

Reflecting on a ‘Waltz-Time’ Project: Efforts, Contentions and New Challenges in the Africanization of Education

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Abstract

Africanization of education was a major policy option in most countries in Africa upon the attainment of independence and its relevance could not be overemphasized. More than half a century after, it behoves many to ask questions such as where are we with the project. Have we achieved it or are we still on the way to policy consolidation? Are there new contentions with this policy which require an ideological shift? The paper is a reflection of these issues. It discusses Africanization as an epistemicide and through a selected country representational literature review, examines efforts by some African states to Africanize their educational systems as well as the challenges that have been on the way. It observes that while implementation actually started in a few countries, the general picture could be termed ‘a waltz-time dance.’ It discusses some of the challenges and concludes that even within the context of globalization and the internationalization of education, the Africanization project is still as relevant as it was in the 1960s and should thus have its place in African policy reform endeavours.

Keywords: Africanization of Education, , Decolonization of Education, Epistemicide, Curriculum Reform, Challenges, Prospects

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1. Introduction

...He can speak French so well because his teacher told him that he must think in French; that you cannot think in Wolof and translate to French. I ask why they keep the French system. He says, they speak French in the offices, they speak it everywhere. He lists the subjects and stops at history. He says with some frustration that, they only learn the history of France, of the United States, the cold war and Russia, the First war, the second. He says, some people know the story of others in these places better than they know the story of themselves and their country.¹

More than fifty years ago, most African nations fought and acquired independence from their various colonial masters. The forefathers of African nationalism came to the stark reality that independence went beyond seeking the political kingdom to establishing socio-economic and cultural institutions which were to represent the African states as unique entities with equal value to those that held them under the bondage of colonialism. Calls were made for reform within which a return to the African indigenous identity as a right in itself was highlighted. Reforms were to restore the past mutilated and abused African cultural and epistemological base that were to serve as tools and values for the education of the future African generations. Using selected country based empirical studies, this paper reviews the developments in the Africanization project and its challenges. It brings to limelight what the founders of African nations meant by africanization; discusses why it was necessary; assesses the terrain in curriculum reform and examines the challenges and prospects of Africanization of education. It concludes by proposing a future line of action for the sustenance of the project.

2. The Colonial Education Experience

Research and recounted experiences have ubiquitously revealed that colonialism brought about a rupture in every aspect of life in Africa from the traditional political institutions and indigenous economic developments to socio-cultural norms and values for its own sake. In education, while colonial school authorities sponsored the assimilation of European contents, they carefully concealed issues which valorised local realities. Wherever it was implemented, the colonial education project was to ensure that Africans should be as much as possible unaware of the developments within their own environment. Literature on colonial education has shown how in primary, secondary as well as teacher training colleges and university centres, the use of European contents and language of instruction was ubiquitous.² As late as 1952, the Advisory Committee on Education in British

¹ CHILTON, India Eliot. Meaningful Learning in the Senegalese Educational System: Problems of Language, culture and Colonization. BA Thesis, Robert D. Clark Honours College. 2016, p.17

² AISSAT, D.; DJAFRI, Y. ‘The Role of Education in Retrospect: The Gold Coast in the Era of Imperialism’, University of Andelhamid, Ibn Badis, Algeria, 2011; NDLOVU-GATSHENI, S.J. The entrapment of Africa within the Global Colonial Matrices of Power: Eurocentrism, Coloniality, and the Deimperialization in the Twenty-first Century. *Journal of Developing Societies*. 2013, 29:4, pp.334 349 DEI, G.S, and

Tropical Africa confessed that ‘education in British Tropical Africa has paid far too much regard to the content traditionally associated with the English elementary school and far too little to the African environment and the material which has reality and meaning for the African children as part of their experience.’¹

It is for such reasons that Said qualifies colonial education as an organized form of imperialism that allowed colonial authorities to continue to indoctrinate new subjects² and in the process, succeeded in doing away with all outward signs of native life that children brought with them to the campus.³ In fact many of the Africans we have read about, and those we had the luck to hear them recount their experiences with schooling in the colonial days have attested to an educational experience characterised by ‘an interpretive ideological valorisation of Euro-American society as superior, progressive and universal’⁴ and the successful eradication of the vestiges of local African cultures. Such evidence suggest that between precolonial and colonial educational praxes, there was ‘cultural discontinuity’⁵ for which post-colonial education imperatively required ideological and policy reconsiderations. This is what post-independent African statesmen appropriated in Africanization; a call for the reorientation of education in favour of a locally based/contextualized system.

3. Africanization of Education: An Epistemicide

Africanization has been one of the most discussed ideologies in Africa since the wind of change of the late 1950s. In the field of education it emanates from the premise that education is man’s acquired experiences as (s)he interacts primarily with his/her environment. This interaction is an eternal process of adjustment, refinement, and improvement of that society. It is therefore a process of transmission of what is worthwhile to those who become committed to it.⁶ The Africanization logic holds that education is expected to initiate each individual into the general culture of his/her community and ensure that the transmission of the culture is sustained.⁷ This understanding presupposes that there is a definite connection between culture, the aims of education and the content. The content of education is the school curriculum and its choice is primarily determined by the aims of education set by the society concerned which in turn determines the structure of the educational system and its sustainability. These are expected to be unique as societies are unique in their composition, past experiences, daily challenges, world views and future plans.

In fact, Confucius, the famous Chinese philosopher was very uncompromising to the study of other societies, at least not to the detriment of one’s own or without a firm mastery of one’s own knowledge base. He explains that the ‘study of strange doctrines is injurious indeed’ and that ‘learning in every society requires that the people should be ‘true to the principles of their society and the benevolent exercise of these principles to others- this and nothing more’.⁸ This is what is meant by education being ‘crucial for the preservation of the lives of its members, maintaining the social structure and promoting social change.’⁹ Mwinzi has talked of an African epistemology being deeply ingrained in the metaphysical and spiritual traditions of Africa.¹⁰

What is generally deciphered is that, worthwhile education should grow out of the environment and the learning process should be directly related to the pattern of life in the society concerned. It should be that which generally constitutes the totality of the human faculty of that society resulting from a combination of commonly held societal data, experiences, needs and projections.¹¹ These are embedded not only in documents or

IMOKA, C. “Colonialism, Why Write Back? *E-International Relations*, January 3, 2018. <http://www.e-ir.info/2018/01/03/colonialism-why-write-back> accessed 01/04/2018 at 7:30am; DIANG, M.C. Colonialism, “Neoliberalism, Education and Culture in Cameroon,” DePaul University College of Education Paper 52. 2013. http://via.library.depaul.edu/soe_etd/52; KATENGA-KAUNDA, A.P.K. “Are we Right to Blame it all on Colonialism? The Subject History and Gender in Schools in a Malawian Context. *Journal of Comparative Social Work*. 10, no.2 (2015): 1-28 <http://dx.doi.org/10.31265/jcs.v10i2.31>; KWABENA, O.A. “The British and Curriculum Development in West Africa: A Historical Discourse.” *International Review of Education*, 52 (2006): 409-423 <http://www.doi:10.1007/s11159-006-9001-4>; LONDON, N. “Curriculum and Pedagogy in the Development of Colonial Imagination: A Case Study.” *Pedagogy, Culture and Society* 10, no.1 (2002): 95-121 <http://www.doi:10.1080/14681360200200133>

¹ READ, M. Africans and their Schools. *British Commonwealth Affairs* London: Longmans Green and Co, 1953, 8. p.13.

² SAID, E. *Orientalism*. New York: Random House, 1978, p.9

³ Elume R. How Sasse Transformed Three Generations of Successful Men. in *Sasse Chronicles 1939-2014: A Special Diamond Anniversary Publication of St Joseph’s College Sasse and Sasse Old Boys Association*. 2014, pp.32-33.

⁴ GROSFOGUEL, R., Decolonizing Post-Colonial Studies an Paradigms of Political-Economy: Transmodernity, Decolonial Thinking, and Global Coloniality. *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World*. 2011,1:1, pp.1-19

⁵ ILAIGWU, J.I. and MAZRUI, A.A. Nation Building and Challenging political structures, in Mazrui, A and Wondji, C. *UNESCO General History of Africa*, Volume 8. Paris: UNESCO, 1999, pp.435-467.

⁶ SCHOFIELD, H., *The philosophy of education: an introduction*. London: George Allen and Unwin. 1978

⁷ WANE, N.N. Mapping the field of Indigenous knowledge in Anti-colonial Discourse: A Transformative Journey in education. *Race, Ethnicity and education*, 2008, 2:2, pp.183-197.

⁸ In VELASQUEZ, M. *Philosophy: a text with readings*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company. 1997.

⁹ RODNEY, W. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Washington: Howard University Press. 1981.

¹⁰ MWINZI, J. M. Towards the Africanization of Teacher Education: A Critical Reflection. *International Journal of Education and Research*. 2016, 4:9, pp. 377-387.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹ NDILLE, R.N. *Education for Development: British Impact on Southern Cameroons*. MA Thesis at the Centre for African Studies, Dalarna University, Falun, Sweden. 2007.

repositories but also in societal routines, processes, practices, and norms.¹ These issues were not new in Africa. They were simply displaced, distorted and made to appear irrelevant by those who held the power of agency during colonialism.² This compounded the task of the school which emerged out of colonialism as relevance became the most crucial ontological condition for educational policy. There was therefore a need for restitution of relevant contents and structure when the power of agency was handed back to the Africans. This restitution is what took the ideological direction of Africanization, indigenization and/or localization of education in African countries.³

As an epistemicide therefore, Africanization is generally seen as a renewed focus on Africa, to reclaim what has been taken from Africa.⁴ It includes all the calls for African consciousness about ‘ourselves; to liberate ourselves; to decolonise our minds; and to emancipate ourselves from mental slavery implanted in us by European colonisation and to develop ourselves with our own uniquely thought-out frameworks, strategies and resources of implementation,’⁵ This is done with the fundamental conviction that such a project will lead to the total liberation of the continent from coloniality and a re-centring of Africa on an egalitarian basis with the rest of the world.

In the context of education, Africanization is a restorative justice project which sees justice in the perspective that each person must have an equal right to the most extensive liberty compatible to a similar liberty with others. It consists of setting up local contents curricula, and proliferating the use of African mother tongues in the development and dissemination of knowledge in African institutions of learning and in the establishment of unique structures of education based on African indigenously established purposes; making African institutions, and not merely institutions in Africa. Africanized educational system is one which

Maintains African awareness of the social order and rules by which culture evolves; fosters the understanding of African consciousness; facilitates a critical emancipatory approach to solve the problems of their lives; and produces the material and capacities for Africans to determine their own future(s). Such an educational system would result in the production of knowledge which is *context* relevant, effective and empowering.⁶

Through Africanization, learners are encouraged and trained to challenge existing relations of power and domination and the curriculum is viewed as an instrument of empowerment,⁷ consciousness raising and the development of social awareness of prevalent influential relations that define the recipients of knowledge.⁸ All these become part of the mission of the curriculum and curriculum planning.⁹ It also involves teachers and policy makers who realize the importance of that which belongs to the continent and integrate it into the school and life of its pupils and students.¹⁰ In terms of instructional materials Africanization of education requires that all the instructional resources are based on African structured or unstructured epistemology and indigenous knowledge systems to enhance transformation.¹¹ Such resources are fundamental in preparing a teacher who is determined to safeguard African values and tenets. The idea is that education will produce people who are not alienated from their communities and are sensitive to the challenges facing Africa;¹² a process of transformation as an ‘affirmative action.’¹³

Mswazie and Muddyahoto have summarized the rationale for Africanization of education in three key areas. The first is the compelling curriculum seeing that the cost of ignorance about one’s society has become far too great for Africa and the Diaspora to bear.¹⁴ This knowledge gap in academia about African cultures’ contribution to humankind is frightening and unjustified. The second is the realization among scholars that Euro-centric models of development, namely liberal and Marxist blueprints have failed to emancipate Africa from its grinding

¹ MACOJONG, T.T. *Philosophical and historical foundations of education in Cameroon 1884-1960*, Limbe: Design House. 2008

² SMITH, L.T. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples*, London: Zed Books LTD, 1999

³ MSILA, V., Fostering Africanization: A Lesson of Identity Formation among Youth. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 2014, 5:8, pp.431-441

⁴ LOUW, W. Africanisation: The Delima to Africanize or to Globalize a Curriculum. *Conference of the Interntional Journal of Arts and Science*, 2009, 1:6, pp.62-70.

⁵ RAMOUI, N., and NDILLE, R. Africanization of Knowledge in the Universities in Africa: A Critique of the Cameroon and the South African experiences.’ In Cross, M., and Ndofirepi, A., (eds) *Knowledge Change in African Universities*, Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2016, 1, pp.195-215

⁶ NKOANE, M.M. Constructing Knowledge through Learner-centred Approach. Unpublished paper. Presented at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. 2002.p5

⁷ MSILA, V. Fostering Africanization: 2014, pp.431-441.

⁸ MWINZI, J. M. Towards the Africanization of Teacher Education: 2016, 4:9, p.382

⁹ EMEAGWALI, G. *African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (AIK): Implications for the curriculum*. 2005.

¹⁰ MWINZI, J. M. ‘Towards the Africanization of Teacher Education. 2016, 4:9, p.382

¹¹ Ibid, p.383

¹² NAIDOO, M. Overcoming Alienation in Africanizing Theological Education. *Theological Studies* 2016, 72:1, p.1

¹³ NDLOVU-GATSHENI, S.J. Decolonizing the University and the Problematic Grammars of Change in South Africa: Keynote Address Delivered at the 5th Annual Students Conference on Decolonizing the Humanities and Social Sciences in South Africa/Africa, University of KwaZulu-Natal, 6-7 October 2016. P.18.

¹⁴ MSWAZIE, J.; MUDDYAHOTO, T. Africanizing the Curriculum: An Adaptive framework for Reforming African Education Systems. *Journal of emerging trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*. 2013, 4:1, pp.170-177.

poverty. This should lead to the quest for alternative strategies to African development. The third most compelling reason for Africanization relates to neoliberalism and the doctrine of globalization which again like colonialism is spreading models of relation that have their base in Western centres and privilege Western culture.¹

4. Africanization of Education Project: An Appraisal of efforts

Since 1957 when Ghana obtained independence, overt criticisms of colonial education and the need to Africanise have been heralded throughout the continent. In a UNESCO organized conference in Addis-Ababa in May 1961, the project was identified as a 'serious concern' for the development of education in Africa. African leaders understood that the growth of a wider consciousness and understanding of African cultural values, will only be effectively developed by an expansion in each nation of programmes of research on the traditions, the ways of thought and living particular to each country.² From this was to grow a larger conception and appreciation of African culture as a whole and of its contribution to the common cultural heritage of mankind.³ The general appraisal hereunder reveals the road travelled so far. While doing that, I acknowledge the substantial literature available in the field of Africanization of education, the human and structural weaknesses in obtaining a wider variety and thus the incompleteness of the purposively sampled collection used to undertake the review.

As far as higher education is concerned, Africanization and other responsibilities attributed to this sector were discussed in workshops and seminars around Africa to help initiate these reforms. Beginning with the Tananarive conference (1963), on to Accra in 1973, discussions centred on how African higher education institutions could build African identities and sustain them within a competing world of cultures and most especially with the challenge of the colonial cultural backgrounds within which such institutions emerged.⁴ Envisaged challenges notwithstanding, African states were unanimous in their efforts to work in coordination to overcome intellectual dependency, through the hastening of Africanization of staff and curriculum and the creation of new national institutions.⁵

One of the early challenges that stood by the way of Africanization was the need to increase the proportion of local staff in African higher education considering that most colonial institutions in Africa were manned by Euro-American personnel and research associates. Looking back by way of evaluation it is estimated that the proportion of African teaching staff has risen from 64 percent in 1978-79 to 84 percent in 1986-87.⁶ This trend follows what has been observed in the Africanization of university teaching staff in Africa which as of 2015 reached 100% except in some, where policy has yet to privilege the rise of the African professoriate.⁷ On a general note therefore, African countries have been given a positive score here.

Alongside the Africanization of academic staff was the question of the university curriculum where studies have taken particular interest in the Africanization of humanities such as history, linguistics, literature, religious studies and philosophy. These were seen as key disciplines in the achievement of the Africanization project. At this level, studies have pointed to curricula of some universities hardly undergoing any transformation; still dominated (as of 2018) by markedly European contents.⁸ It has been argued that although some local history courses have been inserted in the curricula of some departments in the humanities, these courses do not significantly sway the curriculum to African-centeredness. Recently, a dean of a humanities faculty acknowledged that humanities have been seen in Africa as irrelevant for not being able to address the problems of their societies despite the fact that such problems have human origins; that the humanities faculties, instead of reacting extremely defensively, still need to provide a better account of themselves to the societies that house them.⁹

The source of such criticisms are not unconnected to the failure of most humanities disciplines to Africanize their curricula. Some studies have observed disappointingly how even some new generation universities in Africa, where a department of history offers twenty-four courses for the Bachelor's degree in History, only six focus on the country and Africa as a whole; and how even recently designed PhD programmes are over eighty percent Euro-American in content.¹⁰ In the field of philosophy and to an extent literary studies, the absence of

¹ DIANG, M.C. Colonialism, Neoliberalism, education and culture in Cameroon, DePaul University College of Education Paper 52, 2013

² UNESCO, Conference of African States on the Development of Education in Africa: Final Report. Paris: UNESCO. 1961, p.3

³ IBID. 1961, p.3

⁴ WOLDEGIORGIS, E. T. and DOEVENSPECK, M. Changing Role of Higher Education in Africa: A Historical Reflection. *Higher Education Studies*. 2013, 3:6, pp.35-46.

⁵ IBID, 2013, p.36.

⁶ IBID, 2013, p.36

⁷ RAMOUI, N.; NDILLE, R.N. A Critique of the Discourse on the Africanization of Knowledge in the African University. in Cross, M. and Ndofirepi, A. (eds.) *Knowledge Change in African Universities Vol. 1: Current Debates*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2017, pp.193-205.

⁸ IBID, 2017, p.193

⁹ University of Johannesburg, *Faculty of Humanities Strategic Plan 2020*. Johannesburg, University of Johannesburg. 2017, p.1.

¹⁰ NDILLE, R.N., Towards the Indigenization of the History Curriculum in Cameroon 1884-2001: Implications for the shift in paradigm to African historiography 1884-2001. *Peace and Security for African Development*. Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA), 2012,

African contents has made such university departments to be described as still in the grip of the “Hegelian Ghost.”¹ While this is hardly the case in the North, there is a perceived tint of interest in Africanization through the establishment of Centres for Africa(n) Studies, as compromises for the weaknesses of university departments to Africanize their curricula. However, the justification for faulting universities in the Africanization project especially of the humanities is that the majority of undergraduate students pass through the departments for which the study of local contents is still highly compromised.²

A recent assessment confirms that universities in Africa are still semblances of western epistemologies propelling an encumbering and debilitating Eurocentric education, characterised by an attendant tenacity to exclude and marginalize an indigenous presence and ‘ways of knowing.’³ Even where studies seem to look African, it is very much not African but rather a reflection of Europe in Africa.⁴ This is the source of the assertion by one head of department that ‘in Africa, there is a widespread conception that historical studies is not a useful discipline, especially in preparing for a life after school in Africa.’⁵

As far as the level of Africanization of the language of instruction is concerned, research has observed a disappointing move away from Mother Tongue Education in favour of colonial languages⁶ despite the fact that research on language efficiency in educational achievement indicates that this trend is counter-productive.⁷ This phenomenon has been described as ‘baffling’ for the africanization project⁸ as it has been debated at length that the use of colonial languages has never demonstrated a positive return on the investment in education.⁹

Some researchers have noted with dismay, the proliferation of European cultural centres and clubs in urban areas and schools in Africa to the detriment of local languages arguing strongly that this constitutes a linguistic insecurity as well as a downward trend in the Africanization of education project.¹⁰ In a comparative perspective it has been observed that the Francophone and Lusophone countries of Africa are making very minimal efforts than their Anglophone counterparts and this does not come as a surprise to researchers on the history of colonial education.¹¹ For the particular case of South Africa, Ramoupi’s policy review of language in education in the past 20 years of liberation¹² has a similar conclusion that school instruction is gradually being narrowed down to English and Afrikaans despite the inclusion of African languages among the official languages with equal standing. He concludes that generally in Africa, and in terms of language of instruction, the africanization project is still to take root.¹³

A particular area which would have served as a point of consolation in the Africanization of education is in the school curriculum where transformations are said to have occurred in some areas. However, as studies have demonstrated, the bulk of social studies subjects in primary and secondary schools are still weighed down by contents about Europe, America and Asia, which is hardly the case in such countries.¹⁴ In Zimbabwe for instance, Tapfumaneyi’s 2013 survey of the situation has concluded that the various curricula in the country ‘are too dependent on Western knowledge systems well after the colonising authority relinquished power to the black political elite.’¹⁵ A look at the Zimbabwe National Report to UNESCO supports Tapfumaneyi’s conclusions. In a forty-one page policy document Africanization is not mentioned.¹⁶

pp.132-159.

¹ TAIWO, o. Exorcising Hegel’s Ghost: African Challenge to Philosophy. *African Studies Quarterly*, 1998, 1:4, pp. 3 - 16

² IBID,

³ CROSS, Michael and NDOFIREPI, Amasa (eds), *Knowledge and Change in the African Universities*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2016, p.1

⁴ NGUGI, W.T., *Decolonizing the Mind*. Portsmouth: Heinemann Educational Books. 1986.

⁵ UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG, *Faculty of Humanities Strategic Plan 2020*. Johannesburg, University of Johannesburg. 2017, p.26

⁶ PLONSKI, P.; ASRATIE, T.; BRADI, R. Why are More African Countries Adopting English a Official Language? Conference Paper presented during the African Studies Association Annual Conference, November 23, 2013

⁷ WOLFF, H. E. Background and History: Language Politics and Planning in Africa. In Alidou, Hassan, Aliou Boly, Brigit Brock-Utne, Yaya S. Diallo, Kathleen Heugh and Wolf. H. Ekkehard. *Optimising Learning and Education in Africa-Language Factor: A stock Taking Research on Mother Tongue and Bilingual Education in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Paris: ADEA, 2006

⁸ J HEUGH, K. Theory and Practice: Language Education Models in Africa: Research Design, Decision-Making and Outcomes. In Alidou, Hassan, Aliou Boly, Brigit Brock-Utne, Yaya S. Diallo, Kathleen Heugh and Wolf. H. Ekkehard. *Optimising Learning and Education in Africa-Language Factor: A stock Taking Research on Mother Tongue and Bilingual Education in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Paris: ADEA, 2006, p.56.

⁹ WOLFF, H. E. Background and History: Language Politics and Planning in Africa. 2006, p.25

¹⁰ NDILLE, R.N. ‘English and French as official languages in Cameroon: The Intentionality of Colonial Representations and the Failure of a Cameroon-centric Identity; 1884 and after.’ *European Journal of Language Studies*, 2016, 3:2, pp. 17-34.

¹¹ WOLFF, H. E. Background and History: Language Politics and Planning in Africa. 2006, p.25

¹² RAMOUI, N.L. *The Imperative of African African-centred Curriculum in South Africa*, Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa Publisher, 2012

¹³ RAMOUI, N.L, African Research and Scholarship: 20 Years of Lost Opportunities to Transform Higher Education. *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies*, 2014, 38:1, pp.269-287.

¹⁴ NDILLE, R., ‘Towards the Indigenization of the History Curriculum, 2012, pp.132-159.

¹⁵ TAPFUMANEYI, K.D., Reordering Education. Potential Benefits and Challenges: Africanizing the Education Curriculum. *International Journal of Advanced Research*, 2013, 4, pp.536-542.

¹⁶ ZIMBABWE, The Development of Education: The Education System at the End of the 20th Century 1990-2000. National Report presented to UNESCO. February 2001, p.12

In the same line, studies conducted in Nigeria reveal the de-emphasis on Africanization in the National Policy of Education (NPE). What emerged in the 1969 document (with recent revisions) that was expected to mark the end of 135 years of a Eurocentric curriculum in the country was a disappointment to the Africanization project. The extent to which the curriculum was Africanised could only be seen in its positive pronouncement on the use of local languages as medium of instruction which like the British era, limited it to the first three years of primary schools.¹ This, in the majority, is not being practiced, especially with the development of urban private primary schools whose extent of westernization is the basis of attraction of clients. Like in Zimbabwe, Social Studies was programmed, but it was more directed to ethics and national unity for which Ibukun and Aboluwadi have agreed, had nothing to do with Africanization. Rather, as they suggested, a well-planned African and national history curriculum would have fulfilled such a project.²

A comprehensive analysis of educational reforms in Botswana, Kenya and Tanzania which was to serve as a lesson for Namibia by Albertus Kuzeeko Kangueehi has brought out some insights of the Africanization projects in these countries. In Botswana, Africanization of education took the form of what was locally known as Education for *Kagisano* which simplistically, is concerned with Africanization thought.³ This was characterised by a rejection of colonial day practices in education; the setting up of the National University of Botswana and Swaziland; improvement and localization of school activities through the indigenization of contents and educational management. The author concludes that 'attempts at Africanization seemed to have achieved a great deal in Botswana under the *Kagisano* ideology except for the medium of instruction which is still characterised by instruction in English but regrets that this perspective is gradually being abandoned in favour of entrepreneurship, science and technology in education which point to neo-liberal tendencies.⁴

Similar to Botswana was the education for self-reliance (ESR) in Tanzania initiated in 1967. ESR was inspired by the need to develop curriculum and school systems to meet the needs of the majority of Tanzanians who were living in rural areas. But it was criticised for preparing students for a permanent rural life, and for being associated with the socialist transformation of society which Nyerere's *Ujaama* African socialism hoped to bring. A remarkable plus for the system was the study of local history and culture and the introduction of Swahili as media of education alongside English. There was also the establishment of the *Wabena* project in 1982 which set up what became known as 'country folk schools' in 168 villages as centres of research and community transformation. Management was also community based and laws, customs and standards of operation were indigenous. These notwithstanding, self-reliance did not succeed because efforts were linked to the political economic system of socialism and most of the projects collapsed.⁵

In Kenya efforts at africanization were fixed in the country's four year development plans with *Harambee* a slogan meaning let's pull together becoming a national education ideology. It was characterised by the removal of western and Christian holds on the educational system and the focus of the curriculum became that of rendering students economically useful within their own environment.⁶ This did not however lead to curriculum transformation as the teaching of history and literature remained predominantly European despite the introduction of a few local texts.⁷ While the primary school curriculum saw some degree of Africanization, the Kenyan secondary school curriculum was at the turn of the century, still being criticised for neglect of African history and literature and for its Euro-centric bias.⁸ In the words of Ngugi wa Thiongo, the curriculum was 'a form of cultural genocide' that perpetuates intellectual dependency on the West.⁹

In Cameroon, authorities adopted *ruralisation* as one of the four key tenets of educational philosophy of the 1961 federal government but this programme was not different from Nyerere's Education for Self Reliance and its implementation did not pass the experimental phase of the 1970s.¹⁰ Its curriculum prepared by the Institute of Rurally Applied Pedagogy known by its French acronym *IPAR*, was never tested and its teacher training programme brought massive confusion within the teaching corps.¹¹ Its attempt to unsuccessfully duplicate the

¹ OLUNIYI, O.; OLAJUNMUKE A.C. Curriculum Development in Nigeria: Historical Perspectives. *Journal of education and social Research*, 2013, 3:1, pp.73-81.

² IBUKUN, W.O.; BOLUWUDI, A. Nigeria's National Policy on Education and University Curriculum in History: Implications for nation Building. *Journal of Education and Practice*. 2010, 1:2, pp.9-18.

³ KANGUEEHI, A. The Possibility of Africanizing the Curriculum of Namibia in the Light of the African Experience. M.Ed Thesis, UNISA, 1995, p.146.

⁴ IBID, 1995, p.147.

⁵ IBID. 1995, p.168

⁶ IBID, 1995, p.174

⁷ IBID, 1995, p.192.

⁸ WOOLMAN, D.C., Educational Reconstruction and Postcolonial Curriculum Development: a comparative study of four African Countries, *international Education Journal* 2001, 2:5, pp.27-57.

⁹ NGUGI, W.T. *Decolonizing the Mind, The Politics of Language in African Literature*. London: James Currey, 1986

¹⁰ NDILLE, R.N., 'From Adaptation to Ruralization of Education in Cameroon: Replacing Six with Half a Dozen' *African Educational Research Journal*, 2015, 3:3, pp.153-160

¹¹ TOSAM, J.F. Implementing Educational Change in Cameroon: Two Case Studies in Primary Education. PhD Thesis, University of London. 1988.

Adaptation philosophy of the 1920s has been termed ‘replacing six with half a dozen.’¹

An attempt to examine the situation in some French West African countries reveals even more disappointing results as the image of ‘that which is French is best’ continues to pervade the contemporary society in the entire French African countries like Ivory Coast, Benin, Togo, Gabon and Senegal. The French West African elite’s continuous privileging of the French language and curriculum structure is exemplary.² In Senegal for example, the triple heritage policy instituted by Senghor (indigenous, Islamic and French) only allows for selectivity in reconstructing a historical discourse for the country that privileges the French heritage. From the conversation quoted in the introduction of this paper, Chilton has argued that Eurocentric education impacts identity in French Africa. That’s why it is allowed to continue. “If someone has studied in French (as in the days of assimilation) you can feel it. If someone has studied in Arabic, you can also feel it. If someone has not studied then he must have studied Wolof. You can still feel it. What you study changes who you are and presumably you are best of the three if you study French and the history of France and Europe.”³

A key function of the Africanization project is the Africanization of the teaching programmes of teacher training colleges in the same way as these are expected to be implemented in the school systems or initiate bottom top proposals for reform. Unfortunately too, in this domain, findings have revealed ‘the inadequacy of the existing teacher training programs.’⁴ Most of the current teacher-training programs were developed before most African countries got their political independence and cases of revision have not initiated significant curriculum reforms to reflect an African knowledge base. In this regard Guro concludes that, in most parts of Africa student-teachers are being prepared as hitherto to teach contents and in languages that are alien to children.⁵

Conclusions from the brief surveys of the extent of implementation of Africanization in some parts of the continent point to a similar observation by Woolman that ‘reform of inherited educational systems that largely functioned to maintain the colonial order of dependency and elitism which was the general cry in Africa at independence has not been undertaken and that the colonial order is still very much in place in most parts of the continent.’⁶ Although there may be few exceptions to the rule, the empirical sources reflect the position of a very limited success of the Africanization of education reform especially in curriculum contents and language of education. This position is reflected in Edward Shizha’s general observation that;

Most countries in this category have been politically independent since the late 1950s but they have not done much to free their school curricular from remnants of colonial education.’ The current postcolonial African school curriculum ignores the voices, indigenous knowledges (IKs) and cultures of African indigenous populations. Students, in Africa, experience barriers in learning because of the dissonance between the school curriculum and their cultural experiences.⁷

While states have made nice pronouncements regarding the relevance of Africanization, there is little to justify their faith in the project considering that there is very little proof on the ground as sustained implementation plans and actions followed by monitoring and evaluation. This is what is meant by the allusion to waltz-timing or in the local Cameroonian pidgin-English; a *ngombe-ngombe-mukele* dance that sees participants simply running in a circulation motion with the only result being a significant waste of energy and the effects of the deafening shouts of the dancers. What then constitutes the impediments of the project? An understanding of the contentions and challenges may be significant in refocusing efforts towards a rational implementation of the project.

5. Challenges/Contentions to the Africanization of Education Project

One of the major challenges to Africanization has been the question of multiculturalism. It is being argued that Africanization has been wrongfully pitted against the process of multiculturalism as advocates of multiculturalism insist that a curriculum that is fit for the contemporary multicultural societies in which most people live today is one that opens the space for ‘diverse ontological narratives’ rather than one that insists on ‘erasure of western discourses’⁸ (although the latter is not implied in the conceptualization of Africanization).

¹ NDILLE, R.N., ‘From Adaptation to Ruralization of Education in Cameroon: Replacing Six with Half a Dozen’ *African Educational Research Journal*, 2015, 3,3, pp.153-160

² NAIDA, Monica, ‘Senegal’s Language Problem: A Discourse of Disparity. Honours Thesis, West Michigan University, 2016.

³ CHILTON, I. E. Meaningful Learning in the Senegalese Educational System: Problems of Language, culture and Colonization. BA Thesis, Robert D. Clark Honours College. 2016, p.17

⁴ GURO, M.Z. Basic Reform in Mozambique: The Policy of Curriculum Change and the practices at Marrere Teachers’ College. PhD Thesis, University of Pretoria, 2009, p.122

⁵ IBID, 2009, p.122

⁶ WOOLMAN, Education reconstruction, 2001

⁷ SHIZHA, E. Rethinking Contemporary African School Knowledge: Restoring the Indigenous African cultures: *International Journal for Cross-discipline Subjects in Education*. 2014, 4,1, pp.1870-1880

⁸ LETSEKHA, T. Revisiting the Debate on the Africanization of Higher Education: An Appeal for a Conceptual Shift. *The Independent Journal of Teaching and Learning*. 2013, 8, p.13

Closely linked to the multicultural discourse is the compounding situation of globalization. Advocates of globalization have argued that, there is need for ‘a fitting of the various African societies into globalization which may require the internationalization of education rather than Africanization as globalization entails the transforming not only of the external factors but also the internal principles and priorities of nations.’¹ Mngomezulu for instance advocates Africanization as in “the Affirmation of the African worldview” but at the same time talks of not necessarily dismissing anything western” in the curriculum.² This suggests that globalization is important and that the more a country chooses to Africanise the less it can internationalise, and vice versa.³ This kind of “cross pollination” which Mngomezulu advocates a cross-pollination between internationalization and Africanization betrays the essence of Africanization as globalization and internationalization in education are heavily weighted by western standpoints and standards- and takes most countries back to the starting points of the dying days of colonialism when the western episteme dominated school contents and practices in Africa.

Ordorika, holds that attempts at creating (indigenous) identities in most African school systems have taken place in the context of intense contradictions, alternatives, trade-offs and conflicts⁴ which ‘if not strongly connected to a thorough understanding of the conditions in which these conflicts and contradictions are played out, would betray the essence of projects like africanization which have been at the fore-front of creating such indigenous identities. Some of these have included internationalization, globalization and neo-liberalism which have continued to push western oriented epistemologies into African learning centres while hardly doing same in the West. An analysis of textbook use in Africa by UNESCO in the 1970s showed how textbooks; the source of inspiration of teachers, curricula and learners in Africa were heavily of Western prominence/authored.⁵ Recent studies conducted in some African countries by Mukasa and Becker reveal that out of a survey of 20 randomly selected papers read at a communications conference in Nigeria with an African theme, an average of 87% of citations were from Western sources, suggesting a continuously heavy dependence on Western thought patterns in African education.⁶ An extensive survey on the teaching of journalism and media studies in Africa by Mano in 2009⁷ also revealed similar results. With globalization and internationalization at the African door step, African institutions are geared to receive more of the exhibits of the hegemonic traditions of erstwhile colonizers; rendering the Africanization project a shadow of its initial self.

Apart from external forces, scholars have also identified that a huge impediment to Africanization remains the Africans themselves partly as a result of their failure to ensure a smooth transition from Alien to African school systems after colonialism. The African nationalists and academics produced by western institutions who had the chance to transform failed to do so. This is what some scholars have termed ‘our mentalities and consciousness’ being the centrality of the problem.’⁸ It is argued that the African intellectual suffers from the alienation that was imposed on him/her by a particular form of education (s)he received.⁹ This state of being makes the African intellectual to aspire to be like the European and to make the institutions they create in Africa local branches or affiliates of dominant European academic models and in this way, have fostered the production of ‘knowledges of disequilibrium.’¹⁰ Fanon has termed this a pitfall of national consciousness.¹¹

It argued that because of their education and continuous affiliation to the West, African leaders have hardly been consistent or sincere with the Africanization ideology. While some have argued for ‘the pursuit of knowledge and truth with a purpose and social responsibility as what an African educational intuition should focus on¹² they have not been consistent in this mission. In many countries, where policies of africanization were laid out, they were soon abandoned instead of being improved upon. Leaders chose at the same time to follow

¹ CROSSMAN, P. ‘Perceptions of “Africanization” or “Endogenisation” at African Universities: Issues and Recommendations’ In P.T. Zeleza & A. Olukoshi (Eds.) *African Universities in the Twenty-First Century Vol.2* Dakar: CODESRIA, 2004, pp.319-340.

² MNGOMEZULU, B.R. Internationalization of Education and Africanization in a globalizing world. In Cross, M. and Ndoferipi, A. *Knowledge and Change in the African Universities*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2016, p.183.

³ BOTHA, M.M. Compatibility between internationalizing and Africanizing higher education in South Africa’ *Journal of Studies. International Education* 2010, 14:2, pp.200-213.

⁴ ORDORIKA, I. Foreword: Knowledge Change and Contemporary Postcolonial Universities. In Cross and Ndoferipi, 2017, p.x.

⁵ UNESCO, *Educational reforms and innovations in Africa: Studies prepared for the conference of ministers of education of African Member states of UNESCO*. Paris: UNESCO. 1978

⁶ MUKASA, S.G. & Becker, L.B. (1992). Toward indigenised philosophy of communication: An analysis of African communication educational resources and needs. *Africa Media Review*, 6(3): 31-50. Also see Dube, Bevelyn. De-Westernising Journalism curricula in South African universities: Where are we? Presentation at the ‘Confronting the Challenges of Africanising Curriculum in Media Disciplines’ workshop at Wits University, South Africa. [3-4 July 2017]

⁷ MANO, W. Re-conceptualizing journalism and media studies in Africa. In D. K. Thussu (ed.) *Internationalising Media Studies*. London and New York: Routledge. 2009.

⁸ NDLOVU-GATSHENI, S.J. Decolonizing the University and the Problematic Grammars of Change in South Africa: Keynote Address Delivered at the 5th Annual Students Conference on Decolonizing the Humanities and Social Sciences in South Africa/Africa, University of KwaZulu-Natal, 6-7 October 2016. P.18.

⁹ CHILTON, India Eliot. Meaningful 2016, p.18

¹⁰ NDLOVU-GATSHENI, 2016, 18

¹¹ FANON, F. *The Wretched of the Earth*, Paris: penguin, 1963, p.119

¹² MAKGOBA, M. M. The Makgoba Affair - A Reflection on Transformation. Vivlia: Florida. 1997, p.180

the worldwide trends of replacing the pursuit of truth with western corporate friendly notions of education typical of globalization and internationalization.¹

Apart from this, there also seem to be a challenge to Africanization from cultural perspectives which feel that the project doesn't represent them. This has accounted in part for the weakening of the project. According to Long, Africanization was erroneously conceived as a 'call to difference'² or what Gareth has termed 'polemical position taking'³; attitudes which do not inspire a consensual rallying behind the project by all Africans. Gareth intimates that there is 'an upheld obsession of what it means to be African' which has substantially kept other cultural representations in Africa out of the picture such as the European settlers and African Indians. To Gareth therefore, Africanization articulates an essentialist politics of ethnic assertion, cultural chauvinism, pan African Black Nationalism.⁴ In this context, the project is bound to be opposed by those who feel unrepresented within the ideology but who make up the living spaces of Africa.

Finally, there is the challenge of the languages of instruction. It is argued that colonialism left a legacy of alien, European official languages in all countries. Each country has numerous African languages, and many indigenous speakers are multi-lingual. Nevertheless, literacy and proficiency in the alien official languages is one criterion for indigenous elite class formation that reproduces the caste system created by colonialism.⁵ Woolman argues that it is difficult to indigenize the language of instruction policy because, in most of the multi-lingual African countries, language policy reflects the need to preserve national unity by not granting official preference to any one African language. In addition to offering a culturally-neutral means of communication, the alien European languages may provide continuity with colonial political foundations but most essentially are the basis for contact with the outside world. Because of this, language of instruction policy after independence has been marked by very limited Africanization.⁶

6. New Directions: Can we move away from the *fence-sitting* attitude?

There is a significant justification for the Africanization project and a seemingly common consensus regarding the necessity of its implementation. While there are indications that some countries actually took up the implementation of the project albeit failures/weaknesses, there are however others who have not demonstrated any change of mind-set from the colonial period. What then can be the best way out for the revival and sustenance of the project in African countries? While recognizing the pressure of the external factors, a significant voice has pointed to the African leaders inability or unwillingness to come to terms with what is required to Africanize; a bold and determined African leadership⁷ that exhibits elaborate attributes of being different from the ones Fanon termed the national middleclass whom he described as lazy, unscrupulous and parasitic and lacking spiritual depth because they had completely assimilated colonialist thought in its most corrupt form.⁸ Evidently, Africanization could not have succeeded (or cannot succeed) with such people at the helm of affairs.

This is the position of Decolonial theorists who have suggested Delinking as the route in the attainment of Africanization. Apart from the effects of colonization, Decolonial theorists have argued that the contemporary call to a globalized world continues to initiate the spread of Western-centrism around the world which negatively influences indigenous and national policy orientations which advocate ideologies like Africanization. Ndlovu-Gatsheni has argued that globalization is one of the greatest stumbling blocks for the Africanization project as it promotes the epistemological and ontological realities of the most powerful in the world and therefore catalyses the colonisation of Africa and her ways of knowing even more.⁹ Decolonial theorists believe that globalization is hegemonic and has generated discursive scientific practices and interpretive frames that make it difficult to think outside of those frames. This is because, it calls for a restructuring of education closely related to the dynamics of global capitalism which is detrimental as it actively represses anything that is articulated, thought and envisioned from outside of its western framework.¹⁰

Although Globalization is being show-cased as the 'global knowledge economy' Decolonial theorists argue that, by all intends and purposes, it is a masquerade which has 'a hegemonic centre' (Europe and North

¹ IBID, 1997, p.179

² LONG, W. The Africanization of Psychology. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 2016

³ GARETH, C. On the Africanization of English Studies in South Africa. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*. 2006, 5:2, pp.117-126.

⁴ IBID, p.118

⁵ Woolman, D.C., Educational Reconstruction and Postcolonial Curriculum Development: a comparative study of four African Countries, *International Education Journal*, 2001, 2:5, 2001.

⁶ Ibid

⁷ WESSELS, N. Decolonization of education in South Africa: A Basic Education Problem, in *Diggit Magazine* 31 July 2017. Available online at <https://www.diggitmagazine.com/papers/decolonization-education-south-africa> accessed on 25/07/2018 at 2:23pm

⁸ FANON, F. *The Wretched of the Earth*, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1967, p.119

⁹ NDLOVU-GATSHENI, The Entrapment of Africa. 2013, p.8

¹⁰ MBEMBE, A. Decolonizing Knowledge and the Question of the Archive, Workshop Paper at the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WISER) Wednesday, April 22, 2015. Pp.33, 37.

America).¹ As it continues to incorporate modern African institutions and their staff and students with a definitely western oriented geography of production and circulation, the Africanization project and scholarship is marginalized. This marginalization is part of a deliberate division of labour rooted in imperialism and colonialism in which scholars of Africa abandon producing knowledge for the African knowledge base and rather become 'native informants' or 'hunter-gatherers of raw data for the North that is turned into theories in the Global North for African consumption.'² In such circumstances africanization would hardly survive.

Consequently, there is a need for a break with the west otherwise called delinking. Contrary to cross-pollination between Africanization and internationalization, Delinking is a careful strategy that takes the form of a transition during which underdeveloped countries would adopt new strategies and values that are different from those of the developed nations.³ It also means a consistent refusal to bow to the dominant logic of the world capitalist system. It is the pursuit of a system of rational criteria for indigenous socio-cultural, political and economic options founded on a law of value for the local, national or indigenous which has popular relevance and is independent of flows from the dominant capitalist world.⁴ Walter Mignolo has since elaborated on the delinking thesis insisting however that Delinking must be a break and not a transition arguing that both capitalism and socialism as they are currently constituted (in internationalization and globalization), are not the answers to Global south problems. Consequently the best option is to break away not from a type of economy but from the ideas, suggestions or instructions of Western countries, [as well as] the World Bank, the IMF and related institutions.⁵

The argument pushed forward in the delinking theory is that when African leaders delink, they would be able to act on their own. When they delink, they would see African values as parity with European values. When they delink, they would be able to initiate curriculum contents and implementation strategies that do not emanate or resemble nor replicate that of the West. Teacher training institutions and universities will be more of society based and local problem-solving centres. Within a long run, African knowledge bases would be significantly relevant in solving world problems and recognized as African, rather than the present situation where such knowledge basis are bought over, transformed and resold to the continent as European products.

This is what Neale-Shutte and Fourie have called 'creating African identities through Africanization programmes. They argue that 'if you do not know who you are, you wouldn't have much to offer your international counterpart.'⁶ As Dowling and Seepe contend, it is only when 'one has a deep understanding of his/her experiences that one is able to conquer knowledge and concepts that are not part of that experience.'⁷ Therefore, rather than view Africanization as attempts to delink from metropolitan control it should be viewed as a contribution of non-western systems of thought to global theories and ideas which are informed by local historical experiences and cultural practices in the same way as Western discourses.⁸

7. Conclusion

The paper has examined what is meant by africanization and its relevance. It has also discussed efforts around the continent with the observation that implementation efforts have not been commensurate to the calls of the 1960s which made the project seem imperative. Some areas with evidence of rudimentary implementation have been identified which were however soon overtaken by other external and internal economic and political exigencies. It also identified some challenges based on which it concludes that Africanization may have been easy to proclaim but implementation goes beyond the proclamations which continue to fill public spaces. African leaders must be determined in the pursuance of autonomous policies for an African emergence to be possible. This can only happen through a break with Western neoliberal ideas as they continue to sustain western hegemony over the south.

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¹ NDLOVU-GATSHENI, 2013, p.9

² MBEMBE, A. Decolonizing Knowledge, 2015, p.37

³ IBID

⁴ NDLOVU-GATSHENI, The Entrapment of Africa, 2013, p.10

⁵ MIGNOLO W., ESCOBAR A., (eds) *Globalization and the Decolonial Option*. London: Routledge, 2011

⁶ NEALE-SHUTTE, M. & FOURIE, J. Challenges to internationalisation in African higher education' *South African Journal of Higher Education* 2006, 20:1, pp.118-142.

⁷ DOWLING, D. & SEEPE, S. Towards a responsive curriculum' In S. Seepe (Ed.) *Towards an African identity of higher education*. Pretoria: Vista University 2004, pp.185-189.

⁸ LETSEKHE, T. 'Revisiting the Debate on Africanization, 2013, p.8

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