. The aims are latched on to a system that was mainly developed to service Western expatriate scholars, hence its discriminatory privileges are rightly resented. The 'aims' must enjoy the same rights and privileges as the local intellectuals in order to minimize antagonisms and exploitation. But this can only be achieved once the academic institutions have themselves become more democratized and the 'aims' have ceased to be nothing but 'refugees' fleeing from political and intellectual persecution and economic hardships. In Africa, one can distinguish two forms of Pan-Africanism, that of the presidents and 'refugees'. Presidential Pan-Africanism is periodically consummated at OAU and regional summits, while 'refugee' Pan-Africanism frays in the derelict camps. Pan-Africanism deserves a better fate. The African intellectual community is as well poised as any group can be to promote more meaningful and enduring forms of Pan-Africanism. Pan-Africanism and academic freedom are inseparable. Pan-Africanism will strengthen Africa's economies, while weakening the authoritarian nation-state, from which spring many of Africa's current crises. The struggle for academic freedom is ultimately part of the struggle for democracy and development in Africa.

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The Political Economy of Environmental Degradation: The Dumping of Toxic Wastes in West Africa*

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The critical point which we must note therefore is that the environmental crisis in Africa today, in particular the paucity of serious regulations and the inability to enforce them where they exist, cannot be divorced from the overall crisis of underdevelopment, dependency, foreign domination, weak and nonhegemonic state structures, the effects of corrupt and unproductive elites, bureaucratic inefficiency and ineffectiveness, declining external assistance, and general vulnerability to more powerful external forces in an increasingly hostile and exploitative global economy.¹

Introduction

International trade in toxic wastes has been a controversial issue in global politics. In recent years, the sharp increase in the dumping of hazardous wastes in a number of countries along the coast of West Africa between 1986 and 1988 has raised serious questions of morality, fairness, human dignity, and economic inequality between the third world countries and the industrialized countries in the emerging world order. Many studies have consequently been done on the dumping of toxic wastes in developing countries, some of them quite distinguished, but with the exception of a few, they fall short of perceiving the sharp increase in the dumping of wastes in the third world countries as part of the North-South dichotomy in the global political economy.² The world system is divided into two economic classes—the North and the South. The North is comprised of the prosperous and industrialized countries while the South consists of the impoverished, less developed and non-industrialized countries. More than 77 percent of the world's human population lives in the South, yet they control only 15.5 percent of the world's Gross National Product (GNP). The life expectancy of an average Southerner is 25 percent shorter than that of a Northerner. A Northerner earns at least 10 percent more than his counterpart in the South. A child born in the South is 5 times more likely to die of diseases, malnutrition, and lack of access to medical care before age 5. In general, the North-South approach focuses on morality. It is within this framework that environmental degradation in West Africa in particular, and the third world countries as a whole, can be clearly understood.

This paper analyzes the critical issues concerning the dumping of hazardous wastes in West Africa from moral and economic perspectives. First, one of our arguments is that hazardous waste materials are generated in the industrialized countries but the exportation of their potential risks to the people in the developing countries who do not share in the benefits of

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