

## Taming the Turbulence? Leading Issues in the Emergence and Challenges of Private Universities

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## Protocols Acknowledgements



## Outline

- A. Introduction
- B. Contextual Turbulence
- C. Taming the Turbulence?
  - Private Intervention
- D. Not Yet Uhuru
- E. Going Forward



## Introduction



## Something about "turbulence"

- Notion (upheaval, disturbance, disorder, etc) = uniquely captivating
- Underneath the chaos, there is order!



**Raising Character-centred Leaders** 



 Discourse of "turbulence in university education in Africa" takes on a unique resonance, considering the life of

### "The African Child"



## Born into...

- Sub-Saharan Africa which harbours 33 of the first 50 poorest countries in the world (15 in West Africa)
- Food insecurity with 60 million Africans at risk and 37% of peers (children) stunted
- More than 50 percent of Africans who suffer from water-related diseases such as cholera and infant diarrhea.



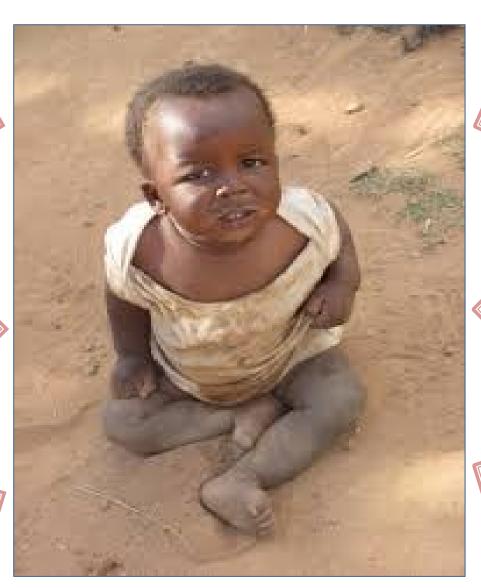
- A land where:
  - every 30 seconds another African child dies of malaria—more than one million child deaths a year.
  - 1 child in 12 dies before fifth birthday

## Unpredictability!

Noble Professor?

**Political** pain?

Educated to



Died before 5?

Died from malaria?

Lived below poverty line?



## If Education is the Predictor...



"the Quality of Life of any Nation cannot be expected to be more than the Quality of the [Higher] **Education** of her Citizenry and the intentional investment in the Education System". (Oby Ezekwesili, 2013).



## Higher education...

- The most powerful instrument for growing the wealth and harmony:
  - lays a foundation for sustained economic growth and development
  - generates and adapts knowledge
  - -produces qualified human capital
  - -promotes international cooperation, and
  - improves competitiveness in the global knowledge based economy.



## Contextual Turbulence



## Lack of appreciation

"A quick look at the world... shows that ALL the developed countries have massive and strong educational institutions while the under-developed [especially Africa] are bedevilled with perennial lack of the appreciation for the need to take Education serious" (Oby Ezekwesili, 2013).



## Lack of appreciation

Several facets, particularly in the 1980s & 1990s. E.g.:

- Low political priority
- Disempowering political control
- Resource (public funding) starvation



### Low political priority

- World Bank/UNESCO orthodoxies (in structural adjustment programmes era):
  - Avoid public funding of tertiary education
  - Focus on early childhood, primary and secondary education.
- Many Govts in Africa began to explore 'cost-sharing schemes' for tertiary education



 The orthodoxy changed in favour of tertiary education, more clearly from 2005

World Bank has incorporated High Education within its Africa Action Plans: building capabilitiess for growth and competitiveness – particular, technological catch-up).



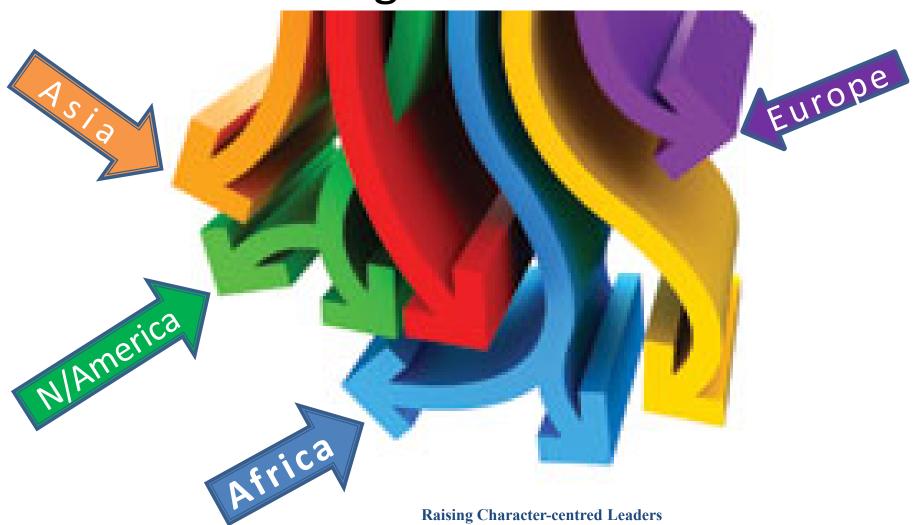
## Disempowering political control (Nigerian example)

- Centralisation of authority
- Arbitrariness in decision without consultation
- Block funding through National Universities
   Commission
- Weakening of academic freedom



#### Resource starvation

"State funding: race to the bottom"





"Africa is the only region in the world that has experienced a [disturbing] decrease in the volume of current public expenditure per student"

(World Bank, 2010)



## ( Africa: decline illustration

Public expenditure per tertiary student: % of GDP per capita (World Bank, 2015)

Year	Gross Amount	No of Countries	Average	% Decline
2000	3229.4	8	403.7	-
2005	3732.0	15	248.8	39.4
2010	3400.6	18	188.9	24.1
2013	1371.3	11	124.7	34.0

Total % decline (2000-2013) = 69.1



## Consequences

### Staffing:

 Universities - finding it increasingly difficult to maintain adequate teaching staff

"Across Africa and disciplines, on average, only 60-70% of the required faculty positions are filled, and in some departments this is only about 30-40%"



... mainly, because lecturers with PhDs

(ideal capacity) are

limited!

"About 60 % of lecturers don't have PhDs and we reject it."

2012



## Teaching staff-student ratios

Sampled Universities	Ratios
Lagos State University	1:144
University of Abuja	1:122
Kenyatta University	1:65
Moi University	1:47
University of Nairobi	1:36
National University of Singapore	1:12
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	1:9
Harvard University	1:4
Cambridge	1:3



#### Infrastructrure

- Buildings are falling into disrepair
- Teaching equipment is not replenished
- Lecture halls are overcrowded

### Time wasting

- Staff strikes distort academic years.
  - Nigeria: cumulatively, 33 months were lost in 10 years (2003-13) to strike action by university lecturers.
  - Malawi, Kenya and Swaziland: 10,000 lecturers went on strike in 2012.

    Raising Character-centred Leaders



### Convergence of all these?

- Transparency and integrity <u>deficits</u>
- Very weak development-oriented higher education in Africa
  - -Low Science, Technology & Innovation
  - –Mismatch/inadequate preparation of graduates for market/industry
  - High graduate unemployability, unemployment, underemployment



Criminality and decadence = rife.

## Criminals in the Temple of Learning!!!

"All [except a few?] have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one" (Psalm 14:3)



- The high priests and guardians of our temples are crying out so loud about the desecration of the icons and the values they represent...
- They too, contribute to the malaise (adapted from Okigbo, 2001)



#### Staff and students:

 present forged certificates, commit admission/exam malpractices, steal, plagiarize, commit cultic racketeering and terrorism

#### Administrators:

-award inflated/phony contracts, rent hit-squads, secure false accreditations, etc)



- Universities in Africa ceased to be true to their own [purpose]
- They became an enclave for criminals (corruption-mongers, touts, terrorists, or miscreants) in academic garbs

Centres for the production of nonleaders and misfits.





## Taming the Turbulence Private Intervention



- Private intervention in higher education is not new.
- Has long pedigree in most of the continents
  - Bologna, Oxford, Harvard, Princeton, Stanford,
     Yale, etc
  - West Africa: Timbuktu University started as Sankore Madrasah - funded by a wealthy Tuareg woman to breed leaders that are God fearing, just, honest, trustworthy and of excellent moral character
  - Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone by Christian Missionary Society Raising Character-centred Leaders



- But, lost momentum to the public system
  - -E.g. in 21st Century, of about 15,000 universities worldwide, only about 2070 (13.8%) are private
- Post-Independence Nigeria: private intervention struggled for space.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> generation abolished by the Military Government in the 1980s
  - Prohibition legislation (Decree) passed
  - Supreme Court ruled in favour of private intervention (Dr Nkaegbu's case); but the body language of the Govt was clearly against it.



- Babangida Military Govt lifted the embargo of the previous Government
- Longe Commission Report favoured establishment of private universities under strict minimum standards
  - The first the private universities (Igbiedeon, Babcock and Madonna) took about 7 years to process for approval.
- 1998 National Policy on Education allowed "voluntary agencies, individuals and groups" to establish universities.
- Under President Obasanjo, number of private universities rose from 3 to 41. Today it is 61.



# Performance re the driving forces "We did not make a mistake" (Obasanjo, 2015)

- Quality: huge impact, generally
  - Beware of (mis)use of statistics
- Mentoring: reverse re-engineering especially with regard to moral rebirth
- Access: "minimal" but critical



### Illustration

# Salem University Under My watch



- University driven by PURPOSE
- Dared to be Different: privileged QUALITY over QUANTITY
- 100 per cent accreditation (full & interim) in the first outing



- Indirect: Support of the National Universities Commission
- Intra-University: E.g. Senate participation for young Academics
- Encounter with a first generation public University
  - -"You are to mentor us, not we mentoring you"



- 1<sup>st</sup> year, admitted over 300 students
  - -University College, Ibadan: 104
  - -University of Nigeria Nsukka: 220
  - Ahmadu Bello University: 426 (most near graduation with London University degrees)
  - -University of Ife (now OAU): 244
- Do not despise humble beginning!



## Assessment during ICPC University Systems Review

"Highly impressed with the 'A' grade takeoff and efforts to lower/eliminate corrupt practices ravaging other universities. We urge the Chancellor and the other officers of the University -Chairman BOT, Chairman Council, and VC to keep up the good work" (Professor Peter Okebukola, 2012).



## Private Intervention Not Yet Uhuru



## Challenges

- Aligning with regulatory regime
- Proprietory engagement
- 'Publicanisation'
  - -Trending towards public university malaise
- Resourcing (funding, faculty, equipment, etc)
- Production of industry-fit graduates



## Going forward

- Regulation to be: more standardisation, less 'uniformisation'
- Respect for basic university traditions in the context of private operation discipline
- Checkmate return to moral degeneration
- Political support:
  - tax breaks, mobile student grants, etc (e.g. Australia, Botswana
- Foster University-Industry Linkages



## Going forward

- The Turbulence is Tamable
- A Healthy Private University Sector is Definitely a Potent Factor
- 'It's about complementing, not dysfunctionally competing efforts



## Thank you for your attention!