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Although it is often claimed that Africa has “fallen off the globalization map” in the 1990s, the globalization process has had more dramatic consequences for the African continent than for any other region on the planet. African nations have been among the first targets of the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have imposed on indebted countries across the South. African nations have also been subjected to systematic “disinvestment,” which has reduced them to their former colonial role as producers of raw materials and labor power for the international economy.

These developments have torn African societies apart. The dismantling of local industries, the privatization of economic assets, and the defunding of the public sector have stripped Africans across the continent of their most basic means of subsistence, leading to an unprecedented increase in unemployment, poverty, migration, and social conflict. The situation has also profoundly altered the schooling process. In the aftermath of adjustment and economic disinvestment, there has been an attempt to replace the educational and professionalization systems that had been constructed in postindependence Africa with a technocratic system of professional formation aimed at producing political and economic elites aligned with the interests of international capital and the goals of structural adjustment. This program so far has not succeeded, given the tremendous resistance to it from students and faculty across Africa. Nevertheless, it has already irreversibly transformed the “social contract” that had prevailed between the new generations of Africans and the state, in which education and professionalization played a crucial role. It has also made African societies more vulnerable to the “recolonization” drive at the core of globalization and the neoliberal agenda. Not least, it has undermined the production and distribution of knowledge in Africa, making it increasingly difficult for African intellectuals and professionals to carry on their work and participate in the global exchange of ideas.

Thus much is at stake in a discussion of the present state of professionalization in Africa, and not for Africans alone. In recognition of this fact, our article concludes with a code of ethics that expresses our solidarity with our African colleagues and also pertains to our own struggle

against the “enclosure of knowledge” and the construction of professionalization as a means of social exclusion and elite formation.

### **African Professionalization in the 1960s and 1970s**

The application of structural adjustment to education and professional training is a pervasive feature in contemporary Africa and can best be described as a reversal of the educational policies that the African states had adopted in the postindependence period. Creating a large cadre of “organic” intellectuals in charge of making Africa politically and economically independent had been one of the first priorities of the new African governments, which had to cope with the lack of educational systems, the flight of colonial “experts” (e.g., medical doctors, engineers, bankers, teachers), and the demands of a new generation of young people whose expectations had been shaped by the anticolonial struggle. In this context, education and professionalization were unambiguously seen as tools of “nation building,” and the launching of new educational programs and institutions was justified in the name of the nationalistic slogans of the day.

Exemplary of this rhetoric are the imperatives agreed upon by the participants in a conference sponsored by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1962 on the development of higher education in Africa. In defining the postcolonial mandate concerning education, the conference made “development” the drumbeat to which the university should dance and insisted that African universities should “maintain adherence and loyalty to world academic standards.” The conference’s concluding document, based on the consensus of the leading figures in African higher education, also recommended that national labor needs should determine the courses offered and the students’ distribution among them, and that African governments should give priority to scientific and technological training (UNESCO 1963, 49). But it stressed above all that the role of higher education in the social, cultural, and economic development of Africa must be:

To ensure the unification of Africa:

- To encourage elucidation of and appreciation for African culture and heritage and to dispel misconceptions of Africa, through research and teaching of African studies;
- To develop completely the human resources for meeting manpower needs;
- To train the “whole man” for nation building;
- To evolve over the years a truly African pattern of higher learning dedicated to Africa and its people yet promoting a bond of kinship to the larger human society. (ibid., 3)

In other words, it was recognized that “national development” required the instrumentalizing of professionalization for specific economic and technical ends; and school authorities were urged both to give students incentives to take technical courses and to increase the number and value of the scholarships “awarded for scientific and technical subjects” (59). Nevertheless, the terms in which this mandate was expressed—*development, nation building, unification of Africa, human resources, the whole man*—also presumed that education should enable Africa to overcome the legacy of colonialism, and stand in stark contrast with the rhetoric of the structural adjustment era (Kamer 2002).

The same is true of the assumption made by the conference participants that the onus of financing education on an individual or institutional level should be carried by the state, and that students should be integral to national planning. Education, professional formation, and students themselves were highly valorized in postindependence Africa. After the traumatic flight of European professional and technical personnel at the end of colonialism, university students were seen as crucial to an “import substitution” process that could save the nation from an embarrassing and costly dependence on the resources of the former colonial powers (Federici 2000).

Given this mandate, students developed a strong sense of self-importance and high expectations—guaranteed upward mobility, high-level employment, participation in their countries’ political and economic life—that were often satirized by contemporary intellectuals. “How can they all be future leaders? And who will do the work?” the narrator asked in Mwangi Ruheni’s novel *The Future Leaders*, after the commencement speaker of the 1958 Makerere University graduating class made one more preening speech (quoted in Sicherman 1995, 31). But this kind of satire also points to the existence of a unique relation between students and the state in postcolonial Africa, a sort of new “social contract,” in which education was upheld as the primary means for personal and national advancement.

The formation of a new generation of professionals and the construction of new full-blown educational systems was one of the main tasks of the postindependence African state and one of its main achievements. Certainly, the educational programs that were put in place tended to create a new elite and generally operated according to developmental and educational paradigms modeled on those imported by the colonizers. For a while, even the bulk of the teaching staff continued to come from Europe and North America. But the creation of African educational systems must be reckoned as an important accomplishment, since, despite all their limitations, they assumed an African future not dominated by the colonial framework.

## The Structural Adjustment of African Universities

For African students the hope of having a role in national development was dashed in the 1980s when the World Bank demanded that the finances of African universities be restructured to require university students and their families to pay for the costs of education. Coupled with the downsizing of the public sector—the main source of employment for new graduates—“cost sharing” was the first sign of a systemic change in the institutional plans for African education. It was soon evident, however, that the goal of educational “rationalization” was not only to make university education more “cost effective” but to drastically reduce the number of university students and even the number of university institutions, which World Bank planners considered excessive, given Africa’s prospective role in the global economy. As the argument went, in an early phase of educational structural adjustment in the mid-1980s, the proliferation of higher education institutions in the postcolonial period had created an imbalance at the expense of primary education that had to be redressed, especially in the face of Africa’s economic crisis. But the policies that the World Bank has prescribed and the initiatives it has undertaken have made it clear that the boosting of primary education has been nothing more than a fig leaf intended to give the proposed university reforms a more democratic facade.

What is at stake, instead, is a radical revisioning of the goals of higher education as defined in the postcolonial period. The first objective is to downgrade, if not dismantle, the African higher education systems insofar as they are the carriers of a national project of economic development. The second is to create a number of professionalization programs often run by an expatriate personnel in charge of training a body of African adjusters steeped in the neoliberal philosophy that the World Bank has promoted and ready to accept the diminished role Africa is to play in the global economy. Combined, these two objectives amount to a recolonization of African education, matching the takeover of African economies by international organizations and investors during the 1980s and 1990s.

Accordingly, one of the first conditions that the World Bank has imposed on African governments, in the name of the debt crisis and adjustment, has been the defunding of higher education at all levels. Consequently, within a few years from the implementation of the first adjustment programs, subsidies to students (for food, lodging, educational materials) were reduced or terminated; academic wages were frozen at the very time when repeated currency devaluations sent the prices of most items sky-high; academic grants for research and travel were eliminated; and investment in the universities’ infrastructures (buildings, laboratories, class-

rooms, student hostels, faculty offices, and above all the university libraries) was also drastically cut.

It is by now well known that as a result of these measures the higher education system in most African countries has virtually collapsed, physically and culturally. Academic facilities have been allowed to rot. Teaching time has been drastically reduced, and for students studying has become a feat, as the increased cost of education has led to a dramatic deterioration of their living conditions and cut their access to educational materials. African universities have also experienced a faculty flight of unprecedented proportions, because of the collapse of academic wages, whose purchasing power on average has dropped by 50 percent or more.

Unable to feed their families even on a professor's salary, scholars have been forced to either supplement teaching with consultancy work in the private sector or change profession or, whenever possible, migrate, usually to Europe or North America. According to the U.N. Economic Commission for Africa, some 27,000 African intellectuals and professionals emigrated to developed countries between 1960 and 1975. But between 1985 and 1990, the beginning of the structural adjustment era, the number jumped to 60,000 and has averaged 20,000 annually ever since (Africa Recovery 2000). The forces pushing this intellectual diaspora are now so strong that African governments are no longer trying to stop it and are even arguing, desperately and paradoxically, that the "brain drain" might have a positive impact on their economy (Zezeza and Veney 2002).

The migration of the faculty to the private sector or to foreign institutions has been matched by that of thousands of former or prospective students, many of whom have traveled to Europe or the United States where they can now be found working in factories and car-washing outfits, or have been recruited to fight in the many civil wars that the dissolution of African societies has produced. Such has been the impact of structural adjustment on access to education that in an early analysis of this phenomenon, we at the Committee for Academic Freedom in Africa spoke of "academic exterminism," arguing that in a context in which university enrollment rates did not exceed 1 percent (having risen from zero in the colonial era) any increase in the cost of university education and any reduction in state support for it threatened its very existence (Caffentzis 2000a).

In reality, the collapse in university enrollment that we had anticipated has not occurred, in part because the universities have opened their doors to any students who can pay the new fees, and because of the stiff resistance students and teachers have mounted against the "rationalization" program. The prolonged strikes, demonstrations, and university occupa-

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tions that (beginning in the mid-1980s) African students and teachers have organized have not blocked the restructuring of higher education (Federici and Caffentzis 2000) but have often limited its effects and produced something of a stalemate. On the one side, the university-student population has continued to grow through the 1980s and 1990s (see table 1), so that gross enrollment rates have increased (see table 2), as has total enrollment (see table 3), though at a slower rate than the 1960s and 1970s. (Exceptions to this trend are Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Somalia, where the university systems have all but shut down because of civil war.)

On the other side, between 1980 and 1995 there has been on average a 68 percent decline in the percentage of GNP per capita publicly invested in the higher education of each university student. This means that in the African universities of the 1990s an increased number of students have met a reduced level of resources and support, leading to a decline in the quality of education and the value of the degrees acquired through it.

### **The Africa Capacity Building Foundation and “Homegrown” Structural Adjustment**

In response to widespread criticism of their retrenchment plan for African universities and the strenuous opposition mounted by African students and academicians, World Bank planners, over the years, have offered substitute schemes presumably meant to revitalize educational possibilities and the professionalization process. These have included the concession of sectorial loans to specific universities for the financing of select technical programs or library acquisitions. One of the latest devices has been the introduction, in several institutions, of “online education”—connecting African institutions to programs in the United States—the ideal fit (World Bank planners argue) for a region starved of cash and unable to sustain an autonomous educational system.

A prerequisite for participation in these programs is invariably the willingness of African institutions to commercialize education. Thus, in the Nigerian University System Innovation Project designed by the World Bank, a university can obtain the supply of books, journals, and equipment bought with the loan funds only if its departments can show a decisive increase in revenue from nongovernment sources (ASUU 2000, 36). In other words, university departments must “corporatize” themselves and show their functionality to the needs of the “private sector.” It goes without saying that the project favors professional and technical departments with direct contacts in the national and international corporate circuits.

But these provisions have failed to pacify the campuses, which have

**Table 1.** Growth of University-Student Population

Years	Average Annual Percentage Growth
1965–70	9.0
1970–80	10.5
1980–85	7.2
1985–90	5.5
1990–95	7.2

Source: UNESCO 1999, Table II.S.2

**Table 2.** Gross Enrollment Rates

Year	Percentage of enrollment of eligible students
1960	—
1970	0.8
1980	1.7
1990	3.0
1995	3.7
1997	3.9

Source: UNESCO 1999, Table II.S.5

**Table 3.** Total Enrollment

Year	In Thousands
1970	199
1980	562
1990	1,362
1995	1,920
1997	2,177

Source: UNESCO 1999, Table II.S.3

remained one of the main centers of the opposition to structural adjustment (despite the support for it by government-appointed university administrators). Students, academicians, and professionals well recognize the vacuousness of the substitutes introduced and, despite the harsh measures African governments have used to silence them, have continued to denounce structural adjustment in and out of the universities as nothing

less than a form of recolonization. In response, the rhetoric in which educational reform is wrapped is increasingly that of “ownership” and “homegrown” solutions. For the World Bank, professionalization is now training in identifying with or “owning” the financial interests of international capital.

This task is the *raison d'être* of the Africa Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), officially launched in 1991, allegedly after “a brainstorming session in Kenya” between the World Bank staff and African policy makers, economic managers, and academics convened there to discuss Africa’s development problem. We are told that at this meeting “sub-Saharan Africa’s limited capacity for policy analysis and economic management was identified as a primary contributing factor to the inability to adjust to the economic dislocations of the 1970s. It was emphasized that Africa needed to build the necessary capacity in order to develop” (ACBF 2003).

The authors of the report do not mention that by 1988 many African campuses (in Kenya as well) had already exploded in anti-World Bank/IMF demonstrations and riots (Federici and Caffentzis 2000, 118–24). One of the largest confrontations occurred on the Nigerian campuses in April of that year, when students protesting the World Bank SAP-inspired increase in gasoline prices joined with workers off campus to create a state of near insurrection. In addition, the World Bank’s staffers had been sending in reports complaining that SAPs could not be carried out, in the absence of structural adjusters in the governments and universities of the countries that agreed to the reform. Typical was the complaint filed by Robert Klitgaard, a World Bank representative in Equatorial Guinea, in the late 1980s, who recognized that he had to teach the government officials responsible for the implementation of SAP what the SAP policy they had accepted was all about (Klitgaard 1990). Klitgaard had also discovered a great amount of data manipulation in the reports he had received from SAP-monitoring government agencies. Clearly, quoting then U.K. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher’s dictum “There Is No Alternative” was not enough!

It is in this context that World Bank officials have begun to define the goals of education and professionalization in Africa as the creation of an interfacing class of African structural adjusters. This goal is made quite clear in the introduction by World Bank Vice President for Africa Edward V. K. Jaycox’s contribution to the ACBF’s founding document, *The African Capacity Building Initiative: Toward Improved Policy Analysis and Development Management in Sub-Saharan Africa* (World Bank 1991), prepared by two World Bank executives, Dustin Wai and Gerard T. Rice:



Many different approaches have been taken to the development challenge in Sub-Saharan Africa. These approaches have all failed to support on a sustainable basis one essential dimension: indigenous African capacities—skills, knowledge, and institutions. . . . Despite the achievements in education and training in Africa in the past 30 years, most countries still do not have a critical mass of top-flight policy analysts and managers who can help pilot their economies through the storms and turbulence that must be faced daily. (ibid., iii)

What are the “piloting” skills “Africa needs,” and its academics and intellectuals refuse to learn, after thirty years of efforts? The missing knowledge (the only one deemed worth of reckoning) is that which neoliberal economists and policy analysts would need to introduce SAPs in Africa. “Capacity building,” in other words, amounts to developing competent structural adjusters disinterested in such concepts as national development, autarky, import substitution, and nation building, which had been considered central for the success of the postcolonial professionalization project. Such concepts—and the educational and cultural capital associated with them—by now are seen as deadwood, and even an ideological impediment to Africa’s recovery. Hence, the ACBF’s most basic assumption: Africans, however highly educated and politically sophisticated, have no “capacity” and must now be trained from the outside. Thus, along with the adjustment of Africa’s higher education systems, a steady transference has occurred whereby, while many African academicians have been forced to leave their campuses, professional training has been placed in the hands of international nongovernmental organizations, such as the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations (among others).

With respect to these “donor initiatives,” the ACBF sees its role as that of a coordinator. Its declared objective now is to build and manage regional institutes of “excellence” and teaching centers, consolidating or replacing the universities and departments eliminated by SAPs, and functioning as a transmission belt between African governments and the World Bank and IMF headquarters in Washington. In the Bank’s own words, the ACBF is to “build African cadres of excellence,” and we can be sure that African universities will have little choice in the matter, for refusal to comply will result in the loss of funding by the Bank or any other outside source. The recolonization project that underlines this initiative has been so evident and noted that the World Bank has been forced to put a new face to these reforms, boosting, for instance, its efforts to recruit personnel of African descent for the planned professionalization programs.

Moreover, after urging African governments for years to relinquish their role as economic planners, the Bank has rediscovered the importance of state institutions for “sustainable development” (World Bank 1997). It

has also increased the funding for ACBF. Initially, barely \$100 million was committed to its implementation—surely a drop in the bucket given the size of the African continent. In Nigerian monetary terms it came to no more than 10 billion naira, while the entire 1999 education budget of Nigeria (the largest country in Africa by far) was 28 billion naira (African Research Bulletin 1999, 13817). Not surprisingly, between 1992 and 1996, the ACBF could only support twenty-six projects in twenty African countries that, by 1999, had increased to thirty-one active projects in twenty-one countries. Things changed, however, after 1999, the year of the Seattle protests and the coming-of-age of the antiglobalization movement, which took the World Bank as one leg of the institutional tripod (along with the IMF and the World Trade Organization [WTO]) of the global economy to be abolished. The combination of demonstrations by “Jubilee 2000 Africa” across the continent and the spread of civil wars in formerly adjusted African countries created a crisis for the World Bank that made the success of the ACBF even more imperative.

Accordingly, in 1999, the Bank launched yet another initiative: the Partnership for Capacity Building in Africa (PACT), claiming that “unlike previous programs [e.g., the ACBF?] which were externally conceived, PACT is an African initiative.” Which Africans were calling for it? By its own admission, the World Bank recognized that these were none other than “the African Governors of the World Bank”! As for PACT’s mandate, it is practically a carbon copy of the ACBF’s; in fact, it is to be administered through the ACBF, though it wishes to have a broader scope, proposing to include all the branches of government as well as the private sectors, civil society, and the academic world:

[PACT] is meant to strengthen human and institutional capacities in sub-Saharan Africa, spur economic growth, reduce poverty, and improve living standards. The initiative is expected to bolster capacity in the public and private sectors and civil society by ensuring better financial and development management, improved legislative, juridical and regulatory frameworks, and strengthened communications and institution-building. (World Bank 1999)

The invention of gimmicks and shadow plays seems to have no end in World Bank headquarters. But the shell game played with the creation of PACT has injected new funds into the ACBF and expanded its operations. Within one year after PACT’s launch, the number of projects in the ACBF’s portfolio increased to sixty, organized according to the categories of “Core Public Sector Interventions,” “Interface Projects,” and “Strategy Interventions.” Presently, the ACBF is funding projects in thirty-two countries. It is useful to examine some of these projects to better understand the ACBF’s notion of professionalization. Consider the \$2 million grant in

the Strategy Interventions category awarded to the Nigerian National Assembly to create a Policy Analysis and Research Unit (PARU). The ACBF's money is to fund: "(1) institutional development; (2) policy research and analysis; (3) training; (4) consultative forums; (5) documentation and dissemination; and (6) networking" (ACBF 2003).

The ACBF does not point out that many of the most important legislative decisions the National Assembly must make concern the World Bank itself. For example, should the Nigerian government pay back its large debt at the rates and schedule the World Bank demands, especially since much of this debt was accumulated by a corrupt military government? Is this an odious debt? We can be sure that these are the kinds of questions the World Bank hopes assembly members will resolve in its favor after it has increased their professional capacity. Could we call such a grant an open bribe to the assembly members who are going to be "turned pro" by PARU?

A typical Interface Project is the \$1.5 million grant disbursed to support a National Economic Council (NEC) in Malawi, which is to do a set of jobs World Bank representatives like Robert Klitgaard had done previously in an amateurish way. The NEC is to provide "professional advice and technical support" to the government on "economic reform" (i.e., structural adjustment); to "promote and improve Private-Public sector dialogue"; to coordinate economic management between the Ministry of Finance, the Reserve Bank, and donor agencies; and to "strengthen the capacity of the executive and legislative branches of government to make effective and timely decisions on economic reform" (ACBF 2003). Thus the NEC will become the face of "economic reform" in Malawi, foregrounding African "experts" instead of the World Bank planners who periodically arrive and depart behind the scenes.

Finally, an example of a Core Public Sector Intervention project is the \$1.1 million grant to São Tomé and Príncipe for training activities. Specifically, the grant is intended to finance: "(1) degree training at the Masters' level for civil servants in the various ministries; (2) study tours and (3) the organization of seminars and workshops within São Tomé" (ACBF 2003). It is a modest project also meant to ensure that the personnel in the country's finance ministries acquire the skills needed to implement structural adjustment, but it well illustrates the strategy inherent to the ACBF. To present itself as a high-powered academic organization capable of dispensing valuable knowledge to willing participants, ACBF must establish a "flexible" relation to the existing academic systems officially responsible for training professionals. It can "link" with an economics department, if the latter accepts its ideological requirements, but it can just as easily "delink."

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The international economic crisis of the early 2000s has created an even greater sense of urgency among African adjusters and their patrons. This has led to a circling of the wagons in the African “capacity building” project. The IMF (generally playing “hard cop” in the negotiations with African governments) has by now started its own Africa Capacity Building Initiative and joined ACBF in 2002. The IMF is to provide “regional technical assistance centers” to groom “a team of resident experts supplemented by short-term specialists in the core areas of the IMF’s expertise, including macroeconomic policy, monetary and exchange rate policies, financial sector policies, tax policy and revenue administration, public expenditure management, and macroeconomic statistics” (IMF 2002).

If we combine the dozens of relatively inexpensive ACBF grants with the projected IMF centers, we can see how the capacity-building project of “indigenizing” structural adjustment is expected to work. Under the rubrics of study tours, networking, and seminars, the structural adjustment catechism is being taught to thousands of legislators, civil servants, university students, NGO personnel, and local businesspeople. Since the ACBF projects are aimed at training staff in government ministries, national assemblies, and academic institutes and departments, they do not require a mass appeal. On the contrary, ACBF’s professional logic is to convince and reward the few to capture the many for it.

### **Social Consequences of the World Bank’s Structural Adjustment of Professionalization**

The impact of the World Bank’s structural adjustment policy and capacity-building efforts on the African education and professionalization systems can be seen on many levels. The most obvious is the curricular one. What knowledge the World Bank wants African professionals to acquire is revealed by the courses posted on the African Virtual University (AVU) Web site, which the Bank founded in 1997 as part of its capacity-building initiative. Teachers from the World Bank’s staff or from North American universities offer courses on the Web site that African university students with access to the Internet can register for. Besides information technology courses, French and English courses, and remedial courses in basic mathematics, chemistry, and physics, the other categories of courses offered are the Career Series (which include courses like “How to Manage Your Career”), the Entrepreneurship Series (whose only course is “Starting and Planning Your Business”), Journalism (which includes “Economics and Business Journalism”), and the Trade Series (whose only course is

“Export Management”). The titles of the seminars that have so far been offered include: “Precision Management: Working Smarter Not Harder,” “Powerful People Skills: Management Problems of the Technical Professional,” “How to Criticize and Discipline through Positive Management for Managers and Supervisors,” and “How to Eliminate, Reduce (Or at Least Cope with) Frustration in the Workplace” (AVU 2003).

Apart from the intellectual poverty of this fare, what is striking about this curriculum is the courses it lacks. No African languages are taught at the AVU. Obviously, the AVU assumes that African professionals will be dealing only with individuals, companies, and agencies coming from Western Europe or North America, not with Africans (except perhaps fellow members of the ACBF’s “invisible college”). Export management is stressed, evidently expressing the World Bank’s determination to discourage African businesspeople from relying on local markets for their products and giving the impression that any problem in the managing of imports is a nugatory one. There are no history, philosophy, or social science courses (basic or advanced), which means that professionals are not expected to put the questions posed by their business or government careers into a wider ethical and political perspective. The students’ main job, paraphrasing some of the seminar titles, is to do “creative problem solving” and “communicate with confidence, enthusiasm and authority” in order to “convert that negative stuff into positive.”

In sum, the professionals produced by such a curriculum must think their management concepts and goals in English or French (the colonial languages of Africa), sell their country’s labor and commodities on the world market, and communicate positively to their countrymen and women about the “negative stuff” of structural adjustment or, even better, convert it into a positive thing.

The second level at which the impact of ACBF is felt is a structural one. The World Bank’s adjustment of professional formation in Africa has produced a two-tier educational system. The higher tier consists of projects and programs subsidized by international “donors” (like the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, and other NGOs), often overseen by the ACBF, and destined to do research and mediation work subcontracted by international corporations or local companies. This tier is composed of special sections of academic departments or quasi-independent institutes linked to foreign institutions or NGOs and therefore receiving extra funding, as well as computers, air conditioners, stationery, and new books and journals. Students and faculty members attached to this tier are paid extra stipends, often worth many times their regular salaries (though quite modest by U.S. or European standards). As they operate in a special academic space, outside the usual university regulations, they continue to work even

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when the rest of the university is shut down because of student or faculty strikes. Such an environment communicates to students that willingness to place one's professional expertise at the service of foreign corporations and NGOs will indeed be well rewarded.

On the lower tier are the regular university departments, not "under the link," dependent on shrinking government budgets, faced by a plethora of shortages and equipment breakdowns, and teaching impoverished students, often eating one meal a day or sleeping six or seven in one dorm room, and only able to access archaic books or purchase out-of-date lecture notes. The regular universities are often shut down for long periods because of strikes, riots, or police intervention on the campuses. "Unlinked" teachers are underpaid and often have to take other positions off campus (e.g., consultant, taxi driver, chicken farmer). Though life on this tier might stimulate the development of a critical perspective on structural adjustment, it is also one that generates much disruption and despair among students and teachers.

The structural gap between these two tiers of professional training is becoming increasingly dramatic on a personal level. Graduates from the lower tier are finding that their professional degrees are not recognized internationally, and when they emigrate, they are forced to take the lowest paid, most hazardous jobs, while those on the first tier have access to the latest knowledge in the field and can be credentialized by U.S. or European academic institutions. But this division is not simply a matter of differences in career opportunities or "cultural imperialism."

The subjection of education and professional formation in Africa to the control of international agencies and the technocratic orientation that has been imposed on it have also undermined Africans' capacity to resist the theft of the continent's natural resources. This subjection has made it possible for global corporations and international financial agencies, like the World Bank, to present themselves, in the eyes of the world, as the centers best equipped and, consequently, best entitled to protect, preserve, and control the cultural and natural wealth of the continent, whatever form that may take, from agricultural seeds, to "cultural property" (like archaeological sites), to pharmaceutical substances to be discovered through exploration of Africa's forests (World Bank 1992; Caffentzis 2000b).

This is especially true of Africa's medical, agricultural, and biological knowledge. The ability of gene-hunting global corporations to carry on "bioprospecting" or appropriate crucial genetic material, often the product of centuries of experimentation by African farmers, relies, above all, on the dismantling of African educational and cultural institutions, as well as on the impoverishment of African countries, which now have to sell

their birthrights to qualify for structural adjustment loans (Tripp 1993). The weakening of the universities makes it difficult to enforce laws that would protect Africa's knowledge, "traditional" or otherwise. Thus, at the same time that the dynamism of African knowledge is being recognized and the importance of "local," "situated" knowledge is given a new epistemological stature (Guyer 1996; Braidotti et al. 1994; Harding 1986), structural adjustment conditionalities have forced African governments to recognize the "intellectual property rights" of global corporations to the knowledge Africans have produced. Without autonomous universities and an independent set of African scientists and lawyers, the necessary institutional support for the protection of "local" knowledge is irremediably compromised.

The structural adjustment of professional schools and departments also makes it possible for global corporations to reduce their costs for research and production by making available to them a rich pool of cheap intellectual labor, as well as cheap research facilities in African professional and technical institutions. Once the potential of African universities for interfering in the appropriation of local knowledge has been preempted, select universities' departments or institutes can be allowed to survive, with the injection of short-term, task-oriented funds, to pay for the personnel who are to help with bioprospecting work, or who are to provide a liaison with local communities to give a corporation's project the veneer of indigenous input.

Much gene hunting and gene plundering is now conducted in this fashion, with only those segments of African universities being revitalized that can be used as intellectual plantations, where workers are expected to survive on short-term contract work in projects issuing from First World "donor" agencies, governments, and corporations themselves, who reap immense profits and prestige by "looting" the medical and agricultural knowledge of the African people.

The larger consequences of the adjusted professional formation system are thus more devastating than they might appear at first. Though the number of university and professional students has not been reduced, the regular university systems have been gutted, defunded, devalued, devitalized, and depoliticized. Conditions of living for students, faculty, and university nonacademic staff have degenerated while the dominant research agenda and cultural paradigms are again being set in Europe and North America. This has pushed many academicians into professional capitulation or total alienation from professionalization. Figuratively speaking, they find themselves either on the path of statesmen like Thabo Mbeki or Olusegun Obasanjo and other indigenous adjusters, who are now busy giving the World Bank's mandated policies a local, "homegrown" facade;



or on the path of the wild, gun-toting youth who provide the manpower for Africa's civil wars, a clear product of two decades of educational adjustment and the expulsion of pauperized students from the African schooling system.

## **Professional Resistance**

These are not the only figures contemporary African history has produced who are relevant to the fate of professionalization in the region. Another is illustrated by the incident that occurred at Bayero University in Kano (Nigeria) on 19 October 2000. The incident was occasioned by the arrival from the United States of William Saint, one of the architects of the World Bank's structural adjustment of African universities. Saint had come to BUK to "explain" to "stakeholders" how the contested World Bank loan to Nigerian universities should be used (Saint 1992). The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), the national university teachers' union, one of the largest on the continent, had campaigned for years against the loan and the project it was intended to support, the Nigerian Universities System Innovation Project (NUSIP) (ASUU 2000). Not accidentally, then, a wall of professors and students, from BUK and other universities of northern Nigeria, rose to stop Saint as he was entering the meeting, noting that he was not "a stakeholder in the Nigerian University System" and had no reason to be there (Ikyur 2000).

ASUU's opposition to Saint's presence at BUK exemplifies the resistance from Nigerian teachers and students to their government's capitulation to the World Bank and demonstrates their concept of professional formation and responsibility. In particular, academicians have protested the erosion of Nigeria's sovereignty as a result of its acceptance of adjustment loans (ASUU 2000, 18–21). As ASUU has argued in a document critical of NUSIP:

The World Bank has no constitutional basis for making policies for the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Unless the World Bank is claiming sovereignty over Nigeria. . . . The 1999 [Nigerian] constitution does not recognize the World Bank either as a citizen, or as an organ of government exercising executive, legislative or judicial functions. Yet, the NUSIP is intended to achieve policy objectives [at variance with the Constitution and other Nigerian laws]. (ASUU 2000, 13)

Responsible professionalism, in continuity with the traditions of the anti-colonial struggle, is still very much alive, then, in Africa, despite the persecution to which academic unions like ASUU have been subjected.



ASUU has often been banned, and its leaders have been hunted, arrested, and terrorized, but it has survived (Jega 2000). And it is not the only African professional organization upholding the flag of pan-Africanism against the World Bank's neoliberal and colonial vision of Africa's future. Many faculty unions, student associations, and professional organizations throughout Africa have refused to abandon the anticolonial project. Though financial and institutional power is in the hands of the World Bank, the IMF, the WTO, and their local agents, most African teachers and students refuse to "own" SAPs and are struggling to take control of their education and economic and political future.

Along with other members of the Committee for Academic Freedom in Africa, we urge academics in North America to support this struggle and endorse the following Code of Professional Academic Ethics, which speaks to our potential role as officers of the "empire." In particular, we ask professional academics in North America to boycott the efforts by the World Bank (and similar agencies) to recruit academicians from our own institutions to assist it in the structural adjustment of African universities. It seems to us that boycotting this effort is a necessary step both to express our solidarity with our African colleagues and to redefine the globalization process in ways that do not undermine the possibility of African self-determination.

We are North American university teachers and we publicly declare our adherence to the following principles of academic ethics in our work in Africa:

- We will never, under any circumstance, work (as researchers, with a study abroad program, or in any other capacity) in an African university where students or the faculty are on strike or which has been shut down by students' or teachers' strikes and protests against police repression and structural adjustment cut backs.
- We will never take a position at or cooperate with the World Bank, the IMF, USAID, or any other organization whose policy is to expropriate Africans from the means of the production and distribution of knowledge and to devalue African people's contribution to world culture.
- We will never take advantage of the immiseration in which African colleagues and students have been reduced, and appropriate the educational facilities and resources from which African colleagues and students have been de facto excluded because of lack of means. Knowledge acquired under such conditions would be antagonistic to the spirit of multiculturalism and scholarly solidarity.
- We will consult with colleagues and activists in the countries where we carry on research, so as to ensure that our research answers the needs of the people it studies, and is shaped with the cooperation of people whose lives will be affected by it, rather than being dictated by funding agencies' agendas.

We ask  
professional  
academics in  
North America to  
boycott the efforts  
by the World  
Bank (and similar  
agencies) to  
recruit  
academicians  
from our own  
institutions to  
assist it in the  
structural  
adjustment of  
African  
universities.

To become a signatory of the Code of Ethics please write to the Committee for Academic Freedom in Africa, c/o Department of Philosophy, University of Southern Maine, P.O. Box 9300, Portland, Maine 04104-9300 or contact the committee by e-mail at [caffentz@usm.maine.edu](mailto:caffentz@usm.maine.edu).

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