FEMINIST AFRICA 8:
Rethinking Universities I

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Editorial: Rethinking Universities I

Amina Mama and Teresa Barnes

Today, as ever, Africa desperately needs its universities. As the pace of technological and social change speeds up, the challenges of knowing ourselves as African people continue to change subtly. Where are the peoples of Africa in world development? What role can our cash-strapped universities play in Africa's fate and future? How do we make sense of global politics and power struggles? Are we at the dawn of a new age of oil-based imperialism, or trapped in a continuing saga of vicious exploitation? What are the implications of the global spread of militarism and religious fundamentalism for Africa, for the women of Africa? Do indigenous knowledges, and indigenous crops and seeds of Africa, hold promise for the future? How can we withstand the consequences of global economic doctrines? What must we do to take advantage of contemporary political democratization processes, or the related opportunities for cultural change? These and many more questions face Africa's corps of comparatively underpaid and definitely overworked – but tenacious – academics, demanding new levels of resilience, tenacity and dedication.

As we struggle to produce new and relevant knowledge in the 21st century, African women continue to display their commitment to education, continuing to regard it as a route to personal and collective liberation and empowerment. We have embraced modern public universities with dedication and enthusiasm, attending them as learners, and serving them as scholars and researchers, teachers and administrators, not to mention the preponderance of women in the various welfare, catering, health, cleaning and other support services that are so crucial for the daily operation of Africa's universities as spaces where the production of knowledge is facilitated.

The next two issues of *Feminist Africa* focus on "Rethinking Universities", because as academics, we want to revisit the sites where we learned, and continue to ply our trade as intellectuals. This is also an opportunity to review some of the themes that first appeared in the very first issue of Feminist Africa back in 2002. With FA8 and FA9, however, we want to revisit the public institu-

tional sites of African knowledge production: as places, as spaces where cultural norms have developed which condition the kinds of questions that are asked and the kinds of answers that are then elicited. We are taking Africa's universities seriously, and rethinking them – going beyond the labels ("crumbling") and behind the static stereotypes ("supporting national development").

Higher education in Africa has always had a gendered element. The antecedents to all the energy women pour into Africa's educational and intellectual development can be seen in the memoirs of the early women educators. Some, like Charlotte Maxeke of South Africa, found it necessary to travel abroad to pursue higher levels of education than were available at home during the colonial era; others established new educational institutions. In the pre-independence years (1940s–1960s), these new institutions included the vocational schools for young ladies set up by Constance Cummings-John on her return to Freetown (where she later became Africa's first woman Mayor), and Mrs Ekpo's educational initiatives for women in Calabar area of Eastern Nigeria, as it was then known. There is also evidence of less conventional educational initiatives, such as Funmilayo Kuti's workshops for illiterate market women, and other non-formal education carried out in a spirit of charitability. Even further back, among Muslim African women, education was carried out by *mallamas*, in the tradition of 19th century scholar and teacher Nana Asma'u, daughter of Usman 'Dan Fodio. In contrast, as the various contributors to FA8 explore in their various ways, modern universities are exhibitions of patriarchy, albeit of the most professedly liberal kind.

The historical material tells us that Africa's colonial-era universities began as extensions of elitist metropolitan institutions. As such, they set out to recruit the brightest and the best of young men from the colonial classes, to train and prepare them to become a new elite destined to serve the colonial state and govern "the natives". African students of the 1950s and 1960s recall gracious conditions of teaching, learning, residence and resource allocation that today's often under-resourced and shortchanged students can only envy. After independence a new mission, that of training indigenes for nation-building and national development took shape, but the institutional form of the university was, by and large, retained.

At no time have women been formally excluded from Africa's post-independence universities, and this is something we can take pride in. However, we are not proud of the fact that, despite this apparent "equality of access", universities have remained highly male-dominated spaces, both numerically

and culturally (Mama, 2003; ACU, 2000). Gender inequalities in Africa's public universities make a mockery of all the proud national and regional political and policy commitments to gender equality and justice, because public universities, as the leading institutions of higher learning, are rightly expected to lead and not lag in the realisation of people's aspirations for full democracy and for social justice. Despite all the declarations and resolutions of the African higher education establishment – Tannanarive (Unesco, 1963), Cape Town 2005 (AAU, 2005), the Kampala Declaration on Academic Freedom and the Social Responsibility of Intellectuals (Codesria, 1991), and a great many grand university mission statements – there are persistent institutional inequalities which reflect a lack of commitment to gender issues and taking women seriously in the intellectual sphere.

Beyond the familiar story of quantitative inequalities in African higher education lie the institutional dynamics and processes that produce it, and it is to this much less studied terrain that we direct our attention in 'Rethinking Universities'. We can begin by acknowledging the role of African women in opening up this field of inquiry through a series of concerted interventions over the years, as documented in FA1 (Editorial, 2002; Bennett, 2002; Kasente, 2002). African higher education studies have expanded in response to the renewed interest of both an African scholarly community faced with all the challenges of globalisation and reform, and a resurgence of donor interest. The Council for Social Science Research in Africa has instituted a higher education research programme under Ebrima Sall's leadership, several institutions have established new courses in the field, and the *Journal of Higher Education in Africa* is now in its third year and getting over some of its teething problems. In 2007 alone, no less than four books have been published to disseminate the institutional case studies commissioned by the US foundations that constituted themselves into the Partnership on Higher Education in Africa.[1] These will be reviewed from a feminist perspective in FA9.

To keep abreast of the gender politics on this changing higher education landscape, the editorial team at *Feminist Africa* undertook to dedicate two issues to the subject. In 'Rethinking Universities 1' we set out to rethink universities from the inside out. Four of the features report the findings of the *Gender and Institutional Culture* (GICAU) research project, which was conceptualised and carried out by the AGI with the support of the Association of African Universities. This set out to carry out in-depth investigations of the dynamics of gender in specific aspects of the institutional cultures of five leading public

African universities. In the first feature, Teresa Barnes sets the scene with an overview of the field that informed the research case studies. She makes it clear that the transformative ideals of higher education remain relevant and attractive, while the conditions of production of knowledge have remained deeply gendered in ways that have proved difficult to change.

The case studies were carried out by locally based researchers at the Universities of Addis Ababa, Cheikh Anta Diop, Zimbabwe, Ghana and Ibadan, and from amongst these, the reports by Gaidzanwa (Zimbabwe), Tsikata (Ghana) and Odejide (Ibadan) are featured here. The GICAU researchers designed research questions that aimed to illuminate the specific gender dynamics at their chosen institutions, and each therefore addresses different aspects of institutional culture.

Dzodzi Tsikata at the University of Ghana investigated gender dynamics in the academic careers of two generations of faculty on the Legon campus. The university has survived through a turbulent set of political and social upheavals. Tsikata's work shows how these upheavals are interpreted in the lives of individual women academics, some of whom are better able to weather storms because they were anchored in the academy during an earlier age. It is striking that the university itself has maintained its "standards" for staff conditions of service as if the storms raging in the Ghanaian political economy did not exist: at Legon, if you don't publish you may not perish, but you won't be promoted. Thus women faculty who joined the institution in the 1980s and 1990s, faced with academic careers and home/house and family work, are held back by unacknowledged institutional instability in ways that their more unencumbered male colleagues are not.

Abiola Odejide looks deeply inside the gender and class dynamics of student cultures in the residence halls and religious associations at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria. She notes that these important aspects of student culture enforce a gendered conformity on women students to a distressing level. These codes reiterate and re-work conservatism and function to constrain women's participation in associational life and knowledge networks. This handicapping extends beyond the campus into post-university employment possibilities. The fact that these forms of association have filled the gap that was left by the collapse of the more secular tutorial system may well have implications for women's academic performance.

Rudo Gaidzanwa's article also peers inside a university, but focuses on the daily lives of academics, rather than students. Her article discusses the changing character of leisure spaces on the University of Zimbabwe campus over the past half-century. Gaidzanwa's article poignantly and cogently brings to the fore issues of how aca-

demic culture survives under excruciating economic circumstances. She shows that one of the conditions of the production of knowledge is the fascinatingly "local" nature of the interactions between academics themselves. How are the "collegial norms" of university life faring under prevailing economic and social conditions? How do academics keep their spirits, bodies and souls together as their institution faces wave after wave of difficult change? Do they, or are they overcome?

One of the ways in which women have sought to improve the quality of academic life has been through challenging sexual harassment, now recognized to be a widespread occurrence within higher education institutions, which has debilitating effects on women. Work in this arena has been ongoing, as indicated by the formation of the Network of Southern African Tertiary Institutions Challenging Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence, in Gabarone in 1996, and the subsequent publications.[2] The feature by Jane Bennett, written with Amanda Gouws and Andrienetta Kritzinger (University of Stellenbosch), Mary Hames (University of the Western Cape), and Chris Tidimane (University of Botswana) is drawn from a research project that set out to investigate the effectiveness of sexual harassment policies between 2004–6, in order to deepen our understanding of the challenges facing such interventions. They discuss the methodological complexities of researching and carrying out policy making in such a complicated arena, to conclude that working on harassment foregrounds all the deep and pervasive contestations around the culture of gender, sexuality and violence that so powerfully affect women's citizenship status in the universities.

In combination, these features offer new information on the pervasive gender culture in universities, and highlight the challenges facing women, those who are actively seeking to bring about change, and those providing support to women facing the extremes of abuse and harassment. They highlight all the daily subaltern dynamics of sexuality and power that so often undermine women in academic institutions, and which continue to pass largely unnoticed and unchallenged. They discuss the kind of thinking and action that institutionalising basic rights and justice requires, providing powerful testimony to the tenacity and persistence of those who "make it" in the academy, not to mention those who struggle and work to bring about change through policy interventions.

The challenges of bringing about change are also revisited in the two Profiles, of activist work in gender and health at the University of Cape Town, and at Makerere University in Uganda. Staff at each institution have pioneered practical initiatives which make an enormous contribution to the well-being of women in their chosen communities. Yet their stories also underline the

importance of institutional and financial support in sustaining even the best initiatives of concerned and action-oriented women staff.

Dr Fay Chung, a Zimbabwean educator, has spent her adult life trying to uproot the inequalities entrenched in our received models of education. This issue's In Conversation features Dr Chung, and shows how, from developing new educational structures in the liberation camps, to trying to re-shape the curricula of independent Zimbabwe, and now to participating in the foundation of a women's university, Dr Chung joins the other activists profiled in FA8 in tenaciously clinging to the ideals of gender equality in education.

As we rethink our universities as sites of knowledge production in the 21st century, we ask: if the universities remain unequal and difficult places for women, what kind of male and female citizens are they now turning out? Has enough been done to decolonise the structures, expectations and horizons of our universities? If the social burdens imposed on women students and faculty, which prevent them from taking their places in traditionally-configured academies are actually increasing, where should our priorities now lie? It is clearly time to rethink and take action, and the contents of this issue of FA8 indicate the depth of the challenges and the extent of the problems – but also the continuing importance of the crucial investigative, profile-raising and support work of transnational feminist networks and organisations.

Thus, this issue also shows how, working from the inside, Africa's academic feminists are conceptualising, investigating and changing the campus cultures around them. As the rest of the world sees African problems and, as always, assumes stereotypical passivity on the part of the continent's people, we salute the tenacity of these activists and urge that the long-term sustainability of their efforts must be positively addressed. There is no other way to bring about the gender transformations of our universities which our diverse, battered but resilient nations require.

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Endnotes

1   The Partnership on Higher Education committed a further US$200 million to African higher education in 2005, but the results of this investment are the subject of debate within the African scholarly community (see www.foundation-partnership.org for details about the partnership).

2   These include the Handbook of Resources to support such work, produced in 2002 (Bennett, 2002) and the book "Killing a Virus with Stones" (reviewed in FA7).

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Politics of the mind and body: gender and institutional culture in African universities[1]

Teresa Barnes

The national university is a unique institution in post-colonial Africa. Regardless of the standard or volume of its output, the African university is the premier, deeply subversive symbol of the colonial-era "hewers of wood and drawers of water" actually writing, thinking and theorising for themselves.

There is an increasing literature on African higher education, matched of late by increasing international and comparative interest. This builds on a small but durable body of work from Africans and others who have examined higher education on the continent since the ending of colonial rule. As feminists looking at these works, we ask, "Who has hewn the wood, drawn the water – and who is now being paid to think? Where are the lines of power and exclusion?"

This article seeks to situate the study of gender and culture in the context of the African university. The areas of convergence in the literature on gender, organisational culture, organisational management, post-colonial political history and educational theory have, largely, been neither described or theorised. The subject of gender and institutional culture in African higher education remains largely unmapped – and a fruitful target of enquiry.

Colonialism transmitted the traditional European distinctions between labour of the mind and labour of the body directly to Africa. The identification of men and masculinity with the labour of the mind and of women and femininity with that of the body, was also transmitted to Africa, along with the senates, the vice-chancellors, the graduation robes, the funny flat hats and the rituals of examination. To Africa was transmitted the idea that learning is a combative and aggressive process; that the worthy candidate is one who survives attackers and bests his foes, and that the experience of intellectual combat is intrinsic to intellectual life and production. Full professors are expected to make seminal contributions, and in return generally expect to be approached on bended knee. Universities are transnational institutions, and a

professor from Cape Town can find a familiar home at Oxford or Melbourne or Tubingen or Delhi or Utrecht or Michigan State.

Politics of the mind: Four decades of higher education in Africa

African universities have faced distinct sets of challenges over the decades since the late 1950s. Initially, the preoccupations concerned the quality of the relationship with the metropolitan/colonial universities, which had often played a role in setting up satellite campuses in the colonies. Then, African universities began to consider the issues of Africanisation/indigenisation, and the turning of their lenses away from needs and preoccupations of the metropole – in terms of staffing and curriculum – and towards those of their own societies (Cooper, 2002). As Yesufu observed in 1972:

> Apart from Fourah Bay College, which was founded in 1827, and the University of Cairo (1910), the development of universities in Africa has essentially been contemporaneous with the continental evolution towards emancipation from colonial rule. The vast majority of the 50–60 or more university institutions which exist today are less than fifteen years old . . . . The explosion in university development since the 1960s reflects, in large measure, the African awareness of the need for a solid intellectual base for the consolidation of Independence, as well as a means to meet the overwhelming requirements for high-level manpower (Yesufu, 1972).

However, these changes were agonisingly slow in many cases. As Ngugi wa Thiongo (1993: 6) recalled of his undergraduate days in the early 1960s:

> The English department at Makerere . . . was probably typical of all English departments in Europe or Africa at the time. It studied English writing of the British isles from the times of Chaucer, Spenser and Shakespeare up to the twentieth century of T.S. Eliot, James Joyce and Wilfred Owen.

Debates about the Africanisation of university curriculum and staffing dominated discussions about university transformation through the early 1970s (Crossman, 2004). As the decade wore on, however, and into the 1980s, increasingly most universities were simply concerned with aspects of survival in an era of social instability and International Monetary Fund/World Bank-inspired cuts in public spending, which resulted in a severe brain drain throughout the continent. In addition, university staff often found themselves at odds with the state, even in countries such as Tanzania, where militarism and its violent excesses did not take root:

Between 1970 and 1980, two TANU [Tanzanian African National Union] party stalwarts in succession were appointed as Vice-Chancellors, and the party treated the university as one of its wings. In that decade, the university became a battleground, with a serious of violations of academic freedom . . . . The biggest crisis of that decade came in 1978, triggered by the dismissal and "retirement in the public interest" of six members of staff, who were picked for their own leftist teaching and research, as sacrificial lambs and also as an example to other academic staff on what would happen should they not toe the line (Yahyua-Othman, 2000: 31-32).

The 1990s were years in which universities struggled to reorient themselves towards developmental goals, enrolments boomed, and African academics debated where their primary loyalties lay. With their disciplines? Their institutions? With national leadership? With notions of truth, or with students? Or simply with their own paychecks and bank accounts? Thus, according to Lebeau and Ogunsanya (2000: vi):

The African public university is no longer the breeding ground of the elite, as was the case during and immediately after the colonial period. Rather, its prestigious position has been progressively eroded by rapid population growth, and increased access to secondary school education, and by a decline in the socio-economic value of the certificate. Compounding this situation, education in Africa has witnessed a severe decrease in funding (resulting from extended economic stagnation on the continent), a standard depreciation and weak personnel management as a result of constant misdirected intrusions of the military and/or "one party" post-colonial governments into academic affairs...the dilemma of the African university is quite clear: either the academic community reacts through innovations that will justify its presence in the restructured higher education landscape, or the brain drain will continue and these public institutions will be relegated to the training of second-class citizens by equally marginalised lecturers.

According to Mama (2003: 11), African intellectuals in the 21st century now find themselves on a knife-edge:

If Africa's intellectuals initially identified with the goals of regional and national development and committed themselves to an ethic of regional pride and social responsibility towards Africa's diverse people, then we have seen how this kind of intellectual identity has become

more precarious over the years, how it has been increasingly deprived of institutional support. Critical thinkers have been driven out of African universities, often by colleagues who defined their responsibility as obedient service to government, no matter how distant from popular interests government had become.

Operating amidst these agonising internal dynamics, African universities find themselves in a dual spotlight of renewed international interest, and a resurgent interest on the continent in vibrant national institutions (either substantively or as showcases of national development). Internationally, the discourse and funding for efficiency in institutional operation has taken the place of the earlier disdain for Africa's universities and the focus on primary education by international donor agencies. Having survived the lean years, these institutions are, ironically, now facing the spread of the global, multifaceted tidal wave of tariff reduction and free trade, which seeks to reduce the power that national governments have over "their own" higher education institutions and systems. This push is likely to be resisted by African governments, loathe to loosen their grip on education, training and intellectual production within their own borders.

Feminism in the African academy: walking a thin line

In South Africa, the apartheid state initially (and briefly) acquiesced to the development of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) in the late 1960s, because it was perceived as a group dedicated to separate racial development. When it became clear in the 1970s that liberation, rather than separation was the goal of the BCM, the state quickly changed tack and crushed the movement in both its organisational and individual forms. Feminist epistemologies in Africa may be on a similar trajectory. African feminists have done the groundwork examining the lives of women on the continent – first proposed in the nation-building spirit. They began with quantitative studies that clearly and conclusively demonstrate that there are fewer girl students in school, that there are many more male students than female at tertiary level, and that women students are congregated in the lowest-status fields. Women in the professional ranks are similarly clustered in the lowest categories and there are few women professors in the African academy. All this data, based on sound research and widely disseminated has been available for at least the past ten years.

The development of a women's and gender studies curricula in Africa has developed from a realisation that the intellectual excitement of re-examining and transforming scholarship from a gendered perspective is widely shared, but

it must be given roots in the African academy. Thus there are a growing number of gender studies programs in Africa.[2] Although links are being made between them, and important work is being done, the male and female feminists who staff and defend these programs know that they are on uncertain terrain: thus the "restore, reform but do not transform" of Mama's recent article on gendered scholarship in Africa (Mama, 2003). The transformative potential of feminist scholarship and networking can be perceived as a threat to the status quo. Thus, as activists, feminists who carry the results and implications of their academic work on gender inequalities into the public domain can make themselves targets of vicious verbal and even violent physical attack (Tamale and Oloka-Onyango; Phiri in Sall, 2000). In this way, feminist scholarship can be a threatened, hazardous place to call home.

That said, there is space to examine the institutional and organisational structures which perpetuate and reproduce gendered inequality in African universities – and to investigate the structures and practices which challenge and confront those inequalities.

Gender, nationalism and higher education

Scholarship has demonstrated that a crucial aspect of the colonial project was the feminisation of African "maleness." Thus, post-colonialism has been marked by a search for a "new man" (Lindsey and Miescher, 2003). This examination of institutional culture of African universities starts from the dynamic premise that these institutions have been places "of the new-men for the new-men." In this way, African universities should not be seen as static, gender-neutral spaces to which women have been benignly and invisibly added. Rather, these spaces and places are intricately marked with codes for man-as-thinker, man-as-aggressive-debater, man-as-athlete, boys-becoming-men, etc. The addition of women to this men's club is thus not only a statistical, but also an extremely meaningful social and symbolic exercise – which is by its very nature, dynamic, challenging, and likely conflictual. It cannot be a coincidence that the dominant position of men remains a quantitative fact of life in African higher education. As of 1999, in Africa's 400 public and private universities, "more than 90 percent of their staff, 80 percent of their teachers and 75 percent of their students are men" (Otunga and Ojwang, 2003).

To the extent that the project of regaining "the nation" (in some post-colonies) or fashioning it anew (in others) was deeply woven with concepts of wresting indigenous masculinity away from demeaning colonial social

engineering projects, the university has been a prime site of struggle over meanings of nation and gender in a new age.

In Zimbabwe, for example, the University of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland (in the Federal period) and later the University of Rhodesia, was a kind of conceptual linchpin in the nationalist struggle. Resistance was conceptualised there. In the early 1960s, African students who could not gain admittance were recruited into the struggle on their way abroad to other universities; in later years, lecturers and students left the university to join the liberation struggle. The first minister of education in independent Zimbabwe, Dzingai Mutumbuka, was one such lecturer, as was Fay Chung[3] (Ranger, 1981; Chung, 1995). The process of Africanising the teaching staff of the university proceeded under Walter Kamba, vice-chancellor from 1981 to 1988 (see also Gaidzanwa in this volume). Attention to gender disparities and inequalities at the university only began to surface from the late 1980s, due to the pioneering work of women academics (generally around 20% of the academic staff) (Gaidzanwa, 2001).

As mentioned above, there are many valuable studies on African women's access to, and participation in higher education (Bloch, 1998; Kwsiga, 2002; Karega, 2001; Mboya, 2001; Masanja, 2001a; Masanja, 2001b; Nawe, 2003). These studies demonstrate conclusively that access to higher education has been an important vehicle for women's social and economic mobility, and they have seized opportunities with both hands (Mama, 2003). Yet, women students are concentrated in the social rather than natural sciences, and the African professoriate remains overwhelmingly male, as do the ranks of administrators and managers (Rathgeber, 2003). Numerous strategies and policies have been proposed to address these shortcomings.

As useful as this largely quantitative literature is, however, it does not generally address the question: what are the internal institutional mechanisms which have generated and perpetuated personal/professional identities and practices of gendered inequality?

From citizen to consumer?

The overriding impetus of the nationalist project was to bring African people into the ambit of citizenship, into a position of rights and responsibilities within the organs of the post-colonial state. The university was a premier site of production of an informed, critical and participating citizenry. However, increasing evidence from several directions suggests that this goal is increasingly being bypassed. First, theorists of managerialism in higher education point to

the ways in which the current tidal waves of neoliberal policies restrict access to university education to those who can pay fees (Pithouse, 2006). Secondly, the impact of the market has reached far into the internal curricular workings of universities, such that business priorities are dictating research and teaching agendas. Writing about the US academy, Mohanty asks,

> How does one theorise capitalist citizenship? And how is the university implicated in engendering this kind of citizenship? . . . If the market provides the ethical and moral framework for university life, educators and students exercise choices as consumers in a marketplace, not as citizens in a democratic polity. This is a dessicated version of democratic politics where "free choice" in the market is available only to those with economic capacities. Private sector decision-making is private – citizens have no rights to discuss and make policy. Thus, wealth determines citizenship. Instead of people governing, markets govern – it is not citizens who make decisions, it is consumers. So those who lack economic capacities are non-citizens. This results in a profound recolonization of historically marginalised communities, usually poor women and people of color (Mohanty, 2003: 182-183).

This idea is extremely suggestive when applied to the context of African universities, where the epistemological foundations were almost always of colonial origins, and nationalist transformations may not have had time to anchor before the onslaught of structural adjustment (Federiciet al., 2000). In addition, many African universities have had to survive years if not decades of civil and/or international strife. Such pressures may have had two conflicting sets of results: truncated or stunted growth, or the development of a certain expertise in keeping the ship afloat through innovative, albeit jury-rigged, solutions.

In terms of gender relations, Okeke writes that women in Africa are still struggling to be accepted as citizens, let alone practising and enjoying the rights of citizenship (Okeke, 2003). In the current global climate, African women's movements which are seeking participation in nation-building processes and activities are, in some instances, actually losing ground.

Politics of the body: identifying gendered dynamics at institutional level

Women academics: squeezed by macropolitics, belittled in micropolitics

The literature that exists suggests that gaining an academic position in an African university is challenging for women, and that maintaining it is even more difficult. Economic structural adjustment programs and military disruptions have had the most devastating impact on Africa's women. They have thus been squeezed by macropolitical forces over which they have little or no direct control. This has been matched by a lack of respect demonstrated to them in what Morley and others have termed micropolitics – the "subtext of organisational life in which conflicts, tensions, resentments, competing interests and power imbalances influence everyday transactions in institutions" (Morley, 1999).

These dual pressures make the achievements of Africa's women academics even more remarkable. For example, Molara Ogundipe recalls her experiences in the Nigerian academy:

> Most men do not like women concerned with social transformations that shake the roots of their male dominance. As a colleague of mine said to me at Ibadan University, "No man wants a revolution in his kitchen." This was in the eighties, and a female college professor's space was still considered to be the kitchen . . . . When I began talking and writing feminism in the late sixties and seventies, I was seen as a good and admirable girl who had gone astray, a woman "whose head has been spoilt by too much learning" (Lewis and Ogundipe, 2002).

Despite the prevalence of these attitudes, Ogundipe reported that she was able to put some feminist ideas into practice at the new Ogun State University in the 1980s, around issues of sexual harassment and improving women's conditions of service (Lewis and Ogundipe, 2002).

Academic women can find that their family ties pursue them into the academy, as reported by this woman at a rural South African institution.

> Sometimes you find that I am here working with people who are friends with my father. Instead of talking to me as a professional, they will go home to my father and say, "talk to your daughter. She is not behaving well. She is rude to me." So you find that people who have no business interfering with your work come to you and say, "Professor so-and-so says you are rude to him. You must be careful how you talk to him." Now

> I have to explain myself. With us women, we have to explain ourselves all the time. Otherwise our professional actions are misinterpreted (Mabokela, 2003).

Or, the maintenance of family life is considered to be something that is only the concern of female academics.

> . . . my husband had difficult times at [the University of] Ibadan, there was a lot of politics in their Department. He decided he wanted to go to Lagos, so he got a job in Lagos, they gave him a Chair there and all that . . . And I was in quandary [about] what to do, whether I should go to Lagos or not. You know, it was a good opportunity to stay in Ibadan . . . there were a lot of vacancies and I think people were being promoted, the opportunities were greater. I had difficulty deciding so I spoke to one or two colleagues whom I respected. One of them, whom I respected very much, he is a man, he said, "Look, I can't advise you. If you want a career, you can stay here but if you care for your family, you go to Lagos, but it's your decision." And [he] left me standing there like that, you know (laughs). So in the end I said, "Well I have three boys and I think they need their father as much as their mother," so . . . I went to Lagos (Pereira, nd).

Pereira has also identified some of the micropolitical behaviours that are used at various times by various parties to marginalise women in the academy: "jokes, snide remarks, insinuations, comments in class to students, comments in the office of the dean/head of department/other, comments on the faculty board, comments in the staff club, laughter when women speak e.g. at meetings, selective monitoring of female (but not male) academics by heads of departments." When women speak at meetings or academic fora, the following behaviours can be used to get similar messages across: "heckling, continual background noise/movement during a woman's presentation, men begin to leave when women are scheduled to speak, irrelevant questions asked at the end, advice offered that implies the woman lacks experience/basic understanding etc." (Pereira, nd)

Masculinist practices and male academics: getting most of the airtime

Academics hold seminars and they know that some are to be feared: where discussants and commentators quickly and unerringly go for the jugular. In these situations, participants are supposed to expect their thrusts to be confidently parried, for a satisfying combat to ensue and the whole matter to

be wrapped up amicably with a cup of tea after the seminar. This boxer-like eagerness to strike telling intellectual blows and land the knock-out punch can certainly be seen at universities throughout South Africa.

This is an example of the way that higher education has been and continues to be constructed as a masculinist process – one that privileges confrontation, and the strong, dismembering the weak. There are, of course other methods of teaching and learning, disseminating research results, and examination. For example, external examiners could give their comments and feedback before the final copy of a master's thesis is submitted so that the final product could embody more of a sense of consensus. But such an idea, although it might assist the writer of the thesis in the learning process, would never fly. Intrinsic to the culture of modern higher education is the figure of the examination candidate, a lone individual on a hill, waiting to be beset by his detractors and pursuers. Should he prevail and beat them all back, he is worthy of a degree. Should he not prevail, he fails and simply becomes a bad throughput statistic.

Thus, institutional cultures in modern, Western, African/South African universities maintain the ability to produce and reproduce ways of knowing that privilege certain kinds of maleness, and sideline and marginalise other ways of knowing and of knowledge production.

In South Africa, for example, two of the most celebrated and meaningful confrontations over the transformation of the academy involved competing versions and visions of racialised male power: the "Makgoba Affair" (regarding management) at Wits University in 1994-95, and the "Mamdani Affair" (regarding curriculum) at the University of Cape Town shortly thereafter. Neither of these conflicts was formally described in gendered terms but it is striking that both involved bitter, gladiatorial struggles between black and white men over vital aspects of institutional change. Although repeatedly referenced as struggles over racial transformation, these two "affairs" could also be seen as struggles between competing racialised masculinities. They share, for example, common aspects with the following description of R. Kanter's study of the ways that particular manifestations of racialised and gendered power are generally privileged in corporate organisational management.

> . . . certain male managers are selected according to their ability to display appropriate social credentials . . . because they are perceived to be more reliable, committed and predictable, free from conflicting loyalties between home and work. In the latter case [Kanter] argues that the extensive pressures on managers to conform to corporate expectations

and demands can exclude not only women, but also many men. The typical profile of managers, she argues, is 'invariably white and male, with a certain shiny, clean-cut look' (Collinson and Hearn, 2000).

In the Wits and UCT "affairs", black men hired by white men were quickly perceived as not fitting into the traditional cultures of the institutions. For example, Professor Malegapuru Makgoba chose to wear formal, Africanist attire for his first Senate meeting as the new deputy Vice-Chancellor at Wits: full Arab dress. It is likely that the subsequent dismay expressed by Professor Robert Charlton was rooted in concepts of acceptable and unacceptable masculinities in this institutional context. Similarly, Professor Mahmood Mamdani's justified outrage at having his curricula overruled by a faculty committee (made up of institutional insiders) had gendered elements: as noted above, professors are considered to be figures of authority in a distinctly masculine register. Professor Mamdani, on the other hand, felt that his rightful authority had been disregarded; to paraphrase, treated like a boy rather than a man (Makgoba, 1997; Mamdani, 1998).

Abusive body politics: sexual harassment and sexual violence

The contests around gender in the African university do not only involve management, curricular and pedagogical issues. Sadly, they also involve the bodily expressions of inequitable power relations. Attention is increasingly being paid to the prevalence of sexual harassment and gender-based violence on African campuses. In 1994, Hallam suggested that there was "an almost endemic problem of gendered hostility towards women and girl students and in higher education, towards women staff" in African institutions (Hallam, 2001). These odious practices work to silence individual woman in particular, and intimidate women in general. They are absolutely antithetical to the ideal of the university as a collegial community of aspiring and credentialed scholars. Yet the practices persist. As Bennett notes in relation to universities in Southern Africa:

> Sexual harassment within higher education presents a particular threat to the redevelopment of human resources that have been depleted by decades of restricted entry to educational opportunity (the kind of educational opportunity on which access to professional employment tends to depend). The profile of sexually harassing behaviour may differ from one institution to another, but the existence of any form of sexual violence on campus creates a climate in which women routinely have to

> fight harder for their right to the diplomas, degrees, and job opportunities that offer them the change of a professional future. At the same time, the prevalence of sexually abusive behaviour…may deepen the divide between men and women on [a] campus (Bennett, 2002: 4).[4]

Obviously, of course harassment also affects the ability of women students to succeed in their studies, as noted by Ndlovu,

> One lecturer in the arts, with a reputation for threatening female students who turned down his proposals, is alleged to have said to one of his victims, 'Girl, your future depends entirely upon what I decide and you shall regret why you ever made the decision' (to turn down his sexual advances). The female student . . . explained that such victims have had to withdraw from active participation in lectures as a measure of self-preservation (Ndlovu, 2001: 73).

Perhaps the most infamous case of sexual harassment in African higher education involved the heckling of a female student at the University of Dar es Salaam to such an extent that it was generally accepted as the reason that she committed suicide (Sall: 2003). Acts of direct physical violence – rape and assault – are also, sadly, far from unknown (Bennett, 2002; Pereira, nd).[5]

Research gaps regarding gender and institutional culture in African universities

Thus, some of the background pieces of the puzzle of gender and institutional culture in African universities are:

- African men were admitted to, and became professional staff in African universities in far greater numbers and much earlier than African women, who are relatively recent arrivals on the scene (at least in terms of quantitative parity).
- Varied expressions of the importance of the gendered post-colonial project of regaining or re-imagining manhood in the former colonies.
- Resistance, if not hostility, to changing the norms of the university club-like atmosphere to accommodate the perspectives, experiences and needs of women as students and staff.
- The ever-present possibility of institutional leadership forming an alliance with the state and its organs (in some countries the police; in others, the media – or both) to discipline "unruly" women students or staff at the university over issues which seemingly threaten patriarchal control or symbols of patriarchal control.

- The multiple burdens of women students and staff, who have both their teaching/learning/professional lives, and the logistics of their family lives to manage.
- The constricting influence of the ideologies and policies of international institutions such as the World Bank on national freedoms such as the expansion of educational provision, salaries, benefits, employment flexibility, etc. These pressures are referred to as globalisation(al) in some of the literature.
- Academic life is an area into which African women have moved enthusiastically.
- Women in the African academy have been developing strategies such as international networking to identify and cope with changing national dynamics.
- The relationship between professionalism and gender in the African setting remains under-theorised.

Taken together, these factors begin to indicate ways in which the African university is a gendered space for the production of knowledge which privileges not only masculinist power, but certain kinds of masculinist power over others. However, there are as yet many questions which urgently cry out for research around the qualitative intersections of gender, culture, and higher education institutions.

Firstly, for example, there is a small but interesting literature on organisational development, which compares management strategies cross-culturally. Does it offer any useful insights about male managers in African settings? Similarly, given that the vast majority of administrators and managers in African universities have been male, what do we know about their perspectives on gender and institutional development? Specifically, as universities moved from colonial/metropolitan to nationalist control, what messages/discourses were passed from one generation of male managers to the next?

In terms of the situations of women academics in Africa, does the "glass ceiling" metaphor speak to their experiences? Have they reacted differently to the disintegration of national economies under regimes such as structural adjustment than have male academics – i.e. do they, or are they able to find other work outside their formal workplaces in order to make ends meet as economies disintegrate underneath them? Are there "femocrats" (feminine + bureaucrats) (Currie, 2002) in African universities and if so, do they contribute to the achievement of greater gender equity?

At the nexus of the personal and the professional, how much childcare do African male and female academics do? How are family needs understood, met, experienced in this setting?

Finally, in terms of gender, sexuality and overall institutional culture in national political economies, there are many questions which need to be asked. Does the concept of a "sexual economy" (sexual favours traded for academic services) have resonance on particular campuses? Are non-heterosexual voices heard, bodies seen, and affirmed, on campuses? Further, Bennett has suggested that higher education in Africa is a prime site for the performance of heterosexuality "as a major route into resources, stability, identity and citizenship." How are these dynamics and pressures institutionalised in the African university setting? What are the formal and informal policies on and reactions to gender-based violence? How do severe national economic and political crises, and ubiquitous budget cuts impact on the already precarious positions of academic staff and students and the search for transformative knowledge? Have the post-colonial poor now been effectively barred from universities by neoliberal fee requirements? Is it true, as Lebeau and Ogunsanya (2000) have suggested, that under all these pressures African men and women must now be resigned to only receiving and reproducing second- or third-class "higher" educations?

Conclusion

Above all, the university provides the individual with the capacity to seek after the truth and to discriminate between truth and falsehood. A major component of this educational process is to stimulate the student's capacity to be critical in the face of all of life's trials. A university graduate who is merely endowed with certain practical skills and knowledge, but who lacks the ability to be critical, to seek after the truth and to follow the truth irrespective of the consequences to his person, is ultimately an enemy of the society which he purports to serve (Eastern and Southern African Universities Research Programme, 1987: 15).

For the better part of the past fifty years, the African academy has recognised (if not always responded with alacrity to) the need to transform the composition of academic and management staff, students, and curricular content: most often in terms of race (Mabokela and King, 2001; Mabokela, 2000). In this effort, the development of new epistemological methods and models rooted in Africa's rich histories and sociologies, have been vital conceptual tools. The

ideal search for truth, as described above, was optimistically and hopefully categorised as congruent with making a new, first-class citizenry in the early nationalist project. Arguably, the transformative impulse survives at least in nooks and crannies even in repressive states where university life has been re-oriented towards political quiescence and sycophancy, as we are now seeing in Zimbabwe.

Overall, however, much less attention has been paid to transforming the structures and practices which actively discriminate against women in the academy, and which reproduce combative and exclusionary intellectualisms. Although African women have gained important handholds in the academy, and many have made impressive achievements, they remain a marginalised minority, soaking up the pressings of the sour fruits of inequality.

More introspection, research and activism are required to put additional flesh on the existing theoretical and descriptive bones of this situation, so that new generations of academics in Africa can conceptualise and participate in fuller, and more meaningful transformative institutional policies and practices. The challenges of confronting varied waves of global pressures, exacerbate the difficulties of such a mission. In the meantime, the literature suggests that on African campuses, a "chilly climate for women students" (Ndlovu, 2001), the marginalisation of women administrators and scholars (Mabokela, 2003), and the institutional privileging of their male counterparts and of masculinist expectations and practices – all continue to be the norm.

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Endnotes

1   A version of this article was presented at the South African Association for Research and Development in Higher Education conference at the University of KwaZulu/Natal in June 2005.

2   See the Gender and Women's Studies website maintained by the African Gender Institute at the University of Cape Town.

3   Interviewed in this volume.

4   See also Nomcebo Simelane. 2001. Sexual Harassment: A Case Study of the University of Natal, South Africa. South Africa: Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE). Available at www.fawe.org.

5   See also "Soyinka wants Nigerian Universities Closed," Panafrican News Agency, 22 August 1999. (http://allafrica.com/stories/199908220041.html, 2005-02-10).

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Gender, Institutional Cultures and the Career Trajectories of Faculty of the University of Ghana[1]

Dzodzi Tsikata

Introduction

History and national socioeconomic developments have shaped the University of Ghana in profound ways since its original conception in the colonial period as a residential liberal arts college for the creation of a new African male elite. Post-colonial changes such as Africanisation, the expansion in student numbers and economic liberalisation policies developed Legon as a space in which faculty continue to experience gender discriminatory practices that present particular problems for women's intellectual production and career development.

This article will explore how male and female faculty experience and contribute to shaping the university's gendered institutional and intellectual cultures, and how these interactions structure intellectual production and career trajectories. Faculty are discussed as men and women with multiple and intersecting social relations and identities arising from their gender, class, age, religion, marital and motherhood status and seniority within the institution. The article highlights the gender inequalities embedded in these identities and social relations.

The article's main sources are archival and documentary research, key informant interviews and life-story interviews.

Key informant interviews[2] of academics and administrators provided an over-view, which framed the more detailed and in-depth accounts gathered through life and career history interviews. A total of eight persons, four men and four women, drawn from diverse disciplinary backgrounds and different age groups were inter-viewed in order to construct their life stories. Of these, seven were academics and one was a senior administrative officer of the university. My experience as both a student and a faculty member on the same campus provided useful information to support the life stories. This has enabled me to draw some tentative conclusions which otherwise would not have been possible from such a small sample.

Towards a Conceptual Framework

The dominant discourse about the low levels of women's participation in ter-tiary education is that this is largely a function of gender inequalities within society at large. This theorisation has been critiqued by feminist scholars, who view educational institutions as "socialising agents which transmit different patterns of achievement, aspiration and self evaluation to males and females" (Prah, 2002: 88; see also Pereira, 2007) or which function as key sites for "the production and reproduction of values and worldviews, for the production of people, of identities, subjectivities and consciousness" (Mama, 2003: 10; Barnes, 2005). As Mama argues, this ideological role of universities has most often been covert, in keeping with the liberal political tradition and its claims to neutrality (Mama, 2003: 10).

This article shares this latter view of the universities as key institutions in the creation and reproduction of particular institutional and intellectual cultures, which faculty, students and administrators all contribute to shaping. Conceiving of institutions as gendered enables a proper assessment of everyday practices which might be considered trivial, but which may be the manifesta-tion of strongly held androcentric values. While gender is not the only axis of differentiation and power, it is a critical one.

Since the problem of women's representation has been analysed mainly as one of enrolment, other critical elements of institutional and intellectual cultures, which affect both faculty and students, are often not addressed. These include questions of structures and hierarchies, processes, social relations and agency in governance, teaching and learning, research and everyday life. Related to this, the questions of how differences among women such as age, seniority, marital status, qualifications, ethnicity, religion, networks and disciplinary background interact with institutional cultures are also often ignored. Some of these issues are examined only briefly in this paper because of space constraints.

Universities cannot be understood without their context and environment (Zeleza, 2002; Sawyerr, 2002; Manuh et al., 2004; Britwum, 2005), and are as much shaped by their internal processes as they are by their national contexts.

The National Context of the University of Ghana

The 1980s and 1990s were highly significant in shaping the current situation at the University of Ghana and this is true of many African universities. It is in this period that finance became the one most decisive factor in the life

of universities. As well, the fortunes of the university also came to be deter-mined not only by national governments, but also by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Developments in this period included the unprecedented growth in the demand for higher education leading to sharp increases in enrolments and the growth in the mobility of and market for highly skilled labour. These, combined with the retreat of the state from social spend-ing, resulted in a drastic decline of the financial support for public universities (Zeleza, 2002; Britwum, 2005; Sawyerr, 2002). In 1983, Ghana embarked on a far-reaching programme of economic liberalisation overseen by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. After a few years of macroeconomic policy reforms, the liberalisation agenda was extended to public institutions such as the universities (Woodhall, 1992; Adomako-Ampofo, 2002; Sawyerr, 2002).

During the late 1980s, the Government of Ghana announced changes in the structure of primary and secondary education. This led to the exponen-tial growth of the pool of people seeking admission in tertiary educational institutions.[3] Measures to tackle the problems of tertiary education were also announced. These included a revamping of the administration of higher educa-tion, cost reduction and income generation for the universities. A major break with the past was the adoption of a non-residential system of education to save on costs (Government of Ghana White Paper, 1990). The upshot of these reforms was that Ghana fully embraced the global trend of commercialisa-tion of higher education. So funding, cost-sharing, income generation, access and strategic planning have become the main preoccupations of universities, replacing core concerns such as curriculum, teaching and research (Prah, 2002; Sawyerr, 2002).

For example, the main elements of the most recent strategic plan of the University of Ghana included mobilisation of financial resources and strength-ening of financial management, creation of a performance-driven structure and the professionalisation of the human resource section, the development of consumer orientation and the active marketing of the university, the strengthening of information technology, the enhancement of infrastructure and capitalisation of the strengths and core competencies of the institution as well as the privatisation of its non core performing units. Questions of values, philosophies, intellectual and institutional cultures, on the other hand, were not explicitly discussed in the plan (University of Ghana Corporate Strategic Plan, 2000–2005: 7).

Elements of the Institutional Culture of the University: Intellectual Traditions and the Composition of Faculty

Intellectual Traditions

The university's identity as a liberal arts college created an unofficial hierarchy of subjects, which has been through many changes over the years. Until the 1960s, philosophy and the classics were very highly rated, although there appeared to be some openness about all courses of study. Though building strength in the natural sciences and research has been a longstanding aspiration, this has yet to be achieved.[4]

By the 1970s, professional courses had become very highly regarded with law, medicine and business administration becoming status symbols among students, their growing pre-eminence strengthened by the fact that students needed better grades to be admitted to these programmes. Economic liberalisation in the 1980s was accompanied by a more narrow and functionalist conception of what education was about; a new hierarchy of subjects formed. Business administration, economics and the social sciences were now preferred over the humanities and cultural studies.

Within the natural sciences, applied sciences were deemed more useful and potentially more lucrative, especially in a situation where equipment and laboratory facilities were insufficient for the serious pursuit of science. Those courses also satisfied the desire to strengthen links with industry and the private sector and to become economically viable through income generation activities. Subjects such as nursing, which were in the past not much sought after, have become very popular in the last few years, in response to the high demand for nurses in Europe and North America. In spite of these changes, the personal prominence of some academics in Legon balanced somewhat the otherwise declining interest in the disciplines and subject areas they were teaching.

The changing dominance of particular subjects within the intellectual culture has had gendered impacts. Some of the areas which lost out in the changing hierarchies over the years were also the areas with relatively more women on the faculty. Female faculty have been at the forefront of introducing courses and conducting gender research, but the university has been reluctant to employ and promote academic staff specifically for this. These programmes, introduced through individual and departmental initiative have been growing over the years. While these courses are popular among students, they are not highly regarded in the university (Manuh et al., 2004: 119).

There is now a strong belief in terminal degrees at Legon. This has implications for those who do not have these degrees. In the case of female academics who often embark on terminal degrees mid career, this involves very adroit planning and strategising to hold career, studies and family together at the same time.

The establishment of links with intellectuals and institutions abroad is now key to research prospects and the external review of papers for promotion. Those who have studied abroad are advantaged by being able to tap into these networks more easily. Because fewer women study abroad, and many women academics do not have terminal degrees, they usually have not had the opportunity to develop such relationships. This could be changing slowly, with the development of more opportunities for such collaboration in a range of areas, including women and gender studies.

The Gender Composition of Faculty

While there was never any doubt that the University of Ghana would be co-educational, both its antecedents and early practices marked it as a profoundly male space concerned with the creation of modern African masculinities. The low numbers of female faculty have improved slowly. In the 1970s, the faculty was still largely male even in the subjects which attracted female students. Since the 1980s, there have been more women on the faculty. However, as the statistics show, there are still a number of departments which have no women. In this sense, parts of the university are still stuck in the 1970s. Physics for example, did not employ a female member of faculty until the 1990s.

The demographic and sociological character of the faculty is an important aspect of the institutional culture in both being a determinant and a manifestation. The first generation of faculty who were trained before and in the 1960s were considered able to hold on their own anywhere in the world. It was this group that contributed to Legon's reputation. They trained the 1970s generation, which emulated them (Sawyerr 2002). By the 1980s, following a period of military coups and political and economic crisis, most of the staff were trained entirely in Ghana and did not have terminal degrees. The majority of women academics belong to this third generation.[5] With a few exceptions, their publishing record was not ideal and many were overwhelmed by the problems of institutional culture, heavy teaching loads and the lack of opportunities for research collaboration abroad.

Female senior members, both faculty and administrative staff, have almost consistently been only 3.3% to 4.4% of the staff total, while male members have been between 14% and 17%. Senior members who are academics are

ranked as assistant lecturers/research fellows, lecturers/research fellows, senior lecturers/research fellows, associate professors and professors. In all, about 79% are men, while 20.3% of the faculty are women. Women are disproportionately represented in the lower lecturer grade.

Africanisation appears to have enhanced gender inequality for a time: but while the University of Ghana's professorial class had 18.5% of females in the 1960s, there were none in the 1970s, and only 7.9% in the 1990s. Current figures put the number of women professors at 19% of the total. In 2006, women associate professors were 2.3% of academic staff and women full professors were 0.7% of academic staff. For men, the figures were 10.8% for associate professors and 8.9 for full professors. More than 60% of female academics are in the lecturer grade as opposed to less than 50% of men. Only about 5% of all women academics were professors as compared to 10% of men. In other words, women continue to be concentrated in lower ranks.

In spite of these stark statistics, the University is still considered gender neutral by influential members of administration and the faculty. Because women's absence has been attributed to their habit of terminating their studies at the first degree and to the demands of their biological and social roles as wives and mothers, the main response to the issue has been to encourage female graduate students finish and take up teaching jobs. That this has not translated into significant increases in female faculty suggests that the problems have not been fully diagnosed. As one respondent argues, women's low representation in the academy is due to both national trends and also to the institution's culture: "There is institutional complicity in gender blindness in that it has not sought to model a structure which would be different from what pertains generally. While some lip service has been paid to gender equity, there is not much going on" (male senior lecturer, aged mid 50s).

Analysing the Career Trajectories
Diverse careers
The material from the interviews with the seven members of faculty highlights how the history, the socio-economic context and the institutional cultures of the university have contributed to shaping the experiences of faculty. For example Adzo (female, late 30s) is widely perceived as the "mother in the department", to the effect that she should expect students to seek her out more than her colleagues. Esi (female, early 30s) can be characterised as a "young woman hitting buffers", as after only four years in her job, her sense of

frustration is palpable. She does not see exit from the university as a strategy and yet she has difficulty coping with uninterested students, cynical male colleagues and the lack of a roadmap for career advancement, and even for basic matters such as how to write an article.

Ama, in her 50s, is a "confident professional who has come a long way". She is a professor and head of an important component of the university, a successful woman in the academy. She exudes confidence and competence, is well respected and considered a little intimidating by some respondents, perhaps because she does not have the motherly style demanded by men of women in the academy, and is not conventional in her political and social life. However, her rise has been neither smooth nor linear. She along with the other two subjects in their fifties have had many ups and downs related to beginning life as academics during the early 1980s, years of political and economic crises that have never really abated and from which Legon has never recovered. She finished a PhD only in the last few years. All the detours have paid off, though and her achievements are monumental. However, she appears to be exhausted by all the struggles of earlier years and professes a lack of interest in the highest offices in the university.

Akua is in her fifties, and is still not a professor. She "would have been a professor but for the proper equipment", in her own words. She attributes this mainly to her being based in a natural science discipline, although she concedes that the general crisis of the university when she first started out at the faculty and the struggles to bring up children have also contributed. Like many scientists, she is only superficially interested in the cultures of the university and their workings. She retains a very positive view of her days as a student, her relationships with fellow academics, both male and female, and her place in the university.

Kwesi (male, mid 50s) feels keenly that he could have been more focused on career progression. He has had "a disappointing career trajectory" but remains "influential because of associational life." In spite of the fact that he is not a professor, he has an important position in administration because of a history of active participation in extra-curricular activities. It is doubtful if a female member of faculty would have been appointed to this post, given their generally poor showing in extra-curricular activities.

These cases show the similarities and differences among faculty in terms of background, their experiences of national developments and the key elements of institutional cultures, their use of mentoring and outside collaboration to advance, and their experiences of marriage and family.

Among the men interviewed in depth, Kofi, is optimistic about his prospects and has a keen nose for how to advance himself – he is a "young man in a hurry". He has been a lecturer under two years but receives excellent collegial support, and is already looking at other options because of his dissatisfaction with his conditions of service. Kwame (male, early forties), also enjoys collegial support, and can be characterised as "properly mentored and on his way up". He has been promoted once and is looking to become an associate professor in the near future. He received textbook mentoring from his days as a national service person, through to post graduate work and employment as lecturer. He was very knowledgeable about how the university worked and confident of his eventual success, even if things were moving a little more slowly than he would have liked. He had already earned his stripes in the leadership of one of the halls of residence, and with his connections and confidence, appeared to be cut out to be become a dean of students. None of the women interviewed were in his age group, which would have provided similarities and contrasts, but it is doubtful if there are women who have been so well mentored.

Table 1: Summary of respondent characteristics.

Pseudonym	Gender	Age group	Area of work	Seniority
Ama	Female	50s	Social Sciences	Professor
Akua	Female	50s	Natural Sciences	Senior Lecturer
Kwesi	Male	50s	Humanities	Senior Lecturer
Kwame	Male	40s	Natural Sciences	Senior Lecturer
Adzo	Female	30s	Natural Sciences	Lecturer
Esi	Female	30s	Social Science	Lecturer
Kofi	Male	30s	Humanities	Lecturer

Source: Life Story Interviews, 2005–6.

The women in the case study had better educated and/or more affluent parents than the men. The differences are sharpest in the case of the three respondents in their 30s. The two women in their 30s had studied abroad and already had PhDs, while the male respondent had an M.Phil. Their educational trajectories could not have been more different – university education abroad and the acquisition of three degrees in quick succession, and in one case, two children had been born along the way. The male in his 30s, Kofi, would not without

some benefactors have entered the university, because of financial constraints. It is arguable that had he been female, he would not have come this far.

The experiences of the women in their 30s – Adzo and Esi, are quite different from the situation of their older colleagues, many of whom acquired PhDs only when well into their forties, having first worked for some time and had children. More and more departments are demanding a PhD as minimum qualifications for an academic post, and this could hamper women's careers, given that there is a global tendency for women to complete their PhD's as much as six years later than their male counterparts.

National developments and career trajectories
The three respondents who were in their fifties had experienced the most marked effects of national developments during the crisis years of the 1980s, both on the state of the university and directly on their academic careers. Ama (woman professor, mid 50s) discussed the general breakdown of society and economy at the time. She barely did any academic work in this period because a lot of time was spent looking for food and the basics of life. The university itself was facing severe shortages. She compares this period to the late 1980s and 1990s, which were much more productive because it was also a period of national recovery.

Akua (senior lecturer, mid 50s) mentioned that her employment at the university in the 1980s coincided with the mass exit of Ghanaian academics to Nigeria and to other places, when increases in student numbers marked the beginning of complaints about large class sizes and heavy teaching loads.

In other words, in times of severe national crisis, intellectual production and careers become near impossible. It took those now in their fifties decades to secure promotion. Of the three aged in the mid 50s, only one is a professor. While they attribute this to different factors, their account of the 1980s makes it clear why they could not publish articles for many years. This contrasts to the situation of Kwame, who is in his forties and hopes to become an associate professor at 45. He embarked on his career after the crises which blighted the academic life of the 1980s. Adzo, who is in her mid 30s, is already contemplating promotion to senior lecturer grade.

More information is needed to fully assess the impacts of developments in the national socio-economic and political context on intellectual production and career trajectories than was collected in this study. Studies on economic liberalisation and higher education have highlighted the adverse implications

for students of cost recovery, massification and the growing attraction of a narrower range of courses. This clearly warrants more serious study.

The impacts of gendered institutional cultures on everyday lives

This section discusses the impacts of gendered institutional cultures on marriage and family, on participation in governance structures, on mentoring relationships and on aspects of everyday life in the university.

With regard to family life, the challenges of marriage and children could have an impact on the progress of the two women in their thirties within the academy, thus counteracting the advantages with which they have started. Respondents differed in how they experienced the impacts of marriage and family on their work. The ages of their children, their marital status and who they were married to, were all important factors. Adzo, who planned her child bearing during her post graduate studies, was very focused and organised. However, coping with sickness, the school run and extra-curricular activities, organising the lives of three children under ten years old, along with a full teaching load and heavy committee commitments, was proving to be a challenge. In the case of Esi, being married to a fellow academic was useful in the sense of helping navigate the complications of the university. Ama and Akua, women in their fifties, described the stagnation of their research and writing during their intensive child bearing and rearing years. Once this period passed, women academics settled into more productive periods of their career. However, by this time they were also older, and certain opportunities (such as scholarships for PhD training) had age limits, thus disqualifying them. Even so, Ama and Akua spoke about the freedom of having older children and how much space is liberated for work.

Legon offered more space for marriage and family life when compared with the stresses of academic life and tenure track positions in American universities, in the view of one of the female lecturers in her mid 30s. But, though conditions did not force a stark choice between work and family, they were not conducive for women getting ahead. In keeping with the pro-natalist national cultures of Ghana, women academics are expected to marry and have children, and they received plenty of conflicting advice from senior colleagues about when and how to do this. Much of the difficulty lay in the institutional culture's failure to distinguish between male and female academics and a firm belief that this was the correct approach. An academic was seen as a gender neutral individual who had the right qualifications. Therefore, there were no measures in place to

support them in the intensive period of childbearing and the raising of young children. The university's ostensible neutrality on these matters ignored critical differences between men and women, thus putting women at a disadvantage.

Everyday life on campus raised issues about the place of female faculty. These included the persisting perception that the real academics were male, the practice of giving more challenging and higher profile jobs to men, the continuing expectation that women would play domestic and ceremonial roles at work and the subjection of those who did not conform to these norms to ridicule and disapproval. Female faculty were routinely called "Auntie" and "Mama", while their male counterparts were addressed by titles signifying their academic achievements. This practice reinforced the maternal and wifely roles expected of women. The most difficult aspect of the institutional culture was the denial of the existence of gender discrimination at Legon (Manuh et al., 2004).

Female respondents were more exercised by their relationships with male colleagues than the other way round. Respondents observed a tendency to patronise women in ways which made resistance difficult. They observed that while certain approaches had sexual undertones, the jocular mode of the approach and the seniority of the men involved made it difficult to judge when the line had been crossed. As a respondent noted, "men have accused me of not being relaxed in some cases when I reacted unfavourably to sexual innuendo. Married women are protected in the sense that they are considered to belong to other men" (female professor, mid 50s).

The experiences of female faculty also appeared to depend on the particular faculty, the number of females there and the level of seniority of the person in question. The experiences of Adzo, who was in a branch of science with few female colleagues, were different from those of her counterpart in the social sciences, Esi, whose area of expertise had relatively more women. Adzo's experience as the subject of great curiosity and confusion about which toilet she might use were two situations which Esi was not likely to experience. In places where female faculty had been working for a longer time, the toilets were segregated either simply by gender or by both gender and seniority. There was no clear university policy on these matters. Beyond toilets, attitudes of students and subordinate workers could create frustrations. Female faculty who were younger or small often got mistaken for secretaries and were expected to take down messages for their colleagues.

More positively, Adzo was on various boards and committees, a situation Esi was not likely to experience for some time to come. Adzo's membership

of one of the established churches on the campus was also likely to stand her in good stead. Her head of department had already suggested that she might apply for promotion to senior lecturer grade. No one had had this conversation with Esi at the time of the interviews. And yet, both of them complained about the difficulties of writing, given their teaching loads. Kofi, on the other hand, had written two articles in two years, partly because of the collegial processes in his department. He was therefore likely to accumulate publications more quickly if he stayed in academia. While he denied that women in the academy suffered any distinct disadvantages, it was clear that he had more space for advancement than either of the two women in his age group.

As scientists, Akua and Kwame felt keenly the difficulties of progressing with poor equipment and laboratory facilities. For this reason, opportunities for outside collaboration were highly valued. Kwame enjoyed a period when his career progressed rapidly and this was the time he was working on a project with colleagues in the UK. Akua hoped to benefit from new contacts made in the US, where she acquired a PhD in the 1990s.

Kwame's "textbook" experience of generous and supportive mentoring showed the less formal ways in which universities renew themselves, and illustrates what has been lost with the undermining of mentoring traditions. It also demonstrated what disadvantages women suffered in a mentoring culture. The women in the study had not experienced mentoring in any systematic way. Esi did not even know how to write an article and did not have much information about career progression. There did seem to be departmental and disciplinary differences. Adzo was in the sciences with almost no other women colleagues, but she had a strong sense of what kind of mentoring she preferred and had taken steps to make it happen. She was cautious about becoming too closely identified with any one of her male colleagues, perhaps in order to avoid the perception of a sexual relationship. She preferred instead to seek advice about various aspects of her work from different colleagues. Her relationship with her head of department was good and she felt accepted by her peers and senior colleagues. Esi, on the other hand, found herself being subjected to the strictures of competitive academic life and several instances of ageism and sexism, despite the fact that there were several women in her department.

Adzo felt that *not* having been a student of the university was positive for the successful establishment of her autonomy, whereas Esi felt out of her depth partly because, having studied abroad, she did not have much of a history with the institution. She lacked classmates who had been contemporaries at the

university, and she was reliant on connections with scholars from outside. Ama, Akua and Kwesi had a stronger sense of the history and changing situation. All three were clearly comfortable at the University of Ghana. However, their experiences as students were not uniform. Kwesi remembered the university in the 1970s as an intellectually vibrant place that included a few well-spoken young women. Akua remembered a warm and close collegial atmosphere, in contrast to Ama, who remembered the gender segregation and harassment of women students, very much a minority presence then too.

In spite of its committee system of decision-making, the University of Ghana has a strong hierarchical culture and the most senior and influential academics are men. Therefore, the likelihood of experiencing the disadvantages of the seniority culture and not enjoying its perks was greater for women (female professor, mid 50s). Seniority was a factor in being able to serve on committees and boards. All professors were automatic members of the Academic Board. Through being there, they had the opportunity to serve on ad-hoc committees or to represent the academic board on other boards or to become members of the executive committee of the academic board which had become one of the key decision-making sites of the University outside Council. Seniority also determined workload, and the more junior respondents complained about having to do more teaching and having larger class sizes than their seniors.

In the final analysis, none of these career academics could escape national developments, the economic policy climate and its impacts on higher education, or the University of Ghana's culture and its implications for their life as teachers and the producers of knowledge. It was these environmental factors, and how they responded to them and attempted to influence them, that shaped their lives at the University of Ghana.

Summary and conclusions

This article has examined elements of the University of Ghana's institutional and intellectual cultures and the contribution of national socio-economic and political developments to these cultures over the years. A result of the years of financial crisis and reform has been a tendency in the university to focus on financial matters and cost recovery, at the expense of intellectual concerns, and the wellbeing of staff and students. I have also explored how male and female members of faculty similarly and differentially experience the various cultures in the university, contribute to shaping them, and how these interactions structure their intellectual production and career trajectories.

Gender inequality was a foundational characteristic of the university, manifesting in various ways and affecting different elements of the cultures of the university. From gender inequalities in student and faculty numbers, to the male-centred approaches in the residential arrangements and in the governance structures, the university has been an inequitably gendered space in which women have had to work hard to establish themselves.

The young, well-educated women in the study quickly came up against the institution's inability to recognise and take steps to address the imbalances created by women's family obligations and the exclusionary way in which informal networks operate. It might mean that for these women to succeed in the university, they would have to conform to certain norms and accept certain disadvantages as normal. Women leaders are expected to fulfil their social roles as wives and mothers, and then to still take on mothering roles at work in relation both to students and to their male colleagues.

There were also generational differences in the career trajectories of respondents. The respondents in their fifties had been particularly adversely affected by the economic and political crises of the 1980s. As young professionals, they had spent years unable to advance their careers, because conditions in the country had taken their toll on the university. The normalisation of the situation, coupled with the economic liberalisation of tertiary education has provided various opportunities for career advancement, while also bringing new challenges such as unmanageable student numbers and low morale among students, while failing to improve the terms and conditions of faculty.

Overall, there are several research findings which challenge the dominant view of the University of Ghana as a gender-neutral space, and evidence that gender works in combination with other dimensions of status and privilege. Further research would settle some of these matters more conclusively and support efforts to transform the deep and hidden cultures of the university. Thus far, the ad-hoc approach to gender equity adopted by the university has yielded some useful initiatives, but these have not begun to address the scale of change needed. This slow pace of change has been compounded by the university's view of itself as a gender neutral space. The situation is not likely to change until there is both recognition of the gendered character of the institutional and intellectual cultures of the University of Ghana and a will to change.

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Endnotes

1   The University of Ghana is also often referred to as Legon, the name of the Hill on which the University stands. Both names are used in this article.

2   Psuedonyms have been used for all interviewees.

3   From a figure of 6 000, there were now 20 000 people a year. This and other factors resulted in a quadrupling of students in tertiary education in one decade. From 12 000 in 1990/1991, numbers grew to 54 000 in 2002/20003 (Sutherland Addy, 1993).

4   To put research on a stronger footing, the University of Ghana has established a School of Graduate Studies and Research headed by a Dean.

5   Terminal degrees (doctorates) are considered vital for full membership of the fellowship of academics. Interestingly, a little under 50% of male academics had a terminal degree while the figure for women was a little over 25% in 1998. In 2006, the situation was not much different. A little under 50% of male senior members had terminal degrees while the figure for females was now a little under 30%, not much changed from the previous decade. A little under 50% of women had masters as opposed to around 35% of men. What was strikingly consistent over the years was that more male senior members had terminal degrees than did not have them, while for women, it was the other way round – more senior academic women had masters than men.

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"What can a woman do?" Being women in a Nigerian university

Abiola Odejide[1]

Introduction

This article explores the perceptions and the lived experiences of female students in the University of Ibadan (UI), the oldest Nigerian university.

Until recently, there have been only a few in-depth examinations of the challenges of being female in highly gendered academic institutions (Gaidzanwa 2001; Pereira, 2003; Morley et al., 2005; Odejide et al. 2005). Contemporary social science research into gender and higher education in Africa has focused on issues of access, curriculum, the effects of neoliberal policies on the quality and management of education (Ukeje, 2002; Okeke, 2004: 480; Zeleza and Olukoshi, 2005); and also on problems of sexual harassment (African Association of Political Science, 1994; Aina and Odebiyi, 2002; Denga and Denga, 2004).

Ibadan, a big city, is located in southwest Nigeria. With a multi-ethnic student population, the institutional culture might be expected to reflect a variety of gender perspectives, since the gendering of organisations derives from concepts people have internalised about what is normal, natural and fair, stemming from their various class, ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Gaidzanwa, 2001).

Scholars have argued that women and men experience higher education differently and that social relations within the educational institutions depict inequalities in the operations of power as is evident in the statistics of access, employment, decision-making bodies, welfare and capacity to access research and professional opportunities (Bennett, 2002; Mama, 2003). Thus, this article will focus on the gender relations which characterise this university to explore how these relations could be transformed. The value of this type of research lies in its capacity to unearth a fundamental component of the participants' identity, which consists of their sense of being gendered either male or female and their perceptions of self-worth and fulfillment. This gendered aspect of

identity forms their modes of relating to people of their own or other genders (Imam, 1997); and the way such identity intersects with other factors such as ethnicity, religion and class. There is evidence that women are often perceived as unworthy, as indicated in frequent statements of some of our respondents like, "What can a woman do?"

A second issue which this article explores is the perception of women's sexuality and its pervasive impact on relationships in the institution. Reports of the widespread occurrence of transactional sex, sexual harassment, and so-called seductive dressing by females on Nigerian campuses (Morley, 2005; Adedokun, 2005) suggest that women are behaving in ways which are subverting prevailing social relations. Women's sexuality is constructed as "seductive" and perceived as threatening to men's superior status. This conflict echoes the literature on women's sexuality, especially in religious contexts. In Islam, the stereotype of "submissive Muslim women tightly controlled by men" depends on the view that "sexuality [is] an elemental and natural discourse that should be suitably channeled in society" (Imam, 1997). Otherwise, uncontrolled sexuality can cause *fitna* (disorder, chaos) in society (Mernissi, 1987; Fisher, 1994). Similarly, in Christian groups, women's sexuality is also viewed as threatening to the social order. Thus, an ascetic lifestyle was preferred for adherents; even though this viewpoint is constantly subject to social dynamics (Smith, 2004).

This article reports some recurring themes in the findings of a study on "Gender and Institutional Culture in a Nigerian University",[2] which examines the halls of residence and religious fellowships on the campus. The research focus was the dynamics of gendered power relations in the halls of residence and students' religious fellowships, and their influence on the formation of knowledge and knowledge production in spaces which are supposed to be largely managed by students, and where there should be minimal direct control by university administration. The underlying assumption is that knowledge and skills acquisition in such institutions happens in many contexts besides formal lecture situations directly under the influence of academic staff. Such other forms of learning follow from the interactions among students, what is termed in the local parlance as "the university passing through the students." The three research objectives of the larger study were to:

1. Compare gender relations among ordinary members and leaders across the two research loci (religious fellowships and halls of residence);
2. Examine how gender relations are located within age, ethnic, religious, class and cultural relations in each research locus;

3. Identify how gender and other power relations in the two research loci affect the capacity to know among male and female students in the university.

This article focuses on the second of these objectives, in particular, how gender relations develop in religious fellowships and in the institutional cultures of the halls of residence. It asks: what are the perceptions of being female on a Nigerian university campus in spaces which are not strictly regulated by the university authorities? What are the perceptions of female sexuality among the students and staff in these locations?

The national setting

Like most African universities, UI has been affected by serious transformations in political economy that have occurred at the global and local levels and have shaped the world of knowledge generation and application. National political instability, severe under-funding of education, erosion of university autonomy, the brain drain of academic staff, lack of facilities, staff and student loss of morale and violent agitations which make university governance appear more suited for males have all affected the university. It is within this context that the university is expected to fulfill its mandate of being transformative and empowering. It is expected that female students entering a mainly masculine terrain (Mama, 2003; Morley, 2005; Odejide et al., 2005), will in some way, be automatically elevated. Ideally, however institutions should not harbour conservative views on women's status (i.e. that they are innately deficient and in need of elevation), especially in view of the stated goal of higher education, "to hold out to all persons, without distinction of race, creed or sex, the opportunity of acquiring a liberal education" (University of Ibadan Act 1962, quoted in Tamuno, 1981: 3).

In addition, the Nigerian government has in the last two decades promoted the rhetoric of participatory democracy, inclusiveness and women's empowerment. However, the reality is that as in most African countries, this equality does not exist on the national political scene where decision-making processes exclude women (Kwesiga, 2002; Gaidzanwa, 1997). This exclusion also predominates within the university setting, depriving the institution of social capital. The institutions, informal networks, norms, values and beliefs, which women could bring into social and economic development, are ignored or neglected.

At present in Nigeria, women still have unequal access to higher education (Jibril, 2003) and the few studies on institutional practices show that Nigerian universities function as major sites for the production and reproduction of contemporary gender identities and gender inequalities (Pereira, 2003; Odejide, 2003: 453; Adedokun, 2004). Part of the lived experience of being female on a Nigerian university campus is being portrayed and treated as subordinate (Odejide et al., 2005) ostensibly because of "traditional culture" and social and familial factors which view women as being inherently fragile, dependent on male protection and requiring surveillance and control of their behaviour. These are notions which can become entrenched and assume the status of timeless cultural constructs regardless of any increases in female enrolment.

The university setting

Planned as a fully residential campus in the tradition of Oxford and Cambridge, the University of Ibadan was designed to maximize the impact of university education by creating not only a centre of learning but also a social institution, a community of scholars. Currently, UI has one College of Medicine and 14 faculties; 100 teaching departments and eight centres including the Institute of African Studies, which houses the Women's Research and Documentation Centre (WORDOC), probably the oldest Women's Research Centre in Nigeria.

The total student population in the 2004/2005 academic year was 18 957. Of this number, 36.9% were female, a figure which is slightly higher than the national average of 35% (Jibril, 2003). The total number of undergraduate students was 10 835, out of which 39.8% were female. Of the 8 035 postgraduate students, 31.6% were female (UI Planning Office, 2005).[3]

Table 1 shows the undergraduate student enrolment by discipline and gender. It is significant that other than in Technology, undergraduate female enrolment was higher than the national figure of 35 per cent. In Education and Arts, female enrolment was expectedly higher than that of males, but more striking is women's high representation in Pharmacy (56.6%), and Public Health (55.4%), which are not traditional female disciplines. However, the extent to which women's relative presence in the various fields actually translates to greater gender equality must be examined.

Table 1. UI student enrolment by discipline and gender 2004/2005

Faculty	Female	Percentage	Male	Percentage	Total
Arts	656	51.7	614	48.3	1 270
Social Sciences	477	36.6	828	63.4	1 305
Law	208	38.7	329	61.3	537
Science	648	36.3	1 138	63.7	1 786
Technology	120	11.5	923	88.5	1 043
Agric and Forestry	473	42.6	637	57.4	1 110
Basic Med. Science	129	40.8	187	59.2	316
Clinical Sc.	464	41.5	655	58.5	1 119
Dentistry	59	44.0	75	56.0	134
Pharmacy	120	56.6	92	43.4	212
Vet Medicine	210	38.7	332	61.3	542
Education	682	50.8	658	49.1	1 340
Public Health	67	55.4	54	44.6	121
Total	4 313	39.8	6 522	60.2	10 835

Source: UI Planning Office, 2005

The academic staff profile shows that among academic staff, the overall percentage of female academic staff is 29%. Women make up 14% of the Professor/reader grade, 30% of the senior lecturer/research fellow grade, 35% of the lecturer grade. The highest proportion of women academics can be found at the lower grade where women make up 41% at the assistant lecturers and junior research fellow grade.[4]

Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework for the study derives from theories of gender identities that are informed by an African perspective. The attribution of women's inferior status to traditional culture has been contested in studies on African women and patriarchy. This debate has been succinctly captured in Bakare-Yusuf's work, which defines the argument as being between those theorists who draw attention to hierarchical differences between men and

women and those who stress their socially equivalent and complementary status
(2003: 24). On the one hand, feminist scholars argue that "women, both now
and in the past, play pivotal reproductive and productive roles that facilitate
patriarchal economic and productive dominance" (Bakare-Yusuf, 2003: 10). On
the other hand, scholars like Oyewumi (1997), Amadiume (1987), and Nzegwu
(2001: 30–32) hold that gender was not an organizing principle in African
societies before colonialism, even though there may have been other forms of
social inequities. According to them, systematic patriarchalisation of African
societies has occurred through colonialism, the introduction of Islam and
Christianity and the process of state formation.

This framework is useful not only for secular relationships but also for
examining gender relations within religious settings in which Imam identifies
a remarkable consistency of vision, that is, "the centrality of concern with
women, an asceticism about the body, a focus on (in particular) women's
sexuality as a source of immorality . . . the reconstruction of patriarchal control
over women and their sexuality" (1997: 3).

Research methodology

As noted, this research focused on students in religious and residential spaces
on the U.I. campus. Part of the complex realities that have shaped student life
at the university in the last two decades has been the rise of transnational reli-
gious movements such as Pentecostalism, and reformist (more fundamentalist)
Islam. This spread has occurred at national level and has been attributed to
globalization. According to Imam (2004:125), the pervasiveness of evangelical
forms of Christianity and Islam could account for new forms of identity for-
mation on campuses through which youths align themselves to persons who
share similar beliefs and values with them. At UI, although students' religious
fellowships have existed since the earliest days of the university (Parrinder,
1981), they were on the fringes of the larger student body until the 1980s and
1990s, which saw the emergence of strong evangelical groups of Christians and
Muslims. Currently, eighteen Christian groups and one Muslim group exist on
the UI campus – alongside 41 academic societies and 47 social/cultural/philan-
thropic organisations (UI "Registered Clubs, Associations and Societies" 2006).
Their objectives are outlined in statements such as, "to make heaven and take
as many as possible with us" (Redeemed Christian Church of God Records); or
"to bring Muslim students under one umbrella, promoting the oneness of Allah
and prophethood of Mohammed SAW" (Muslim Students' Society Records).

Approximately, 7 500 students (37% of the total student population) are registered as members of religious organisations. These highly structured fellowships have a reputation of providing students with social and academic support networks and also protection against campus violence. Their large number and visibility on campus make them a worthy object of study.

Less than half of UI students live on campus. Currently, only 44.6% of students (30% of males and 15% of female students) are accommodated in the twelve halls of residence. Eight of these are single sex while four are mixed (co-ed). There are three halls for postgraduate students, and one for both undergraduate and postgraduate students. The halls form a strong part of the university culture on account of the deep ties which students forge there, ties which frequently endure beyond graduation, as can be seen in the strong Hall Alumni Association.

The method of study of students in these spaces was mainly qualitative, combining key informant interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs) with documentary evidence about the groups obtained from their records. Key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with the presidents and members of the executive committees of five diverse Christian fellowships (the Protestant, Anglican Communion, Baptist, African Independent and African Pentecostal churches),[5] and the Muslim Students' Society (MSS). We also conducted interviews with the female wings of these organizations: the coordinators of the "sisters' arms" of the Christian fellowships, and the *Amira*, the leaders of the female members of the MSS.

In the halls of residence, executive members and residents of Queen's Hall and Queen Idia Hall (the two all-female halls), Awolowo Hall (co-ed and undergraduate and postgraduate students) and Kuti Hall (male) were interviewed. In addition, the Dean of Students, the hall wardens of selected halls and staff advisers of the religious fellowships were interviewed. The rationale for selecting two all-female halls was to enable the female perception of university life to be heard from the perspective of those who lived in virtually exclusively separate spaces for women.

Eight focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted among a mixed group of BSF members, male MSS members, female MSS members, female Queen Idia Hall residents, female Queen's Hall residents, male Awo Hall residents, female Awo Hall residents and male Kuti Hall residents. Each focus group consisted of at least eight members randomly selected, except that members of the executive councils of the organisations were excluded. The MSS FGDs had to be

single sex because of the restriction on interaction between male and female members at their meetings.

Six postgraduate research assistants from the social sciences participated in data collection and analysis, including a Muslim female student specially selected for the MSS to facilitate access. Though my position as a senior academic and principal officer of the institution facilitated access to students and staff, and cooperation, I had to stay in the background during the data collection, given the unequal power relations between a principal officer of a university and students. However, I closely monitored the research through briefing of research staff, training, discussion of instruments and debriefing sessions after each assignment.

The respondents regarded these interviews as opportunities to express their candid opinions about deficiencies in their academic, residential and social lives, presumably with the hope that as part of management, I would be in a position to correct these. There was no reported case of refusal to participate, but we had difficulties in securing appointments, especially with the presidents of the religious fellowships whose protocol officers (fellow students) made access very difficult. This inaccessibility constitutes part of our data, as it revealed the highly hierarchical structure of the organisations.

Data collected from the eight focus group discussions and 35 interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analysed. The themes emerging from the interviews were tracked and recorded and the data from the two modes of data collection were triangulated with data from the documentary search to highlight the major findings.

The research assistants perceived the data collection and analysis to be empowering in building their research capacity skills, and in revealing the gender dynamics of their own institution (which they had often taken for granted).

Findings
1. Gendered hierarchy
A major finding from the interviews and the focus group discussions was the general perception of and acquiescence to a gendered hierarchy which privileged male students. Males were credited with superior skills in leadership and people, time and crisis management. This position was supported by essentialist notions of women's "natural" temperament, cultural constructs, the generally low status of women in Nigeria, and by religious doctrines. The cohort of

leaders of fellowships was predominantly male in spite of the large number of female members. Only the IVCU and the Redeemed Christian Students Fellowship had up to 30% of its leadership as females (see Table 2). Even then, female coordinators of "Sisters' Fellowship" and Amira (female heads) of the female Muslim Students' Society were still subordinate to the male leaders. Thus the Amira vigorously dismissed the possibility of female leadership by declaring, "Astagafulla (God forbids it), Islam does not encourage the female to be head of the community".

Table 2. Composition of executive committees of fellowships by gender

Organisation	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total	Percent
BSF	27	71	11	28.9	38	100
CCC	15	78.9	4	21.1	19	100
IVCU	24	64.9	13	35.1	37	100
MSS	13	65	7	35	20	100
RCCG	25	41.7	35	58.3	60	100

Source: Gender and Institutional Culture in a
Nigerian University research project, interviews, 2005

In the female halls of residence, females served as executives, but even in a mixed hall like Awo, which is 80 per cent female, there were no females in the executive (Awo Hall chair, 2005 interview and FGDs). Female participation in student politics as potential candidates for elective offices was low and frowned at; so was female activism. A male member of a mixed hall said:

> . . . the ones that come out . . . (for politics) are probably . . .
> those feminists. Those who believe in women's emancipation.
> But anybody who is oriented towards getting married, having a family,
> settling down, definitely the man will not want it.

The reasons given for women's apathy were astounding; for example, "women's feeble-mindedness", "fragility", "lack of courage", "inferiority complex", "keeping malice", "being more controversial" as opposed to "men's boldness", "self confidence", and "strong heart". The resignation of many women to their marginalisation in university politics is captured in the words of a female hall warden: "Some of them (female students) will always say 'What can a woman do? Let me just face my academics'." Even more worrying were reported cases of female students refusing to support female candidates in faculty elections.

This was in spite of the risks these candidates were taking, participating in often volatile student politics in the context of a supposedly hostile university management and difficult academic demands.

Occasional reference was made to an institutional culture that inhibited female participation, such as the psychological and physical violence that characterized student politics and made it threatening to female students. Generally, individual agency as opposed to social structures was perceived as important, with the female students being blamed for their "own" lack of motivation, poor time management and lack of the networking skills required for political success in student politics.

The domestication of female students was observed in both the secular and religious research spaces. Exploitative interactions were reported, mainly in the form of a number of women students providing domestic services by cooking for males in the halls, and doing decorating, sweeping and cooking work in the fellowships. Public preaching by females was limited, where permitted, to crusades, seminar, Bible class or a Bible discussion where "ladies" could preach, coordinate or evangelise (Fellowship FGD).

Ethnicity did not appear to intersect in any significant way with gender concepts in this study, probably because majority of the students in the university were from the Yoruba ethnic group. However, it was striking that some of the girls who ran for elective positions were encouraged to do so by their friends from other ethnic groups.

2. Infantilisation and control of women

Closely related to relegation of female students to the background was their complaint of being infantilised by female hall wardens, who enforced regulations on visiting periods, "morality", dress codes and "loitering" around the hall by "ladies", deploying the University's regulation that lecturers are *in loco parentis*. Less authoritarian treatment of male students by their male wardens and hall supervisors was resented and seen as sexist.

Trivialising or labeling of female students was common, for example, in the derisive references to residents of one of the female halls as "*butty*", that is, overly westernised, privileged, and not suitable as "wife material". The interviews and FGDs suggested that heterosexual relations are the norm and wifehood is an ideal sought by the female students.

In the fellowships, women's high levels of participation in religious activities were stigmatized as excessive, juvenile, evidence of being "somehow feeble

minded, more . . . easily (moved) than guys". Participation in the fellowships was viewed as advantageous to women, though, as a strategy to identify suitable partners. A male respondent in an FGD said, "There's a big rush in the husband market. In the fellowships and crusades, you will see the number of sisters who are there to get a husband." Subtle psychological pressure and close monitoring of dress codes, dating rules and general conduct on campus ensured compliance by members.

3. Female sexuality and disorder

In striking contrast to the strong emphasis placed on women's subsidiary role in the university, our researchers also heard a strong discourse that constructed women's sexuality as powerful and threatening to the social order. According to this discourse, women's sexuality was overwhelming – and impossible for women to control by themselves. One of the Sisters' coordinators presented the women students as highly subversive of social norms:

> Female students . . . go about nude, all in the name of fashion . . . the way they dress . . . may directly or indirectly have influence on the male students . . . like what they used to say, that women and money is the root of evil.

The recurring references to the existence of transactional sex and the alleged preference of some of the female students for "*aristos*", sugar daddies, echoes a dominant media focus on the alleged "immorality" of female undergraduates and the potential damage to the reputation of their residence halls and the university, according to female hall residents. The *Amira* explained the perceived reason for the need to control women: "[A] female voice is nakedness". Given this premise, management of widespread gender-based violence by the hall management was based on blaming the victims, holding the girls responsible for their own sexual harassment through their "indecent dressing."

4. Support through religious identities

Fellowships provided the students with many services: an intellectual and emotional safety net in the context of dissatisfaction with perceived inadequate academic, financial, social and emotional support by the institution. A male fellowship president said, "Some of them (students) are scared, they're afraid of university life; how do you cope with your academic and fellowship work and some other thing?" Thus, a major attraction of membership of the fellowships for students was the organisation of tutorial classes at departmental, faculty,

hall and interdisciplinary levels, even though these were gendered. Male students in general taught the groups, including the MSS, unless a female student was really outstanding, thus reinforcing notions of male's superior academic capacity. Social support was provided through hall and departmental cell groups, which effectively covered virtually all aspects of the members' campus lives.

A sense of collective identity was concretised by reference to each other with the title "Sister" and "Brother", followed by the person's first name said with a distinctive tonal inflection, an inflection which makes it different from a mere linguistic premodifier for signifying seniority. The effect of this was to blur the marker for seniority, which is a requirement for interactions in the Yoruba language.

5. Limited women's agency
The female students occasionally contested the male control of members of fellowship groups, and the double-standard of the fellowship groups in relation to sexuality. They also wanted better mentoring by female lecturers and the women's groups on campus. The female residents of Awo Hall had, in a proactive move, joined a non-governmental organisation, War against Rape and Sexual Harassment (WARSH) to fight cases of rape and sexual harassment, and had secured male residents' support.

Strategic alliances over academic work were being forged in the secular spaces, and female students sought support from senior women academic staff who could mentor them in women's groups such as the UI Women's Society, as well as in religious organisations like The Deborah Initiative, The Esther Club, and Sisters on Fire. They also questioned the more conservative agendas of groups that were preoccupied with producing "good wives and mothers to build the nation".

Discussion
The perception of a gendered hierarchy in the university's religious fellowships, and in the university student politics was pervasive. Such hierarchy runs contrary to the stated objective of the university to be an equitable space. A university setting which promotes itself as being progressive if not transformative appears to be a veritable haven for entrenched inequalities that work against women. The popular attribution of these attitudes to tradition, rather than to the "modernising" atmosphere of a university, suggests beliefs and practices

that the female and male students have internalised and are unwilling to change. These are students who have been exposed to technological innovations, philosophical, political and social theories, and yet continue to resist any attempts to shift what Mernissi refers to as "authority thresholds" (1987: 9).

In addition, for these university students, the belief in the gender hierarchy that privileges men continues to be affirmed. This calls for a re-examination of insistence on the absence of gender as a social division among Yorubas (Oyewunmi 1997, 2002). The findings suggest that there is in fact considerable reproduction of traditional Yoruba norms of masculinity and femininity within contemporary religious associations on the UI campus, thus affirming the restrictive roles ascribed to women.

The marginalisation of females in decision-making on Nigeria's contemporary political scene further legitimises the situation on the university campus. This corroborates the theories of those who point to the influence of contemporary politics on gender inequality in Nigeria (Nzegwu, 2001: 30–32; Oyewumi, 2002). The statements of many of the women students in this study denote a disturbing level of resignation to an unequal social status, and a reluctance to exert some degree of agency to empower themselves in either secular and religious contexts.

However, on the other hand we also found evidence of some contestations in the secular space, among hall chairs and female activists. Here there were remarks that indicate that women can negotiate their relationships with their male friends and colleagues in academic work. There were also calls for reviews of the curriculum to include entrepreneurial courses that could make women more employable and thus less dependent on male partners. This marks the seeds of women's awareness that they too can become "social actors, employing, reforming and changing existing social institutions for their own ends" (Mojab, 2001).

What was less explicable was the disturbing regurgitation of traditional labels of women as quarrelsome; as less academically gifted than the male students; as shallow thinkers, and as malicious. Thus, a supposedly modernizing institution was reproducing age-old stereotypes, in spite of the increasingly large numbers of female students even in the highly demanding professional traditionally male-dominated disciplines like pharmacy (56.6%), public health (55.4%) and clinical sciences (41.4%, see table 1).

How does one explain the observed clustering of females in the religious fellowships and the pervasiveness of the fellowships even in such ostensibly secular places as the halls of residence? One explanation for the ascendancy

of collective identities defined by religion points to the safety net provided by these networks, given the wider context of social instability and uncertainty in the Nigerian university system and the growing distance of the students from the location of institutional decision-making. Another influential force could be the competition for limited resources and the disillusionment of the present generation of students with the state of affairs in the nation (Federici, 2000: 49). Thus they were willing to "bear the brunt of identity politics in terms of control of their life choices so as to follow 'authentic' notions of identity and behavior and the emphasis on controlling women's sexuality and other aspects of their lives" (Imam, 2004).

This was designed to avoid what Mernissi (1987) and Fisher (1994) had described as the Islamic concept of *fitna* (chaos, disorder), premised on the view that women, as uncontrollable beings, are destructive to the social order and need to be restrained. O'Brien and Coulon note that conservative Islamic prescriptions of strict moral standards for women as a panacea for economic and social ills arise from "an institutionalised mistrust of women" (1988: 117), especially those females seen as Westernised. These fundamentalist and politically far-right groups refer to so-called traditional forms of the religion, and refuse to countenance for example, the varieties of leadership positions of Muslim women in other societies in favour of Islamic rulings about the "complementarity" and "separation" of male and female roles (Mojab, 2001).

The Christian groups similarly exclude women from top leadership positions due to the doctrinal positions of their mother churches and patriarchal family structures. Their unquestioning reiteration of such dogma differs from the findings of studies that have shown gender practices in the churches to be more diverse, deriving from intersecting ambiguities in Western and African gender practices that at once empower and disempower women (Crumbley, 2003: 584). The influence of fundamentalism in this study revealed it to be a profoundly simplified and patriarchal worldview.

Conclusion

The study has examined the ways in which gender identity for female students is constructed in a Nigerian university. Gender relations in both religious fellowships and halls of residence have been strongly influenced by religious beliefs – both evangelical Christianity and Islam, and those notions which the students and staff have imbibed about traditional norms of masculinity and femininity. Uncertainties about campus life and disillusionment about

national life have coalesced in the minds of the female students into a state of resignation and frustration expressed in the question "What can a woman do?". While the individual may feel powerless to effect a change, the institution can restructure its policies and processes to establish gender equality. This might be a painful evolution for a deeply masculine institution, since it will have to make deep "institutional, pedagogical and epistemological" changes (Mama, 2003: 105) in order to discard the restrictive social roles ascribed to females in what should be a transformative environment.

Acknowledgments

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Endnotes

1   The author is a faculty member in the Department of Communication and Language Arts at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. She was serving as deputy vice-chancellor at the time of the implementation of the study.

2   As part of the larger Gender and Institutional Culture in African Universities project carried out by the African Gender Institute.

3   Eighty-seven sub-degree students were excluded from the study.

4   Figures from 'Gender Equity in Commonwealth Higher Education', working paper 5. The Institute of Education 2003, London.

5   These were Inter Varsity Christian Union (IVCU), Redeemed Christian Church of God Fellowship (RCCGF), Celestial Church of Christ , Student Parish (CCC), Baptist Students' Fellowship (BSF).

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Alienation, Gender and Institutional Culture at the University of Zimbabwe

Rudo B. Gaidzanwa

Introduction

This paper explores the issue of alienation in academia and the ways in which a small group of academics at the University of Zimbabwe manipulate their working environment to resist and imbue positive meaning to their work under conditions of social, economic and political crisis in Zimbabwe. This paper is based on secondary sources and original field research conducted at the University of Zimbabwe since 1989. As the paper was being written, undergraduate teaching in the largest faculties of Social Studies, Arts, Commerce, Agriculture and others, virtually ground to a standstill as academic staff undertook industrial action over salaries and conditions of service starting in January 2007. Teaching only resumed in late May 2007 after a protracted struggle between the university authorities and the Association of University Teachers.

Theoretical framework

Theoretically, the paper explores the alienation amongst academics at the University of Zimbabwe. Marx used the concept of alienation to refer to the loss of control experienced by workers over the nature, process and products of their labour. Marx and other theorists such as Braverman (1974) and Carbonella (1992) observed that when workers entered wage relationships, employers estranged them from the products of their labour and forced them to give up their ability to determine the intensity and duration of their work. Workers lose the capacity to organize, divide and allocate work and define the tools and machines they use. Alienation occurs as workers are estranged from themselves when the meanings and purposes of their work are lost.

Work, especially away from their domestic environments, also provides variety to workers, enabling them to interact with people with whom they can broaden and develop voluntary ties of affection not necessarily based on

affinal or agnatic relations. This is particularly true for women workers, who are usually expected to be satisfied with relationships and activities in the domestic domain. Wage work is also a contributory component to a stable social identity, especially for men, whose self-esteem is tied to the economic contributions they make to maintaining households most especially those of their wives and children.

African studies of academic work generally did not focus on the concept of alienation: Nyerere (1967), Yesufu (1973), Ajayi (1996) and Mazrui (1978) examined the role of the African university, the curriculum and structure of disciplines in cultural revival, improving relevance and nation-building. Later studies on the African university have focused on the alienation of African academics, the erosion of academic freedom and the increased political repression of staff and students in the African university, combined with economic and social distress (Diouf and Mamdani, 1994).

This paper theorises that all institutions are historical sites of cultural production and reproduction, and that these sites are gendered. In universities in particular, cultural and intellectual production are explicitly stated to be the missions of the institutions, privileging specific types of knowledge, frameworks, and ways of thinking and expressing intellect. Academic institutions are replete with tacit assumptions about masculinity and femininity. In situations of underdevelopment, national universities have been expected to produce scientific knowledge that can be deployed to fight imperialism and build nations able to resist the predations of other nations in scientific, social, political and other arenas (Sawyerr, 2004).

This paper explores alienation in the Zimbabwean academic context by describing and analysing gendered aspects of academic work in Zimbabwe. It details the organisation of the University of Zimbabwe as a workplace, the experiences of academics and their adaptation and resistance to alienation. It draws on an observational study of two sites, the Senior Common Room and the Social Science Tearoom, to understand and analyse the ways in which leisure and recreational spaces, along with the lecture halls and residences, function as sites for intellectual production, reproduction, and contestation.

Research methodologies

The secondary data was collected by perusal of historical data such as biographies, the official history and founding documents of the University of Zimbabwe as it has evolved through different incarnations as, the University

College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (UCRN), the University of Rhodesia (UR) and finally, the University of Zimbabwe (UZ). The primary data are derived from interviews with past luminaries of this university, observation, and focus group discussions amongst academics. This data set was gathered for the Affirmative Action Project that has run since 1999, and the Gender and Institutional Cultures Project in 2005–6. I also drew on my personal experiences and insights as a student between 1976 and 1978, and as a teaching assistant between 1979 and 1980. My knowledge of people and friendships over many years with many respondents helped me gain access to records, information and confidences on different events. The interviews and observations were necessary to procure research data on the leisure choices and recreational activities of academics because it was not possible to procure these kinds of data through other methodologies such as surveys. Observation was undertaken by me and two male research assistants in sports and leisure areas, notably the Senior Common Room and the Social Studies Tearoom in the Arts block. In total, we conducted 50 interviews and conversations with various key respondents in the university community.

The early history of the university

Gelfand (1978) provided the bulk of the data on the founding processes of the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (UCRN), a federal institution established through a Royal Charter in 1955. This institution was supposed to be a beacon of hope and provide a place of respite from colonialism, racism and parochialism engendered by the environment and the stifling of learning, open debate and liberalism desired by some sections of the colonial communities. Originally intended to be a whites-only institution, the UCRN became a non-racial institution because of the intervention of the colonial government, which offered to fund halls of residence, the administration and library and other buildings.

In reality, while maintaining a non-racial formal identity, the UCRN was a white-dominated institution with a predominantly white student body and staff. The reason for the poor black student representation was that the federal government did not have a large number of black secondary schools from which to draw black students. Only the missionaries provided black secondary school education and the first government secondary schools for blacks such as Goromonzi and Fletcher were established only after 1946. Secondary schools such as Kutama and Empandeni, which were run by Catholics, and

St Augustine's and Thekwane, run by the Anglicans, had till then provided the only secondary schooling available to blacks. Even then, the mission-run secondary schools tended to favour black men and only a few black women attended them.

Before 1955, blacks desiring tertiary education went to South Africa, where they studied medicine, the arts and social sciences, and business. Secondary and tertiary education were limited in availability to blacks in colonial Zimbabwe, resulting in the first wave of black-educated people moving to South Africa for tertiary and university education.

Institutional cultures

The dominant racist culture was exclusionary of, and alienating to, blacks; and the gender culture of the university tended to be very white and masculinist, exemplifying settler/frontier militance, especially after 1965, the year of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence. This masculinist institutional culture was exaggerated by the war as the settler-dominated society gradually became militarised in the seventies. This culture co-existed uneasily with a more liberal, masculine counter-culture, which manifested itself in covert support for the liberation movements and a liberal curriculum in the arts, social sciences and education. Aspects of liberal culture and curriculum were advanced by lecturers, particularly white, male expatriates such as Terence Ranger and others, who then constituted the majority of lecturing staff. These lecturers – Terence Ranger, Giovanni Arrighi, John Reed, and others – were deported as soon as they became too flagrant in their liberalism for the regime to tolerate.

Amongst the black students, the masculine gender culture was dominated by peasant and working-class norms overlaid by liberal masculine values. The minority black student body comprised peasant and working-class men and women who had obligations towards their kin, and needed to graduate and secure good jobs that would enable them to support their extended families and kin. In this alienating environment, stressing achievement and upward mobility, they experienced pressure to graduate and secure good jobs while supporting the struggles against racism and class discrimination.

As the war intensified in the 1970s and more white men were called for military service, black student intakes increased. Nevertheless, despite consti-tuting an elite in their racial group in colonial Zimbabwe, black students and academic staff remained a racially subordinated and culturally alienated group, and their gender and class cultures were suppressed or muted.

The institutional cultures of the colonial university were mixed, with liberal tendencies predominating in the first decade of the founding of the UCRN. The racial nature of campus interactions was established, with racially-separated residences, but integrated lectures and lecture rooms. Both races used laboratories and other academic facilities simultaneously. The student populations were predominantly white and they favoured policies and practices exclusionary of blacks in general and those whites perceived to be liberal or so-called "kaffir lovers". In Rhodesia, liberal whites were despised and disliked for their stances, which were perceived to be pro-black and showing scant appreciation and gratitude for white privileges, for which their white pioneer forefathers had fought and sometimes died. One law professor used to intimidate black law students by parading on campus in camouflage rather than an academic gown. He demonstrated his politics and loyalties to all students and staff, and his wife too was a prominent propagandist for the regime.

The white exclusionary and racially anti-intellectual culture came under stress as the numbers of white men increased, and they could no longer be accommodated in the segregated Manfred Hodson Hall. Eventually, some white men had to join blacks, mixed race and Asian students in Carr Saunders Hall.

The black academic body at this time experienced conflicting expectations, since they were aware of racial and class discrimination, which disadvantaged all poor and black people, while at the same time they subscribed to those norms supporting achievement and upward mobility in the system. They therefore needed to devote a lot of their time to the serious intellectual activities necessary for good performance at university, and to steer clear of confrontations with whites, while supporting the struggles against racism and class discrimination by blacks.

Black academic men tended to take the more overtly political route, participating in overt and acceptable politics through meetings, class boycotts, pickets, pamphleteering, demonstrations and other activities that did not threaten their jobs too much or put their academic futures at risk. They were supported by a few black women and liberals from the white student and lecturing communities. However, most of the white community considered the black staff and students extreme nationalists and communists who did not deserve to attend a state-funded institution whose values and culture they opposed and attacked.

There were common gender understandings across the racial groups with regard to women. Women were not expected to take leading roles in academic

and institutional struggles, although their support was expected. White women staff occupied the positions of secretaries and treasurers of clubs and societies. The war provoked changes in the racial composition of the staff; more black staff were hired as teaching assistants, junior lecturers, technicians and tutors. These categories of staff did not have a significant impact on the intellectual or institutional cultures. If anything, they were keen to fit in and succeed on the terms defined by the institution. This was the situation during the period from my enrolment as an undergraduate student in sociology in 1976 until I joined the same department as a teaching assistant in 1979.

Intellectual cultures

The intellectual culture of the UCRN was dominated by the expatriate whites who presided over faculties and the administration, nurturing and maintaining the intellectual cultures and traditions of British universities such as London and Manchester, whose examinations were taken by UCRN students and whose degrees the graduates earned. There was a self-conscious effort to bring up black students to the standards of this culture, to nurture them so that they could achieve within it and to prove to the Rhodesian society that the non-racial intellectual and cultural experiment would and could work. As Mazrui (1978) observes, African universities have been the most dominant transmitters of western cultures in African societies. The UCRN might not have been African in reality, but the graduates of UCRN, the UR and the UZ have nevertheless played prominent roles in post-colonial Zimbabwe.

Amongst the men and women who attended and/or graduated from the UCRN and UR during the 1960s are prominent men and women such as Aeneas Chigwedere, current minister of Education; Mark Chona, a former Zambian minister; Fay Chung, former education minister; and many other members of the post-war Zimbabwean cabinet.

The UCRN was able to maintain a high quality of academic output and a metropolitan intellectual culture, complete with external examiners, sabbatical leave for staff, seminar systems to facilitate academic exchanges and continuing learning, all sustained under the oversight of the metropolitan universities. This intellectual culture privileged experimentation, field research and publishing of research internationally.

The intellectual culture after 1965 changed inexorably as the University of Rhodesia, as it became known, lost its international and militant flavour and became a more self-consciously defensive intellectual institution, attempting to

balance its position in a racist society that was under scrutiny by a supposedly liberal western world that had tried to institutionalise a liberal, humanist intellectual culture. Local, predominantly white lecturers were recruited to replace the expatriates and "leftist" academics were banned, as different intellectual tendencies sought to assert themselves. The sciences and law faculties became less liberal while the arts and social sciences attempted to keep up a culture of resistance and openness through intellectual production. There was continuous repression of those academic activists who fell foul of the Smith regime.

The chemistry department of the university was involved in research on poisons and toxins used against the guerillas of the liberation movements, while the law faculty had lecturers who openly supported the regime. Racism was overt, especially against black staff and students in enrolments, some classes and in some residences.

Leisure and recreation in the colonial university

In the first decade of the founding of the UCRN, the college was small and pro-vided opportunities for intimacy between staff and between staff and students. For example, Gelfand shows that staff had access to leisure through the Senior Common Room, guest nights in halls of residence and staff to staff visits for dinners, drinks and tea in the private homes of liberal whites and nationalist blacks. A significant proportion of staff at the UCRN and the UR were expatri-ates and therefore, lived in campus-based housing. They interacted socially and sometimes politically with students.

Opportunities to mingle and share recreational pursuits with the local white population existed but the politics of racist Rhodesia alienated expatriate white academic staff from local whites. The liberals in the local population explored multi-racial initiatives that were often viewed with suspicion by the bulk of the local white population. Many of the liberal white academics were keen to explore friendships and relationships across the colour line. They were able to entertain their black friends and acquaintances in university housing and on campus, since the campus was, as stipulated by a condition for Federal fund-ing, exempt from the segregation laws that governed and proscribed mixed residential and other contact across racial lines. The UCRN had to provide a complete social environment for its academic and student populations, since they were not able to live outside the university without falling subject to the racial legislation and practices of the host society. It was only possible for black students to live and attend classes in Mount Pleasant, a white area, as long as

they were confined to the campus, where they were not likely to offend the racial sensibilities of the neighbouring white population.

Black students and black workers servicing the university community and commuting from the townships faced many hardships because they could not use whites-only public transport to Mount Pleasant on a daily basis. Whatever black transport existed was scheduled for mornings and evenings only, when domestic workers, shop assistants and other service staff could be expected to be commute to and from work. Black students attending dances, fulfilling sports fixtures or lectures during the day could not expect to be given lifts by white motorists. In fact, the UCRN authorities advised black university students to wear their academic gowns when flagging down transport so that the motorists could tell that they were university students and not random black men and women who ostensibly had no business in a white area.

Thus, the UCRN became an exclusive community where residential, recreational, leisure and educational facilities had to be provided on site, a costly exercise occasioned by the politics of the day. In such a community, there was a very strong incentive to improvise on entertainment and to constantly situate leisure and recreational opportunities on the campus rather than have expatriate staff and black students seek leisure and recreation off campus.

Independence and growth

Independence was won in 1980 after a long and bloody struggle that claimed the lives of over 30 000 Zimbabweans. At the University of Zimbabwe, as it became known, there was a very exuberant atmosphere as Walter Kamba, the first black vice chancellor, was appointed in 1981. The national economy grew at about 4% per annum and welfare policies to expand access to health, education and housing were developed, resulting in the opening up of the public service and to a lesser extent, the private sector, to blacks, particularly men. The 1980s were a decade of transformation, as black lecturers were appointed to lectureships, curricula were revised to include African perspectives in arts and the humanities, and donor assistance for staff development was made available and utilised, mainly by junior black male staff. The existing contracts of white professorial staff were broken to enable blacks to occupy chairs and senior positions in the university. Due to the absence of black women in the senior ranks of the university, these changes benefited black males. The campus became a place of engagement, ferment and a centre of political, economic and other intellectual leadership.

In these years, the Social Science Tearoom and the Senior Common Room were popular sites for the airing of contending Marxist and liberal ideologies. The expansion of the UZ and the increase in the hiring of black staff resulted in the dispersion of staff from the campus to the suburbs of Harare, since there was insufficient campus accommodation for expatriates and locals. In any case, most of the black academics were then able to buy homes in the former white areas and did not have to live on campus. The campus-based places of leisure thus had an important function in enabling the expanded staff complement to meet each other outside their departments and to fraternize across disciplinary boundaries.

The UZ expanded its student numbers, from 2 235 in 1980 to 9 288 in 1989. After 1983, space constraints in the library, lecture rooms, laboratories and canteens became more acute as these growing student numbers outstripped available teaching, learning and leisure facilities. These developments created an alienating teaching and learning environment, stretching teaching hours; and crowding lecture rooms, halls of residence, laboratories, canteens and ablution facilities over the campus.

The decline of the university, and new sources of alienation

In Zimbabwe, the 1990s were characterised by economic decline, indebtedness and the beginning of the dissolution of the national social contract between the state, academia, civil society and labour. The university community, students and academic staff had been instrumental in opposing the one-party state project of the ruling party, ZANU-PF, in the mid-1980s. That project had been shelved, but the rift created by the issue grew in response to growing authoritarianism by the government. Students' demonstrations against corruption in the wake of the "Willowgate" scandal, in which party and government functionaries were discovered to have bought cars at subsidised prices and re-sold them at significant profit on the open market, led to the discrediting of the ruling party and government in the eyes of the populace. Students led the anti-corruption demonstrations and demanded higher grants and loans from the state (Cheater, 1991).

In retaliation, the government enacted two pieces of legislation, the University of Zimbabwe Amendment Act and the National Council for Higher Education Act in 1991 which, inter alia, whittled down the powers of the university. For example, the Chancellor (the President of Zimbabwe), was vested with new powers to appoint the Vice Chancellor after consultation with the council and the Minister of Higher Education.

The university's fortunes began to decline drastically as economic austerity eroded salaries. State repression of the university increased while working conditions deteriorated. In July 1991, during the graduation ceremony which the Chancellor and the Cabinet attend, Professor Kamba the Vice Chancellor announced his intention to retire on the grounds of what he termed ". . . unprofessional fingers interfering in the affairs of the university". This announcement, timed for delivery on an occasion widely covered by the media, signaled open conflict between the state and the university. There was despondency and fear within the university community when a new Vice Chancellor was appointed – he was a party functionary with no higher education interest or experience. Student demonstrations against the state flared up in October 1991, resulting in the expulsion of all students and the closure of the university.

These and other factors contributed to the alienation and exodus of academic workers.

Exodus of workers and the economic crisis

In the 1990s, national debt, drought, a structural adjustment programme, unemployment and increasing poverty led to at least 25% of professionally trained Zimbabweans emigrating to South Africa, Canada, USA, UK and Australia. Significant numbers of staff leaving on sabbatical leave failed to return and the complexion of the university and its intellectual and institutional cultures changed as seminar activity declined and staff loyalty waned. This resulted in UZ's transformation from being an institution with a strong intellectual culture to the present situation – an institution dominated by junior, often inexperienced, academic staff.

By March 2006, the profile of staffing at the UZ showed that the UZ had 1 050 academic staff comprising 481 male permanent staff, 327 male contract staff, 142 female permanent staff and 108 female contract staff. Of the permanent academic staff, there were 44 professors and 10 associate professors, 64 senior lecturers and 435 lecturers showing the dominance of the junior academics on the staff. Amongst the 394 contract academic staff, there were 16 professors, 2 associate professors, 11 senior lecturers, 110 lecturers, 70 teaching assistants, 171 graduate teaching assistants and 13 graduate research assistants and 1 research assistant. The gender breakdown of the staff was not available for technical reasons but there are less than six females in the professorial grades, while women constitute one third of the senior lecturer grade. Women are bunched in the lecturer grades in the permanent staff category. Amongst

the contract staff, there are virtually no professors, and most women are in the lecturer and teaching assistant and graduate teaching assistant posts.

In mid-2006, there was a total vacancy rate of 31%. The specialized units and the College of Health Sciences, and Law and Science faculties have been hardest hit by the staff exodus, with vacancy rates of 51%, 50%, 44% and 30% respectively. The Arts, with 5% vacancies, is the least affected. Other faculties such as Agriculture, Social Studies and Education have vacancy rates of between 17% and 22%. In February 2006, academic staff went on strike for higher wages and better working conditions.

The physical environment

The physical environment of the workplace is an important indicator of the value placed on the workers in any workplace. The current degradation of the working environment at the university is characterised by litter all over the campus and overgrown grass on quadrangles and paths. Shortages of chalk, teaching aids, lack of resources for learning materials, lack of research funding and general degradation of the buildings and classrooms undermine the pleasure derived from the research, teaching and learning experiences. By February 2002, in most departments, there were no cleaning services in offices, corridors and other spaces, presumably because of lack of funds. Each staff member now swept their own office if they considered it dirty. Offices are shared by at least two people, but these offices tend to be very small and were originally intended for single occupancy. Consultations with students and members of staff and the public are not very private and the environment is so degraded that minimal time is spent on campus.

Safety on campus presents problems because of poor lighting and security. There has been no lighting in the humanities car park from 2000. Many academics, especially women in the humanities buildings have stopped working in their offices after 6pm every day because of poor security. In 2000, a female academic was attacked at lunchtime in this car park, which is supposed to be patrolled by at least two security personnel at any one time. This incident terrorised many people, particularly women students and lecturers, some of whom had witnessed the incident and the lack of security on a supposedly guarded campus. However, there has been no improvement in security since then.

Theft of computers, books and other teaching and learning equipment is so rife that academics dare not leave personal equipment and books in their offices. The materials for academic production are absent or in short supply. In the toilets, taps, door handles, toilet paper and cistern covers are habitually

stolen, necessitating extra expense for securing cistern covers and office doors with wrought iron screens. The over-burdened and degraded campus facilities present problems for academics and other workers because toilets are usually dirty and unpleasant to use. Given this working environment, it is preferable to visit the campus for the minimum possible time, and social interaction is curtailed. It is difficult to sustain an intellectual culture, and the sense of alienation intensifies.

Poor wages and salaries

Academic work is poorly remunerated at UZ. The wages are very low, currently at approximately US$50 per month at the professorial levels, and massive staff losses lead to a sense of social disintegration.

Contraction of benefits

Permanent academic staff are entitled to contact leave every three years and sabbatical leave every seventh year. These types of leave were developed and institutionalised prior to independence, and were intended to accord academics time to renew their contacts with other academics elsewhere, and to update their knowledge through spending time in other universities and institutions. The UZ pays for academics' airfares and subsistence for 28 days for lecturers and 35 days for professors while they are on contact leave and for one month of the sabbatical year. Because of foreign currency shortages, academics are no longer assured of these benefits and many have been asked to take the benefit in weak Zimbabwe dollars, which at Z$100 000 per US dollar on the parallel market, can afford an academic only three days' leave in South Africa or Botswana, the closest destinations, even on the most parsimonious budget! In addition, the contact leave benefit was extended to some administrators, who were never intended to enjoy this benefit. This has further alienated academic staff.

The erosion of sabbatical leave isolates academics, particularly juniors, who have fewer networks and contacts in other institutions, to avail them learning, teaching and exposure to diverse intellectual resources and traditions. They increasingly feel incapacitated in intellectual discourses and cannot market themselves as consultants to non-governmental and international organizations in order to survive and sustain some of their academic activities. In the absence of a sizeable cadre of senior academics to take academic leadership and mentor these isolated junior academics, the level of intellectual discussion, teaching and learning is negatively affected.

Despite the existence of a campus-wide computer network, all staff, including academics, are not allowed access to specific internet sites such as Yahoo! that offer free email services. Such sites can only be accessed before 8am and after 4.30pm, forcing academics to resort to other email services by subscription or to work on campus during the most unsocial hours, which presents security and other problems. This affects academic parents, particularly women, who have to cater for their children and spouses in the mornings before and evenings after work, making it difficult for them to use an important teaching and learning facility. The absence of research funds puts pressure on academics to raise money for their own research funding in a country under sanctions by the traditional donors to higher education.

The work process

Academics have more flexible schedules since their work is less structured than that of other workers in the university. This relative autonomy in the organisation of work is usually a source of satisfaction and promotes academics' commitment to their work. Their work is built around the schedules of their students, so lectures, tutorials and other interactions with students may be spaced out over many days, a few hours at a time. In the free spaces of a day, a lecturer has discretion to undertake reading, fieldwork, seminar and conference attendance and other activities. For many female academics, domestic responsibilities impinge on this timetable, necessitating the harmonisation of academic activities with fetching and transporting children, cooking, cleaning or supervising domestic and other workers. However, this relative autonomy and flexible scheduling of work has been eroded by the semesterisation of the university, and the increased student enrolment.

Semesterisation

The semesterisation of the university paved the way for delivering "fast education" in much the same way that fast food systems deliver cheap and poor quality meals (Ritzer, 1998). In higher education, operations such as teaching and examination, are similarly broken down and repackaged in standardised combinations suitable for mass consumption, resulting in uniform, mechanical curricula that leave very little room for creativity by lecturers and students.

At UZ, the great expansion enrolment from 2 500 in 1980 to 9 250 in 1989, and to just over 13 000 in 1995, increased the burden of academics many times over. Service departments in the social sciences have huge classes with over

400 students and only one or two lecture theatres into which they can all fit. This has a cascade effect on the second- and third-year classes, which have quadrupled in many departments, resulting in crowded lecture and seminar rooms, huge and unworkable tutorial groups and massive marking loads, particularly for the junior staff. The politically driven massification of enrolment was not matched by increases in resources, seriously overloading the system.

In these conditions, tutorials and essays have been reduced or abolished, confining assessment to the cheaper mode of one or two multiple choice tests that can be marked easily by junior staff. It is not uncommon for a class of 200 students to depend on one or two books and have very little access to a diversity of reading materials. In this situation, lectures and notes become the main means of learning. But the learning experience is as alienating as the teaching experience, as lecturers have little individual contact with or knowledge of their undergraduate students. Post-graduate courses that should be taught by senior academics are taught by junior lecturers as departments are hit by staff shortages. Finally, postgraduate students who have traditionally performed some teaching and tutoring work with undergraduates are now overburdened as their financial needs erode their study time, and research opportunities are scarce. This is particularly so in the Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities, which enroll the bulk of the undergraduate students.

Resistance to alienation

In order to create meaning and ameliorate the worst effects of an alienating work environment, academics at the UZ attempted to resist the deterioration of the teaching and learning processes in the late nineteen nineties. The Faculties of Arts and Social Studies held out for two years against the proposals to semesterise the university, until 2000. Immediately, academics started teaching shorter courses, setting and marking more examinations per year to accommodate more failed students especially at second and final year. It took over four years to change the degree regulations to fit the semesterisation. The exodus of academic staff increased, resulting in heavier teaching burdens for those remaining.

Nowadays academics are often forced to search for more lucrative work in the NGO and other sectors. There is greater reward for teaching short courses to private sector and civil service students so that too, has created a more mechanistic way of conceptualising intellectual labour, instrumentalising it and linking it to immediate cash rewards.

I now turn to examining the changing use of social spaces by academic staff working in this deteriorating and alienating environment.

The Social Sciences Tearoom

Before 1991, the Social Sciences Tearoom was operated by the university and provided a worker who made tea for staff at nominal cost. It was a very convivial space that attracted lecturers, teaching assistants and some professors. It linked academics from business, rts and the social sciences as they exchanged political news, peddled institutional gossip and kept in touch. Located on the Political Science corridor, the Tearoom drew lecturers from a department which included members of the ruling and opposition parties, pressure groups, economists, activists and creative arts fraternities. A few women from the Arts and Social Studies faculties also patronised it. In those days, the Tearoom resonated with raucous laughter and verbal jousting between members of different parties, creating entertainment and providing a relaxed atmosphere for discussing contending political and academic issues in a friendly and non-confrontational manner.

The stuctural adjustment program (SAP) of 1991 affected the tearoom negatively. The university withdrew the services of the general worker who ran the tearoom. Instead, a private tea club organized by two female junior lecturers from Arts and Social Sciences was formed and members subscribed to it. The club serves tea, bread with milk, peanut butter, jam, margarine, biscuits and *samoosas*. The membership of the club now comprises senior and middle level men and junior women from Arts and Social Studies. In particular, the club has attracted lecturers from African and Modern Languages, Political Science, History and a few members from Economics and Sociology. The Tearoom was a venue for informal organisation of resistance to semesterisation by Arts and Social Studies faculties in the late nineties.

Gender and the organization of conviviality

In the tea room, young academic women organise and run the tea club, ensuring that supplies are available and that subscriptions are collected. This role is in keeping with the caring roles that women in academic departments are assigned, formally or by default. Such roles include counseling students, career guidance and related functions. For example, in the Affirmative Action Project of the UZ, the coordinator organises all the project activities, research, seminars and other activities, in addition to a normal departmental teaching, research and university service load and with no extra remuneration or concessions.

This occurs in spite of the fact that the Affirmative Action Project is a university-wide project touching on gender issues affecting staff at the university. There is no formal recognition of these roles, which the women academics say they value. These roles spill over into informal interactions, which women undertake voluntarily as part of domesticating and reducing alienation in the workplace. In interviews, academic women mention their satisfaction derived from counseling and interacting with students. It was not surprising that in the tea room, junior women took on the caring roles to make an alienating environment bearable and to create a convivial space to help alienated academics remain connected.

Younger women took up these caring roles in the tea room for rational reasons. The UZ has a promotion system that favours research over teaching and community service. This effectively undermines the importance of teaching. Given the bureaucratisation of the university and its failure to provide teaching and learning resources, it is only the most daring chair of department or departmental board who will penalise staff for poor teaching. Therefore, the only activity avidly pursued by academics is research, especially if it brings funding that can ease an academic's financial woes. The tea room serves as a space for relaxation and a space for conducting academic business between junior and senior academics, namely, alliance building and networking.

This strategy can offset some of the other pressures experienced by women academics. Together with the combined pressures of academic performance and "mothering" of students, they tend to be overworked and "burnt-out" (Busari, 2000; Moncarz, 2001). This transference of maternalism into the work place costs women highly. They take on a multitude of social tasks which erode the time they can allocate to research and publication.

Over twenty of the forty academic women participating in an Affirmative Action Project workshop in 2000 reported exhaustion, emotional frustration and helplessness in dealing with young, mature, disabled and other students with problems that affected their learning. Junior women must cope with additional academic pressure: cooperative or collaborative work is risky, since credit tends to accrue to the dominant seniors who are well networked for finding funds and publishing outlets. The small proportion of tenured female academics and the sex-segregated nature of the society makes it difficult for many junior women, particularly those in faculties with very few or no women, to be mentored by senior academic women. These are the same women who have replaced the "SAP-ed" unskilled man who used to be responsible for

making and administering the Tearoom. They are now performing the priva-tised, unpaid and deskilled work of serving tea, effectively carrying over their domestic roles into the academic domain and losing out on leisure time. This work is unrewarded and unrecognised in the academic reward and promotion structure. It benefits the predominantly male and few academic women, who are exempted from such work and can continue with their academic roles, albeit at a higher price in the form of a subscription to the tea club.

However, the Tearoom work enables some junior women to build alliances, which are useful for securing information, support and mentoring, usually from the older males who know the system well. The casual nature of tea room inter-actions allow married young women to interact with men without experiencing problems relating to sexual decorum. It also creates solidarity between the men and women in a very difficult working environment. It gives meaning and structure to work by providing an opportunity for academics to experience some pleasurable experiences in a workplace which is degrading and degraded.

Competition and cooperation

The Tearoom interactions enable junior and senior academics to handle com-petition more successfully, foster cooperation and build academic and social solidarities within an alienating environment.

In December 2006, a senior academic member distributed offprints of his latest publication to the tea-mates amidst comments and laughter around the "new farmers" of the national resettlement program and their lack of success in feeding the nation. There was an exchange about the wage problem and the possibilities for a turbulent semester in 2007. In January 2007, amidst discus-sion around the new semester, there was an exchange between a junior female in Arts and a senior female in Social Studies regarding the tenure assessment of the junior woman. The exchange ended with referrals to three journals to which the junior woman could submit articles, and advice not to send articles to another journal. There was also a discussion about the impending strike and the opportunities it presented for completing articles for publication.

Given the often "hawkish", individualistic nature of academic work (Mars, 1982), the Tearoom functions as a space for tempering the worst effects of the competitive work environment by facilitating mentoring, networking and building connections within and across gender and disciplinary lines. Information about securing the cheapest fuel, meat, fish and other commodities is exchanged. Connected tea-mates facilitate the renewal of passports for travel to conferences.

Lifts to town are offered if a person has no transport on that day. In the Tearoom, there are some successful "hawks" that do not compete with or exploit junior academics who may or may not be their protégés. Informal mentors often explain organisational histories and cultures, introduce their protégés to successful colleagues, procure recent literature, publishers and publications, write recommendations and references for research grants and steer opportunities their protégé's way. Mentors also defend their protégés from the possible malice of other senior "hawks". In 2006, these solidarities enabled four Tearoom academics to publish articles on gender in an edited volume involving five Tearoom habitués across the Arts and Social Studies faculties.

National Politics

The Tearoom culture has succeeded in transcending political divides in the university community. The Tearoom still attracts members of the ruling and opposition parties and of pressure groups; they still discuss political issues amidst a lot of banter and mutual ribbing. Given the polarised nature of contemporary Zimbabwean society where opposition and ruling party adherents are often in conflict, the relatively safe space of the Tearoom has historically provided space for amicable co-existence and support for colleagues termed by the late Professor Masipula Sithole, himself an opposition politician and tea-mate, "political gladiators".

Given the long history of association amongst these academics and their experience with colleagues who have ascended into high political office, politicians are not held in awe and interactions are not marred by political allegiance. In fact, the exploits of ex-colleagues who have become powerful politicians and civil servants are drawn on in demystifying the powerful and to caution those vying for power. The Tearoom has players who have access to both the ruling and opposition parties, creating a platform for intellectual analysis of political parties and providing an understanding of the current political, social and economic crisis. The politically engaged academics also comprise a group that has stayed precisely because they desire to struggle and effect democratisation in Zimbabwe, to reduce the alienation and disempowerment that afflicts the majority of academics and instead create purpose and imbue meaning to their deprivation. The university is therefore a suitable place of work because it allows them to pursue their interests without curtailing their freedom of expression and association and to define themselves as people engaged in building a better future for their country.

Conclusion

This paper has illustrated the changes that have occurred as different types of institutional and intellectual cultures have prevailed at the national university in Zimbabwe. Through observing leisure and recreation, the processes of academic production and reproduction have been explored. The paper has outlined the history of the UZ, its gendered traditions and the sources of alienation for academics. It has outlined the political developments that have intensified alienating working conditions and experiences for academics, resulting in the brain drain. It has explored the circumstances under which academics in the university adopt different strategies to deal with their alienation.

Academics using the Tearoom overcome alienation through creating a nurturing community and activities, which add positive meanings and produce pleasurable outcomes and interactions. They humanise their workplace in order to sustain their pride in their work. In the absence of significant material rewards and remuneration for their intellectual labour, they create meaning and support each other through their voluntary association. Since it is difficult to separate their work from their leisure, it is hard for them to turn their backs on the UZ. Those who have studied, lived and worked away from Zimbabwe understand that alienation may intensify if they leave academic work to pursue less meaningful work in other organisations. Some of these academics may also stay because of their marital circumstances or their advanced age but it is also clear that they have chosen not to pursue other occupations and activities, which are available to them in Zimbabwe. One cannot ignore the fact that academic work still accords them a high status in Zimbabwe and that those academics who do leave, are forced to do so because they need to provide for their families. Academics are interested in the work that gratifies them and contributes to their social, emotional and intellectual wellbeing. Academic work is perceived to be and experienced as challenging, fulfilling and worthwhile especially in an environment of strife, resentment and high stress. Thus, the Tearoom environment may exemplify traditional gender relations but it also provides a sanctuary in which academics of different genders, specialisations and political persuasions can express solidarity and conviviality with each other, humanising their environment and making it bearable in the context of a society undergoing social, economic and political crisis.

At present, the Tearoom has remained a space where men and women voluntarily create a community that accommodates both academic men and women. Gender differences and disparities facilitate the mixing of the young

academic women and the older academic men in the Social Sciences Tearoom, as women were not perceived as and did not perceive themselves to be excluded or in competition with the men. The serving role of the women in the tea club was congruent with the expected gender roles of women in the society. So in that respect, these women did not transgress the accepted gender boundaries and spaces despite their participation in the intellectual discourses.

The importance of and processes of knowledge production at UZ have suffered as academics have become alienated and isolated not only from each other but from the state, the university and society. Academics have lost status and interest in functioning as knowledge producers at a time when knowledge production has gained more importance. Instead, the imperatives of survival and reproduction dominate their thinking and actions. Only those academics with disposable time and access to resources – through their families and through organisations that may not necessarily be interested in national projects in path-breaking knowledge generation – are able to sustain their academic engagement. This situation also discourages students from choosing academic careers, which can be perceived to be unrewarding and unimportant.

This in turn exemplifies how national difficulties can imperil the capacity of African universities to produce knowledge that has strategic value and importance in the global knowledge market. While the "drain" of intellectuals into other African countries may not always be a negative phenomenon, the conditions in which this "exchange" occurs are negative. Alienated intellectual labour is not as attractive as willing and motivated labour. Those academics that migrate to the north will service other knowledge producers under varying conditions of alienation, motivation and contentment.

It is imperative that further research into the trajectories, conditions and circumstances of knowledge production are explored so that efforts to revive and revitalise universities in Africa can be re-focused. Knowledge is not produced or generated only in classrooms, seminars, libraries and conferences. It is contested, digested, refined and changed though both formal and informal institutional processes. This study has shown how different players, affected by gender, class, age and other hierarchies also acquire agency and acquit their roles and places in knowledge production through the informal intellectual and institutional settings in which they operate. It will be crucial to continue to study how these processes operate to advance or frustrate the processes of knowledge production in the contemporary African university in ways that minimize the crippling social alienation described here.

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"Gender is Over": Researching the Implementation of Sexual Harassment Policies in Southern African Higher Education[1]

Jane Bennett, Amanda Gouws, Andrienetta Kritzinger, Mary Hames, Chris Tidimane

Introduction

From mid-2005 to 2006, the African Gender Institute (AGI) carried out a project which allowed research teams in three Southern African universities to explore the effectiveness of official campus policies on sexual harassment in the complex climates of diversity, discrimination and opportunity that characterise contemporary higher education institutions. The three campuses involved comprised one where the initiation of a sexual harassment policy occurred in the early 1990s (the University of the Western Cape), and two with relatively new policies (the University of Botswana and the University of Stellenbosch).[2]

This article discusses aspects of the background to the research project, and explores critical findings from the research. We argue that while there is little evidence that policies on sexual harassment in Southern African higher education have been integrated into campus-based discourses on citizenship or democracy, this could be read as complex commentary on the location of feminist activism within Southern African higher education, and tackled as such.[3]

Notes on Gender and Higher Education in the Southern African Development Community context

In order to understand the broad context of the research on sexual harassment policy implementation in three Southern African Development Community (SADC) universities, we sketch the profile of current challenges to higher education in the region, and identify key questions concerning gender dynamics within the sector. Of the ten countries involved, all have a higher education sector, but the structure and composition of the sector differ dramatically from one country to another. Most countries, however have one national university, a number of teacher training colleges, schools of agricultural training, medical

and nursing schools (sometimes attached to the university), as well as smaller educational enterprises training school-leavers in a variety of professional skills (secretarial, computer-related, hairdressing, and business management). Within SADC, South Africa's educational sector is the most complex, because the sector is the largest, and it has undergone massive restructuring through state policies designed to maximise access to tertiary education over the past five years; Botswana has the fewest institutions.

In each SADC country, systems of higher education face enormous chal-lenges because the ever-increasing demand far outstrips the resources and infrastructures available. National politics, too, have heavily influenced the operation of the sector (this is especially true for Zimbabwe, Malawi, and South Africa) and financial exigencies have come to dominate discussions on the meaning, directions, and shape of higher education in each country.

Full analysis of the profile of higher education in the SADC region is there-fore beyond the scope of this article. It is safe to suggest, though, that over the past five years many Southern African institutions of higher education have moved, through a combination of restructuring initiatives and projects explicitly dedicated towards the improvement of the quality of life on campus for educators and learners, into increasing acceptance of their seminal role in the leadership of democratic strategy and practice in the region. However, such initiatives have to negotiate both the politics of what constitutes "democracy" in each context[4] and, as seriously, the increasing economic pressures on SADC states within a global market economy.

In the past ten years, a body of serious research on the impact of globali-sation on higher education in Africa has highlighted the tensions between dwindling national resources available for university and technikon subsi-dies and the need for the institutions to deliver high-quality education in environments protected by the values on human rights.[5] The general research on gender and globalisation has exposed, in particular, the assumptions of structural adjustment programmes concerning women's labour, identity and mobility, and noted that within higher education, these assumptions continue to have an impact on women's access to full equality of opportunity.[6] If South Africa is to be considered as part of the scenario, however, it has to be noted that while national economic policies certainly include aspects of structural adjustment programmes (such as commitment to free trade agreements, focus on the development of export industries, and an eye on downsizing domestic expenditures targeted at social welfare), gender is less of a factor in determining

access to higher education than class (and the legacies of race so embedded in South African class systems).

Quantitative measurement of access has been a dominant route into analysis of gender questions in higher education. While such measurements remain very valuable in profiling the status quo at a numerical level, and for introducing analysis of the impact of interventions (such as the implementation of affirmative action programmes, or the official encouragement of girls into fields of study traditionally marked as "masculine"), many feminist researchers have stressed the need to recognise that gender operates at the levels of culture, sexuality and epistemology, zones in which access to "being a human being" is negotiated through life-long engagement with constructions of "manhood" and "womanhood" upon which the possibilities of society itself are predicated (Mama: 2003). The implications of this for analysing gender within institutional space are serious. To put it simply, at one level, it may not matter how many human beings identified as "women" are offered access into territory from which they were previously excluded. If their exclusion is a result of their cultural construction as "women" (say, as people whose mental capacities were inadequate to the task of scientific research, or as people whose primary responsibilities did not include public political leadership), it does not necessarily follow that offering "women" new access radically reconstructs their admission to deep citizenship as "human beings, *as long as they continue to be recognised <u>primarily</u> as "women" within the new space.*

Bearing witness to the complexity of day-to-day gender dynamics within higher education has for us also been an engagement with issues of sexual harassment and sexual violence on campuses. Strategies to explore possibilities for gender equality into the institutional culture have taken several routes in higher education, and tackling sexual harassment has been one of the most powerful routes into analyses of institutional culture because such research can illuminate the axes of power through which academic and social "careers" are forged (Bennett: 2002). Most research on sexual harassment and sexual violence in Southern Africa has been undertaken with explicitly activist intentions, and has led to the institution of new policies, educational programmes, and disciplinary procedures.[7] In the course of this research over the past few years, interesting and complex realities concerning gender, sexuality, and institutionally-created opportunities for abuse have emerged, and before turning to questions of policy-formation within higher education, it would be useful to survey some of the most illuminating ideas emerging from the region.

Teaching women a lesson[8]

In an introduction to a recent workshop on researching gender and institutional culture in African universities,[9] Teresa Barnes brilliantly summarised a core "gender challenge" for higher education institutions:

> Scholarship has exhaustively demonstrated that a crucial aspect of the colonial project was the femininisation of the African man, and thus a crucial aspect of post-colonialism has been a search for a "new man". To the extent that the project of regaining "the nation" (in some post colonies) or fashioning it anew (in others) was deeply woven with concepts of wrestling indigenous masculinity away from demeaning social engineering projects, the university has been a prime site of struggle over gender meanings in a new age . . . (the university) spaces and places are intricately marked with codes for man-as-thinker, man-as-aggressive debater, man-as-athlete, boys-becoming-men, etc. The addition of women to this men's club is thus not only a statistical, but also an extremely meaningful social and symbolic exercise – which is by its very nature, dynamic, challenging, and likely conflictual." (Barnes: 2005)

This formulation captures the context in which participation within the project of higher education demands engagement with constructions of "manhood" and "womanhood", inserting staff and students into very particular (although rarely acknowledged) gendered negotiation with the histories of being, and becoming, "intellectuals" and "professionals" within urbanised African political space. Although processes of gendering are ubiquitous, and certainly not confined to campus borders, within higher education the trajectories of class mobility for students (and some staff) proffered through campus participation are linked with profound debates concerning relationships between men and women. Such debates concern identity, authority, and – critically – the operation of heterosexuality as part and parcel of university life.

Research on secondary education has long established the importance of linking gender and sexuality in studies of school teaching and organisational practice. Often drawing on Foucauldian theories concerning institutional interests in surveillance of gendered and sexual practices and norms, interactions between boys and girls around "dating", flirtation, sexual connections, and densely interactive constructions of "good" and "bad" routes to gendered sexuality, have been foregrounded as resistance to educational institutions' policing of students' identities, through regulations and discourses designed to keep active sexuality away from "children" (legal permission for sexual

activity remains a core political dividing line between "children" and "adults"). At the same time, researchers argue that beneath the performance of generally "sex-aversive" culture within educational institutions, overt and covert energies contribute to the construction of ideas about masculinities and femininities that assume heterosexuality, and seek to produce a heterosexual citizenship conservative in its acceptance of dominant contextual norms concerning reproduction, forms of sexual behaviour, and the regulation of sexual partnerships. Such energies often concentrate on girls, stressing appropriate "femininity", encouraging education "before" sexual activity (or marriage), and placing the burden of their sexual and reproductive health and safety solely on their own (moral) shoulders.

Research on the way in which heterosexuality is part and parcel of university life is, however, thin on the ground for SADC campuses. Anecdotal evidence suggests a high level of sexual liaison within student communities (especially on residential campuses), histories of marriages contracted between those who have encountered one another as part of their campus-based scholarship or work, and concern about reproductive health and HIV transmission encountered by student health services and counselling centres. Gender-mixed social events are consistently integrated into sporting, religious, and residence life, and there is evidence of active homophobia (always an index of the importance of heterosexuality as a key cultural norm).

What campus-based research on sexual harassment and sexual violence has offered is one window into the cultures of heterosexuality within higher education. While it is critical to note that such cultures may offer people access to important, life-enhancing, and deeply pleasurable relationships, a focus on sexual harassment and sexual violence allows certain tensions of gendered dynamics to be brought to the surface, possibly named as "abusive" and identified as core zones for intervention, both for the sake of those likely to become abused and for the sake of higher education itself.

Since the early 1990s, there have been a number of important studies on the nature and practice of sexual harassment and sexual violence in higher education in South Africa and neighbouring countries.[10] The picture painted by the researchers and activists is one in which many different forms of sexually abusive interactions could be found simultaneously within higher education institutions. Each campus is differently constituted in terms of its geographical, institutional and political location, and the demographics of its student popu-lation, but the following concerns have been consistently identified over a

decade of discussion. Firstly, the hierarchical nature of universities, coupled with patriarchal cultures of leadership, means that there are multiple zones of seniority operating within the campus, and those considered "junior" are consistently vulnerable to unwanted sexualisation from senior men.

These vulnerabilities are confirmed by survivors' accounts during research projects, and are described within surveys of attitudes and perceptions about sexual harassment. These analyses do not differ from global descriptions of institutional climates inhospitable to women, because of the prevalence of sexually harassing behaviour. Within the SADC region, however, where access to higher education remains harshly competitive and highly prized, the costs of naming complex vulnerability to sexual harassment and sexual abuse – the risk of losing credibility, employment or academic credentials – are intensified.

Secondly, research attests to the presence of relationships in which explicitly transactional sex plays a key role in organising heterosexual liaisons for men and women. Such transactions could include the provision of grades or academic opportunities, from men academics to women students, or access to financial resources (including housing) for women in exchange for sex. This theme is connected to a sense that university environments are changing rapidly, and that economic struggles (for staff and students) are accompanied by the need to handle increasingly diverse campus populations, where different norms about gender and sexuality jostle for recognition and dominance.

Thirdly, much of the research suggests that some men (students and staff) are suspicious of campus-women's sexuality (especially among the student population), resenting their potential "bedroom power", or "bottom-power", blaming them for provoking men lecturers. Male lecturers and students were sometimes more ready to challenge sexual harassment from a sense that they themselves were "harassed" by (overt and covert) offers of sex by women than from any analyses of patriarchal privilege. Early South African-based research[11] conveys a sense that ideas about sexual harassment were being regarded as just another racist ploy to destabilise and control men, especially black men.

This position is echoed by the fourth broad finding emerging in Southern African research on sexual harassment and sexual violence in higher education, namely the power of discourses on culture and tradition. In virtually every study carried out between 1990–2001, there is mention of confusion and anger concerning the relationship between challenges to certain forms of sexual abuse and the meaning of "cultural" norms concerning heterosexual masculinities. Practices such as men touching women without their permission

through bottom-patting, palm-scratching, shoulder-rubbing are defended, as is men's perceived right to pursue women aggressively with overt interest in sexual liaison, regardless of the women's expressed disinterest. All this is pursued in the name of "culture". The histories of colonial and racist discourses concerning the "immorality" or illegitimacy of African peoples' (diverse) social and cultural systems can make such defences difficult to tackle where alleged harassers identify themselves as embedded within the histories of colonialism as victims. Those who challenge these harassers may find themselves dismissed as "new colonisers", "white people", "Westerners", or "those who have abandoned their roots."

The fifth theme concerned the difficulty survivors have in naming experiences of sexual harassment and sexual violence. Even within institutional environments with long histories of radical engagement with the politics of social justice, such as the University of the Western Cape in South Africa, those who found a route into disclosing the pain, humiliation, confusion and anger of their encounters with sexual abuse were afraid of publicising their experience beyond the counselling room, or in a private conversation with a sympathetic lecturer or residence warden, or a friend. Where "cases" of sexual harassment or sexual violence surfaced (sometimes through student protests), they were accompanied by a sense, fuelled by third-party narratives, that such experiences were far from isolated. Nevertheless, there is a dearth of specific, self-authored, publicly available narratives of being sexually harassed or abused.

Again, the prevalence of fear about complaining publicly of subjection to sexual violence is part and parcel of all analyses of gender-based violence. This is easily explicable as an effect both of the distress and trauma of the experience and of realistic apprehension of the gender politics at play in "normalising" many experiences of sexual abuse as integral threads of healthy, masculine, heterosexual prerogative. Identifying the "normal" as destructive stigmatises one as an outsider, alien to the terms on which heterosexual citizenship is negotiated, even if these seem dangerous or absurd. The willingness to talk openly, within higher education institutions, about personal experiences of sexual harassment and sexual violence was rare.

The research thus sketches a profile of complex gender dynamics, and alongside continual hints of heterosexualities that afforded participants pleasure and community, it also illuminated strong suggestions of anger, tension, conflict, misunderstanding, and abuse which are operative in myriad ways between women and men on university campuses.

Nevertheless, almost all the research attests to the power of the research process itself as a tool of advocacy, solidarity-building, and communication with key members of the university community. While some researchers spoke of the discouragement and humiliations they encountered while conducting their explorations, many viewed their research as valuable feminist interventions within the university space. They describe the levels of genuine enthusiasm, sometimes from key management figures, for opening up discussions on gender, sexuality, equality, and democracy generated by their work as key achievements. This is important; the years 1990–2001 within SADC higher education have witnessed waves of interest in, and debate over, questions of gender equality, democracy, and citizenship. Although maintaining a focus on the need to challenge sexual harassment and sexual violence has been hard, it would not have been possible at all without rich discourses concerning "equality," "human rights", "transformation", and "change." It could be argued that the capacity of activists and researchers on different campuses to explore sexual harassment and sexual violence as core impediments to democratic education constituted a key index of the degree to which questions of gender had become "real" – and powerful – within campus politics.

Policy-making on sexual harassment within SADC higher education

It has been argued[12] that on the African continent, there has been more feminist political activism targeted at legal and policy reforms concerning sexual violence than at any other question except access to organs and processes of governance. There are many ways to theorise this interest in policy-making and policy reform. Key among them is the engagement with notions of citizenship which argue for "active citizenship" from within the recognition that *activity*, for women (people very likely to be targets of sexual violence), requires reconceptualisation of the very terms and conditions on which safety, dignity, and access to social presence and power are predicated (Walby: 2005). Such reconceptualisation includes reclaiming "the private" as a zone to which public policy may be relevant, challenging norms about definitions of abuse, and interrogating issues of access to voice.

Policy-making has been the most popular avenue for institutional discussion of campus-based sexual violence and sexual harassment. Despite this, it would be wrong to assume that most campuses within the SADC region have developed and institutionalised policies against sexual harassment. Indeed, at an Audit Workshop of Resources within the region, hosted by the African

Gender Institute in February 2002, just under a quarter of the 18 institutions represented by participants had policies in place. Of these, most indicated that it had taken 7–10 years of advocacy and research work to formalise their policy. Despite this, all participants present agreed that without policy, institutions are impotent in the face of serial sexual harassers and sexual abusers, and that those vulnerable to attack continue to include the institution itself as a source of menace. Those at the forefront of demands for policies on sexual harassment within higher education saw policy as a platform into campus consciousness, a means of formulating a clear (feminist) link to other statements of university principles around equality, excellence, and integration into (often) national development goals. These activists also needed concrete language into which the experiences of survivors could be fashioned so that offenders could be confronted, not simply by the survivor, but by the institution itself. As with much feminist policy-formulation, the risks of handing over authority for the processing of injustices to women to traditionally patriarchal bodies (states, institutions) were theorised as part and parcel of the need to believe in "gender mainstreaming," the idea that new conceptions of gender – which radically shifted the meanings of women and men away from predefined, traditional power relations – could be infused throughout the university environment.

Researching implementation?

Most researchers would agree that the processes of conceptualising, designing, and implementing research projects are as vital to its impact as any "findings" or "analyses". Undertaking our research was, for all concerned, explicitly concerned with an interest in re-invigorating campus-based debates on gender, sexuality, violence and democracy, and a simultaneous interest in revitalising institutional and collegial connections. The proposed key objectives of the research project were:

- To describe and analyse the impact of institutional policies on sexual harassment and sexual abuse in specific sites of Southern African higher education;
- To make recommendations on strengthening the link between policy-making, policy-implementation and the development of democratic cultures, (interested and invested in open debate, the promotion of human rights and respect for difference) within specific sites of Southern African higher education.

The team recognized from the outset of the project that each institution involved would need to develop research processes attuned to its own context and priorities. Because the interest in initiating research on existing policies

prioritised the potential for strengthening their relevance, it was essential that case studies be shaped by local institutional voices. The three different universities who elected to participate in the project did so through the local research leadership of people who had long been involved in institutional work on gender, rights, and social transformation, and in most cases, had themselves participated in activism which had led to ratification of policies on sexual harassment on their campuses.

Workshop discussions (held at different stages of the research process) highlighted the need to design a framework through which to conceptualise "policy implementation" on a campus, and in whose terms individual case studies for specific campuses could be designed. Research on policy implementation is intellectually challenging partly because it entails deep tolerance for the notion of fluidity and (unpredictable) change. As is well understood, "implementation" as a noun simply reifies a relationship to multiple energies. Theoretically, "implementation" achieves cohesion through adherence to a set of guidelines but in practice, "implementation" of policy is unevenly dispersed across bodies, texts, interaction, offices and space in ways that cannot be captured in any single frame of analysis.

In a US study of sexual harassment policy implementation in a large public university and a city, Reese and Lindenberg (1998) approached the meaning of "implementation" through research on people's awareness and understanding of the policy, through analysis of reported cases, and through people's "levels of satisfaction" with the policy – their perceptions on how it contributed to a better working or academic climate. Peirce, Rosen and Bunn Hiller (1997) looked at the use of sexual harassment policies in the workplace as described by a survey of 1 500 US women, exploring the meaning of "successful implementation" as the creation of policies and procedures which encourage reporting.[13]

Recent South African research on sexual harassment policy implementation in universities and in the workplace stresses that "implementation" means accessibility to survivors (where accessibility means both the opportunity to read, ingest, and understand the policy and the opportunity to find policy-structured help within the organisation easily),[14] but this is not something permeable to conventional research procedures. As Gouws, Kritzinger and Wenhold point out, policy implementation which changed the institutional culture of silence around gender-based violence would result in <u>more</u> formal and informal complaints. How many more remains an open question (2005). To research the success or failure of implementation by counting complaints, or asking people

whether they would report personal experience of sexual harassment, offers insights only into a small pool of experiences, which may or may not be representative.

In the project workshops on conceptual frameworks and methodologies, there was much debate both on how to define implementation, and how to research it as a living dynamic. Teams agreed that the narratives of how university policies came to be ratified were a key resource in contextualising current perceptions and experiences, and also a way of understanding that policy implementation began for all institutions in activist work committed to addressing the sexual harassment of particular staff or student. Research teams also agreed that implementation could be categorised into different areas of engagement (such as "communication"; "education"; or "disciplinary management of complaints") but that to some extent such categorisations necessarily somewhat fragmented and distorted the profile of university engagement with sexual harassment policies. Thus, while it was critical to try and understand the ways in which policies had first been developed, it was also important to examine the ways in which different institutions had embedded their policies into campus-wide opportunities for staff and students to understand the meaning of sexual harassment, and to find ways to address it when it occurred. Each campus chose a different lens through which to examine these opportunities, and this article presents only those findings which cut across different campus realities.

Research findings and analysis

The three case studies explored the operation of policies officially instituted as tools in their university's suite of policy-based strategies for encouraging respect and equality within university communities. There were important differences between the institutions' approaches, but they all approached implementation of a sexual harassment policy through (at least) five main questions:

- In the current campus context, who knew that there are policies on sexual harassment?
- What did the policy structures look like, in terms of relationships both to national legislation and to units of authority located in different zones of the university?
- How did those to whom the policy allocated specific responsibility for addressing sexual harassment evaluate their work in this arena?
- Was there evidence that campus members, at any level, saw the policy as a helpful resource?
- What changes did the research process – as a probe into campus discourses about gender, sexuality, and violence – catalyse?

None of the case studies on the implementation of sexual harassment policies in Southern African higher education suggested that implementation is currently being taken seriously as a core strand of their university's interest in building cultures of democracy. There was a widespread sense that most campus constituents perceive policy statements and structures as marginal to their own theorisations of gender, sexuality and violence. Very few complaints had been formally reported through policy procedures.

Discourses on human rights or democracy turn constantly to the language of international, or national, policy formulation as a backdrop to any local debate. But interviewees across all three campuses explored notions of sexual harassment from personal positions of experience, anecdote, or opinion, rather than using the language of policy. There were two exceptions to this: those interviewees who worked in contexts where national labour legislation required employers to consider sexual harassment as a form of unfair labour practice, and those interviewees with long feminist experience of global (and national) trends in policy-making and gender-based violence.

All the institutions under research in this project had formally established procedures through which to handle complaints of sexual harassment. Such procedures paid nominal attention to the fact that university populations include people of many different affiliations to the campus (by recognising more than one "route" for processing complaints), and had also attempted to foresee the need for a "double-layer" of redress: "informal" problem-solving and "formal" disciplinary action. The separation of these spheres corresponds mainly to two concerns: the need to privilege survivors' choice in terms of the direction she or he wanted to travel in pursuit of resolution, and the recognition that there are degrees of difference in the severity and complexity of what can be experienced under the umbrella term "sexual harassment" (and, equally, degrees of intentionality or malice on the part of alleged perpetrators). The policy procedures thus – at a superficial view – accommodate both the diversity of campus constituents and the fact that sexual harassment may occur in many different shapes.

In practice, the research showed this is deeply confusing, especially on campuses where, within national labour legislation, all sexual harassment is defined as a form of discrimination. According to the case studies, Human Resource officers (with minimal training in the philosophical nuances of legal definition) are left to determine the level of discrimination constituting "minor misconduct", what should be handled "informally" (leaving no forensic trace in a staff file), and which levels of discrimination are worthy of "serious

misconduct", and must be treated formally. Given survivors' reluctance to lay complaints, such officers may process no more than one or two cases a year, which is not enough to build up strong conceptual and practical experience. In addition, the anxiety created by such inexperience when complaints are made (coupled with the fact that these complaints sometimes allege that senior, and powerful, university members are perpetrators – something that in a hierarchical culture hugely escalates the stakes), may cause delays, procedural mistakes, lapses of confidentiality, and certainly attenuates the survivor's distress.

The implications of having multiple entry points for complaints was constantly raised as a reason for overall policy "failure": the issue of "fragmented structures" was raised by all three studies. It may well be true that sensitivity to the diversity on campus deserves policy attention. It is certainly true that university policy making must – in a robust and pro-active way – engage with national policy making.[15] In South Africa, that means engagement with at least four zones of law: legislation on rape, and on sexual assault (criminal justice law, currently under review), the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act (which pertains to all shared residence spaces), and labour legislation. In Botswana, two are involved: national legislation on rape, and the Public Service Act of 2002. However, given that the need for "multiple paths" is likely to remain a feature of the campus policy landscape when it comes to sexual harassment, it is imperative that there is a very rich knowledge of how these routes cohere, and that "knowing where to turn" for help is a critical issue.

At the moment, on the University of Botswana campus, there is no unit or office, specified by the policy procedures there; the place to turn to is the Counselling Centre. The research at the University of Botswana showed that students overwhelmingly see counselling as the best option for addressing the issue. They are probably not alone in this perception; research on both other campuses in the case studies suggests there is a preference for mediation, counselling, and supportive "confidential" services when sexual harassment occurs.

The universities are often working simultaneously with two different approaches to justice. One approach (which leads to the criminalisation of an activity, and sentences of expulsion, disciplinary warnings, or public disgrace) works with justice as a matter of surveillance and punishment: parties are either clearly "innocent" or "guilty", and the process of justice-making is a dichotomised affair, full of the divisions and language of competition. The other approach is more rehabilitative, privileging non-punitive explorations of activity, assuming the possibility of reharmonising an acrimonious situation, and open to the possibility of both "mutual responsibility" and "forgiveness" as part of the process.

There are challenges to both approaches for those with solid understandings of gender-based violence. Policy approaches which criminalise perpetrators certainly speak with some accuracy to the impact of sexual harassment and sexual violence: their effects are assaultive, in ways akin to those of other criminalised acts. However, the discursive power of "criminalisation" intensifies alleged perpetrators' rage, frustration, or anxiety; and this can dramatically escalate the dangers to a complainant's safety, especially where both complainant and defendant live and work at close quarters. In addition, interaction with criminalising processes are traumatising, especially to complainants whose credibility is the primary target of the defence. Few survivors are willing to endure these processes, and few are actually able to do so. All three research teams uncovered data on withdrawn complaints, breakdowns of health for survivors, drop out from the university, and long-term bitterness – usually targeted as much at "the university" as at the perpetrator. So, feminist policy-making with a regard to the ultimate health of a survivor (and to the humanity of a perpetrator) might easily concur that non-criminalising processes (which include confidential counselling) were more useful to building institutional cultures inhospitable to sexual harassment.

However, it is equally clear that a preference for non-criminalising procedures concerns the politics of gender. All three case studies bear witness to on-going cultures of deeply gendered access to confidence around speaking of personal experience of sexual harassment or sexual violence. Sometimes embedded in discourses of sympathy for the perpetrators whom they "don't want to hurt," complainants' preference for rehabilitative processes may indicate a gendered investment in heterosexuality that requires a benign third-party who will refashion the (hurt, feminised, silent) body back into language through reconnection to a communicative, even conciliatory, masculine presence (the perpetrator). Perhaps this is over-simplified. Micro-transformations of gender politics may well occur within the small spaces of the counselling office – but then, how do these changes move out to become a broader change in institutional culture, bounded as they are by the discourse of psychological health?

It has to be acknowledged that a preference for rehabilitative approaches, in an environment where there is evidence of strong patriarchal beliefs about gender and sexuality and where women interviewees are open about the fact that they witness sexual harassment regularly, cannot be read as a political choice about the prospects for non-abusive heterosexualities.[16] It is, more likely, evidence of a culture in which access to the rights of citizenship is compromised. Complainants' preference for rehabilitative approaches to sexual harassment may

simply bear witness to the threat of masculine authority, and to the strategic politics of the structurally "weak" but individually "tough."

Despite the difficulties of implementation, all case studies professed optimism about the potential for their policies on sexual harassment to carry more transformational power. The University of the Western Cape (with the most long-standing policy) pointed to the fact that some survivors had, in fact, drawn on policy processes to challenge perpetrators successfully; for evidence of usefulness, the other two studies looked more to the interest generated in the "sexual harassment debate" among research interviewees.

Finally, the research on policy implementation in all three cases hinted at a broad historical narrative concerning the ebb and flow of feminist interventions at international, national and local levels. In the case of the University of Botswana, the report suggests that during the early 1990s (immediately prior to the 1995 Beijing Conference), NGO and academic activism in Gaborone created an environment in which – despite hostility – ideas about "women's rights", and the intimate connection between those rights and a national profile of democratic praxis percolated in ways that genuinely transformed the atmosphere.

But the University of Botswana case study also documents a contemporary campus culture in which ordinary feminist ideas about the causes of sexual harassment or about the importance of working visibly towards gender equity through policy are no longer discursively in play. While some of the members of committees especially established to promote gender advocacy were still well-informed about debates on gender equity, and were deeply interested in the details of how policies on sexual harassment were (or were not) functioning, their knowledge and commitment was not answered by most other constituents. There was evident pride in the history of the policy, but this had not translated into ongoing advocacy campaigns nor into education and training programmes. The difference between the era of initial policy-research at the University and the current context is marked.

The University of the Western Cape case study is structured through an historical lens which echoes aspects of the University of Botswana's conclusions about current political space. The UWC report argues that initial policy-making on the campus was ahead of its time, driven by radical black feminists whose political education in anti-apartheid struggles had taught them how to mobilise both arguments and action. The case study of policy implementation hints at a history of South African engagement with ideas of "democracy," moving from ideals of

redistribution and deeply co-participative government to the post-1994 realities of (at most) liberal approaches to imagining nationhood. While such approaches inspired new laws,[17] many very helpful to women, the integration of demands for new approaches to gender into state legislation (inevitably) lost their original edge. The most critical loss has been the lack of *on-going* recognition that being gendered as a woman in South Africa carries culturally entrenched vulnerabilities to sexual violence and sexual stigmatisation.

At the University of Stellenbosch, historically deeply linked to the education of the elite within the apartheid regime, the post-1994 era has required massive engagement with restructuring the university's image and culture. A small group of highly effective feminists on campus had made it possible for a policy on sexual harassment to be ratified (after years of research and activism), but the current case study showed clearly that a wide range of campus constituents were ignorant about the policy's procedures, and had a poor sense of how an actual survivor could find him- or herself supported by the institution. The research hinted strongly at the "disappearance" of gender as a key concern within the (very high-profile and well-resourced) university engagement with transformation.

Conclusion

Research on policy implementation thus illuminates the status of feminist activism and discourse within institutional spaces. It is clear that the current era is posing very particular challenges to the legitimacy of earlier gains (such as the ratification of a policy capable of addressing sexual harassment). In all three cases, broad swathes of the institution are unaware of the policy's potential: those sitting on structures designed to implement textual commitments feel under-employed or frustrated; those who experience sexual harassment are embedded in contexts only nominally aware of its implications; those with theoretical and practical knowledge of how gender, sexuality and violence intersect (and of how to address this strategically) experience themselves as "out-dated", "marginal," or "exhausted."

It is important to analyse this, as others have done elsewhere, as the effects of resistance to change. The ratification of policies on sexual harassment constituted a major challenge to deeply embedded notions of gendered sexuality. All case studies revealed pervasive current resistance to the integration of these policies into university life, resistance identified by many research interviewees. We listened to staff disillusioned with their marginalisation (despite management rhetoric of inclusivity), heard anger at the denial of multi-lingualism (which

denied many staff access to their policy) on campuses, of women staff students who are worried about their safety. We spoke with men disturbed by collegial *quid pro quo* transactions, and to survivors who identify "the university" as analogous to those who assault with impunity. While managers and university authorities tended to be optimistic about their policies, those actually engaged with issues of security, sexuality and gender, and the bodies set up to have formal responsibility for policy implementation, were often disheartened.

We do not see this situation as proof of the idea that in Southern African higher institutions of higher education, feminist energies around sexual harassment policy-making have failed. Our research on sexual harassment policy implementation shows evidence of an on-going contest between core principles of feminist activism and ideas which erase gender from a general approach to questions of social justice, an erasure quintessentially rooted in intellectual and philosophical fear. On each campus, there are feminists (men and women, in different strata of the campus) who remain dedicated to practicable gender justice within the institution. Simultaneously, there are those at both management and student levels who feel that "*gender is over; the gender issue has been dealt with; we have other issues to deal with now*".[18]

The case studies we carried out suggest that while there are serious concerns about different institutions' failure to take up the opportunities offered by the formal presence of a policy on sexual harassment on their books, policy remains just that: *an opportunity*. As Manicom suggests,

> "Opening up some analytic windows through which to review rights is the growing volume of critical accounts of rights politics drawn up by feminists in postcolonial contexts, fundamentalist states and in the former communist regimes. These depict gendered subjects of rights that distinctively reflect their embeddedness within respective political formations, cultural and ideological traditions . . . . [Such reviewing] also inevitably disrupts hegemonic cultural constructions of gender and reveals the contestability of gender relations... This dislocation provides new opportunities and recharts the political ground for women's struggles, ground that is necessarily configured by communal relations, class, racialised and national relations" (Manicom, 2005: 39).

The research conducted for this project illuminates clearly that in the process of exploring the implementation of sexual harassment policy, campus "cultural" performances of gender, sexuality, and violence become foregrounded as critical contestations concerning university citizenship.

A focus on sexual harassment may appear to target a micro-dynamic within institutional culture. But careful analysis of this dynamic coaxes open the worlds of the "private," the "subterranean," and "the personal," revealing the layers of human interaction least permeable to rigid theorisation, and holding the most precious possibilities for creating policy formulations and processes truly responsive to principles of democratic citizenship.

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Endnotes

1. A book which includes the full case study reports from the three universities involved with the project has been published, by the African Gender Institute of the University of Cape Town. The book, edited by Jane Bennett, is entitled *"Killing a Virus With Stones?" Researching the Implementation of Policies on Sexual Harassment in Southern African Higher Education*. The details of the individual research reports on each universities can be found here. Electronic access is available from Jane Bennett: jane.bennett@uct.ac.za.

2. This action research project was made possible by the generous support of the International Development and Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada.

3. See Endnote 1.

4. This is a complex discussion, but the terms of nationalism currently operative across SADC countries do not share in-depth understandings of "democracy". In current Zimbabwe, for example, state discourse on democracy includes what Terence Ranger has referred to as "patriotic nationalism"; in South Africa, "democracy"

comprises a wide range of commitments to equality across citizenship, and a strong interest in redressing historical legacies of race/class privilege; in Malawi, recent state changes have revolutionised possibilities of broadening popular access to government but poverty is worse than under the previous, much more authoritarian regime. There are threads of semantic agreement running through the diverse approaches to "democracy" (predominant are ideas on access to representation at state level, and interest in protection of human rights), but in practice, the meaning of "democracy" is negotiated contextually, and in intimate relationship to priorities which respond to local emphases, authorities, and debates.

5. See Zeleza, P. 2002.

6. See, for example, general theory on this: Lumumba, N. 1993; Fall, Y. 1999; Kwesiga, J. 2002.

7. See for example, Gouws, A. and Kritzinger, A. 1995; Letsie, L. and Tlou, S. D. 1997.

8. In October, 2004, a young woman was sexually assaulted and beaten by a group of men at a taxi rank, in Manzini, Swaziland. Their defence, according to an article in the South African newspaper, *The Sunday Independent,* was that they were "teaching her a lesson" for wearing provocative clothes (a mini-skirt). See Timburg, C. "Women Take to the Streets After 'Mini-Skirt' Rape", *The Sunday Independent,* October 10, 2004.

9. This project is currently hosted by the African Gender Institute, and funded by the Association for African Universities; some of the case studies funded are published in this issue of FA8.

10. Dominant researchers here have been Finchilescu (1994), Gaidzanwa (1997), Gouws and Kritzinger (1995), Mate (2000), McFadden (1997, 2001), Letsie and Tlou (1997), Simelane (2001).

11. See Sutherland (1991).

12. See Bennett (2002b).

13. They argue that policies which "encourage reporting" are characterised by three things: commitment to ensuring privacy, supportive and fair investigative procedures, and top management support for policy enforcement (Peirce et al, 1997: 235).

14. See Le Roux, Orleyn and Rycroft (2005); Wilken and Badenhorst (2005).

15. This is not to say that such engagement should be one of mere compliance. In the best case scenario, institutional research and intellectual debate should be stimulating national policy formation processes although the contextual politics of the day will determine the meaning of this. But where issues of gender-based violence are concerned, there is an especial need to be vigilant about policy congruity and coherence, across diverse zones of employment, because there is: (a) a base-line need to collate rich information about the implementation of such policies that can properly inform stronger approaches to the issue; and (b) chances of maximising survivors' access to policy resources accrue with the development of popular "common denominator" meanings for "sexual harassment," "rights," and "complaints processes".

16. The research was dominated by questions of heterosexual interactions; all research teams were however deeply aware of the possibility for abuse within lesbian or gay interactions, and explored interviewees' ideas about sexual citizenship in a way which allowed for the expression of homophobia, and for rejections of the powerful heteronormativities operative on SADC campuses. This material will form the focus of a second article on this research project, currently in preparation; Jane Bennett (jane.bennett@uct.ac.za) can be contacted for more information.

17. Such as the Child Support Grant, the Termination of Pregnancy Act, the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act, and others.

18. See Endnote 1.

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The Sexual and Reproductive Health Counselling Initiative

Edith Okiria

The problems faced by women students are almost universally underestimated. It is often assumed that once they pass the gates of the university, all they have to do to succeed is to study hard and hand in their essays on time. This Profile wonderfully illustrates how that ideal is far from the reality of many women students at Makerere University, Uganda's premier public institution of higher learning. It shows how the determination of a small group of women faculty can make an enormous practical difference in students' lives. However, we also see that the personal and professional resources of these faculty members can be stretched to the breaking point in a situation where neither their own institution nor the international donor community sees fit to offer material and financial support to their efforts. Thus, simple yet crucial – sometimes life-saving – information and resources are denied to women students except on a small scale; and that smaller provision is dependent on the inner resources and strength of those same women faculty. It should be noted that Makerere formally adopted an Anti- Sexual Harassment Policy in June 2006 with detailed implementation guidelines; but as we see here, there are many steps that must still be taken before it can have an impact on individual students. Organizing activist women across the university in support of each other's work also can face serious obstacles of communication.[1]

This Profile suggests that to the extent that institutional culture ignores or sidelines the specific health information needs of women students, the "norms" of female drop-out and failure, and the maintenance of male privilege, are cyclically reproduced.

I joined Makerere University in 1999 as a lecturer in the Department of Women and Gender Studies, established a few years earlier. At the time, one of my daughters was in her second year at the University. In her first semester, she had chosen to stay in a hostel near the University with some of her friends from secondary school. When I first took her to the hostel, I became concerned

about the neighbourhood. We had to walk through a drinking place and there was no direct access by car. To my great relief, my daughter spent only two nights there before deciding on her own accord to come back home. She was very reluctant to return to the hostel, and when I pressed her she told me:

> Life out there is too hectic for me. My roommates go out literally every day and come back with their boyfriends waking everyone up. Actually they call me custodian of the room and have tried to get me a boyfriend too.

Needless to say I was happy to keep her at home. In the year 2000, my second daughter also joined the University but they both continued to commute from home. The difficult experiences of female students became a regular subject of our conversations. Some of their friends were having unwanted pregnancies, some were forced into premature marriages, and yet others were experiencing all manner of health problems. It was through these conversations about the social, economic and even cultural challenges facing their friends and colleagues that I first became interested in the situation of my students.

As a lecturer, I found myself in the ironic position of teaching gender studies while, all around me, students were facing difficulties related to their gender and sexual identities that were going unaddressed. Many times I had students, young women especially, come to talk to me after my lectures on gender and reproduction. I always used these lectures as an opportunity to sensitize students to important reproductive issues, sharing my own experiences by way of informing them. Many of them did not even know the location of the University Hospital.

The very first female student who came to see me about her personal life was living with a boyfriend who was also paying her tuition. She was on the evening programme so her lectures started at 5.00pm and ended at 10.00pm. After some time, she reported that her boyfriend became unhappy that she was coming home so late from her lectures. He started coming home late too, past midnight. Furthermore, he started beating her up for staying out late. It was difficult for this student to concentrate in class due to the domestic violence. She tried to go back to her mother, a single parent, working as a nurse. However, her mother explained that she did not have money to pay her tuition as she was already supporting her younger children. Thus the student had two alternatives: to stay in the abusive relationship or to go back home to her mother and drop out of the University. She was an intelligent girl who valued her education. I referred her to the Forum for African Women Educationists (FAWE), Uganda, but she never came back to tell me what happened, indeed

I never saw her again. I was angry and felt helpless, because I could not assist this girl more, and still do not know what became of her.

Another time, I was teaching Gender and Population and we were discussing maternal and child mortality rates. A female student leader followed me after the lecture and told me that one of her friends from the class had just lost a baby. The baby had died two days after delivery due to negligence on the part of the attending midwife. I made an appointment to meet this woman and counseled her, an act that was made easier by our shared Christian faith. This happened towards exam time so the student was busy studying despite her grief. She did manage to take all her exams, and later came back to share her results with me, showing that she had performed very well. This was a gratifying experience for me, in which I felt I had been able to help my student, who is still at the university, now in her final year.

Other problems my female students shared with me concerned their romantic relationships, post-abortion complications, as well as general questions about their sexuality and bodies. I realized through all this that students lacked a suitable environment in which to seek help or services on their sexual and reproductive health issues. These issues become particularly pressing at university, as students embark upon relationships that usually engender problems such as unwanted pregnancies, abortions, rape, sexual harassment, sexually transmitted diseases and so on. It is very disheartening to teach about gender relations and yet ignore the real-life, gendered challenges that our students are living through. I therefore decided to do something to address this matter.

In 2001, I had the opportunity to attend an advocacy skills training workshop on "Women and Reproductive Health Rights in Africa," organized by the Multidisciplinary African Women's Health Network (MAWHN) in Accra, Ghana. After this workshop, which I attended with Dr. Olive Ssentumbwe from the World Health Organization, we organized a similar meeting in Kampala, involving the Assistant Commissioner for Reproductive Health from the Ministry of Health, a doctor from an STD clinic, a lawyer from Makerere University Law School, a counselor from Makerere University Hospital, a religious leader and myself. I subsequently decided to carry out a rapid appraisal of sexual and reproductive health issues in three institutions of higher learning in Kampala which, in turn, led me to carry out a number of sensitization workshops that made use of the findings. I found that the problems experienced by students from the various institutions were similar: sexually transmitted infections (STI's), unwanted pregnancies and the complications of abortion, rape and sexual

harassment. The rapid appraisal also clearly showed that students do not use health services available to them. On the basis of these findings, the team I had worked with, composed of staff and students from all three institutions of higher learning, produced a comprehensive report which we submitted to the University authorities (Dean of Students), the Department of Women and Gender studies, and our funders, the World Health Organisation.

One of these three tertiary institutions, Kyambogo University, proceeded to develop a full fledged project on sexual and reproductive health for their students, spearheaded by one of the staff members that I had worked with. At Makerere, my department (Women and Gender Studies) embarked on lunch time seminars on reproductive health and family planning, which attracted a lot of interest and discussion. Together with the Head of Department, we discussed the possibility of establishing rudimentary support and information services for students, especially as there was already a student nurse with a background in counseling who was interested in working with me. However, my funding proposals for this project did not attract support. We were so determined to do something though, that we agreed to carry out the project by offering information sessions to students from all over the university every two weeks. We ran daytime and evening programmes, in keeping with the Makerere teaching timetables, and held a walk-in clinic in my office from 3.00pm to 6.00pm. This meant that I had to leave my office for students to have privacy with the counselor. The department stepped in to give a token payment to the counselor for her time, but even this was not sustained, although the Office of the Dean of Students was fully aware of the work we were doing.

The massive uptake of this modest health and counseling service by students, and the extent of the problems presented soon became overwhelming. Again, most of these problems concerned sexuality and relationships. For instance, we found that women students tend to go out with older, working men because of their need for material support, such that some are forced to endure sexual exploitation and abuse from these men. We saw too that young women students often opt to have abortions although these are illegal in Uganda. Illegal abortions use crude and dangerous methods such that some women needed post-abortion care but could not go to any health unit for help.

We have also had male students visiting our clinic. Their questions tend to concern sexual hygiene. For example, one male student we saw was not aware that wearing tight underwear could cause pain to his private parts. Another mature man who had contracted an STI was washing his genitalia with antiseptic,

hoping the problem would disappear. Recently, a male law student called asking to see me on a gender issue. In his case, a male lecturer was sexually harassing his girlfriend to the extent that this woman felt that she could not attend his lectures any more. I met the girl and asked her to speak boldly to the lecturer but she was terrified to do so, fearing victimization. Likewise, it was difficult for me to confront and rebuke this man. Mechanisms of reporting such cases are not yet in place at Makerere, and the university administration does not seem to see the seriousness of the problem. A sexual harassment policy has been developed with the leadership of the centralized gender mainstreaming division, but it has not been fully implemented.

In July 2003, the Women and Gender Studies Department sponsored our Counselor, Gorrette Nalwadda, and myself to go for a two week training in "Advocacy for Sexual and Reproductive Health" at the German Foundation for World Population Training Center in Uganda. The training opened our eyes even more. Through the project we had established, we had realized the need for students to be better informed. Therefore, after the training, we again wrote a funding proposal to establish a youth-friendly Center for Sexual and Reproductive Health at Makerere. The proposal had been solicited by the World Health Organization, but was again rejected for lack of money. We were deeply disappointed after all the hard work we had done. I even decided to reduce the proposal to the development of an information kit that could be given out to students, those new to the University in particular. However even this reduced initiative was rejected, forcing us to abandon it altogether. I still maintain that even a small-scale intervention such as this could make a lot of difference to our students' sexual health and well-being.

It is often assumed that university students are mature and have all the information regarding their sexuality but, as I found, the reality is very different.

The initiative I have described here started as an individual effort, as it was not easy to find any support for it. Ultimately I believe that this is what has prevented it from fulfilling its promise. Although the Gender Mainstreaming Division under the Registrar's office has spearheaded gender awareness throughout the university, they also face capacity constraints.

At the same time, the problems I have described in this brief profile are present in the students' lives every day, and many women in particular, are unable to complete their education for want of institutional support to help them through life's challenges. We need more research into the gendered and sexual cultures of our institutions of higher learning so that we can better

appreciate the problems that our students experience, especially as they come nowadays from all over Uganda and the countries beyond our borders too. For my part, I have continued organizing seminars and training sessions for students whenever possible. That over two hundred students attended the last seminar, held in November 2006 during their exams, speaks to the gaping need for this kind of service at Makerere University.

Endnotes

1   See Joyce Kwesiga and Elizabeth Ssendiwala, "Gender mainstreaming in the university context: Prospects and challenges at Makerere University, Uganda" *Women's Studies International Forum* 29:6 (2006). A copy of the Makerere University Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy, as adopted June 2006, will be posted on the GWS website; our thanks to Prof. Sylvia Tamale, Dean of Law at Makerere University (Editors).

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Medicine and Activism: Institutionalising Medical Care and Compassion for Rape Survivors

Simidele Dosekun

The Heath Sciences Faculty of the University of Cape Town has the oldest medical school in Southern Africa, initiated in 1912 as a Faculty of Medicine. It currently operates in alliance with the Groote Schuur Teaching Hospital and the Red Cross Children's Hospital. As a large faculty, with five separate schools and eleven multi-faceted departments, it is responsible for the teaching and training of hundreds of young doctors, research specialists, surgeons and nurses annually.

Medical schools are globally renowned for their patriarchal cultures; they are often steeped in very traditional notions of gender roles, and associated with positivist approaches to research which are not always sensitive to the complexities of men's and women's social realities. But even within the most formidable patriarchal institutions and traditions, it is often possible to find expert activists working – sometimes without recognition or fanfare, but with great courage and skill – to address gender injustices.

Professor Lynette Denny and Dr Nomonde Mbatani are two such experts, located in the UCT Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, and at Groote Schuur Hospital. They work as specialists in the field of gynaecology oncology and as a team, offer their patients a particularly rare combination of medical and surgical skills. Because of their surgical expertise, Denny and Mbatani perform reconstructive surgery upon women survivors of the most violent rapes in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. This critical care takes place in the context of a widely acknowledged rape crisis in the country. Together with Denny's policy work, it has motivated institutional and cultural changes at Groote Schuur Hospital to improve the treatment of all rape survivors. This profile focuses on this particular aspect of the doctors' work (although it is only one facet of their overall medical engagement with women's healthcare) and offers a brief overview of gender activism by two women which challenges the intersections of professional medical care and the meaning of political compassion and advocacy within everyday gendered realities.

Denny specialised in gynaecology oncology in 1993, while Mbatani, her former student, joined her in 2003. Denny's work in the field has gained her widespread recognition in South Africa and abroad, including a 2003 award as South Africa's Woman of the Year in Science and Technology, for her work on cervical cancer in poverty-stricken urban environments of South Africa. Surgery as a whole still tends to be dominated by men because of the demanding working hours, but both Denny and Mbatani (senior surgeons in their unit) note that the gender profile is gradually shifting. The obstetrics and gynaecology ("obs and gynae") unit in which they work is, for instance, almost evenly split between men and women surgeons.[1] At the same time, they explain that "obs and gynae" is becoming a less desirable specialisation, because it carries for the doctor a high risk of exposure to HIV.

Having women gynaecologists is very important, Mbatani considers, because it encourages their patients to feel more at ease. This is true for all women seeking help, but in rape cases where the patients have just suffered violence, humiliation and indecent exposure at the hands of a man, the need for women surgeons is especially critical. When rape survivors come into the hospital (usually, but not always, after having reported their assaults[2]) they have to recount their experiences and expose their bodies to the doctor for medico-legal purposes, all of which they may find easier to do with a woman doctor. Furthermore, Mbatani explains that, "being black comes as a bonus to our female patients especially in the public sector and this is one reason I am still here."

Most of the severe rape cases she and Denny see come from the largely underprivileged population served by Groote Schuur, a public hospital and they tend to be black and coloured women with relatively little education. In Mbatani's experience, it is important for such women to relate to a doctor who understands their social background, "someone that they consider to be 'one of us,' someone who speaks in their own mother tongue."

The majority of rapes of women in South Africa do not involve extensive physical damage (although the "minor" damages – bruises, spinal trauma, vaginal tears and scratches – and gross psychological damages are serious). But Denny and Mbatani annually encounter five to ten cases of women who have sustained very severe physical injuries inflicted by brute force and all manner of weapons during rape. As Denny notes, most of such cases become homicides because the women die from the extent of their injuries.

Denny's work with "severe" rape victims, as indeed with all her patients, is informed by her feminist principles. Denny is a well-known activist around

gender-based violence; she served as Chair of the Rape Crisis Cape Town Board for many years and won a White Ribbon award for her work with rape survivors. She has developed critical protocols for handling the medical and legal care of survivors, and has worked within UCT for many years on the development and implementation of institutional sexual harassment policies.

When a woman arrives at the hospital, after surviving sexual attacks with bottles, knives, or other implements used by perhaps multiple assailants, the trauma done to her body is substantial and even horrifying. Denny explains, though, that she has learnt over the years that treating a rape patient while enraged about the patient's victimisation prevents the carer from fully caring for the patient: "it leaves one feeling helpless and angry in the face of the suffering."

What is the alternative to rage, in such circumstances? "The best way I know to approach and help rape survivors is to fully focus my energy, attention and compassion upon them, as a professional doctor," says Denny.

Mbatani concurs with this approach, as she views her role in these cases, and her teaming with Denny, as that of doctor and healer, not feminist or activist. Working with rape survivors, she says, "requires a lot of understanding and patience from the practitioner". On the one hand, the doctor must show the patient empathy and respect, and give her space in which to express her emotions. At the same time, it is her role to medically assess the patient, accurately record her story, for which purpose one may have to repeat questions, and collect the necessary forensic evidence. This kind of evidence collection is essential to ensuring a successful prosecution, if a charge has been laid. The doctor therefore has to guide the patient through a detailed restaging of her rape experience which is often traumatic and difficult not just for the survivor, but the doctor too.

Through Denny's activism, critical steps have been taken to create support structures for this difficult interaction between doctor and patient. First, in 1994, Denny pushed to establish a rape centre at Groote Schuur. This is a private space in which non-critical rape survivors coming into the hospital are seen immediately by a nurse and the attending gynaecologist, and where they can shower and change into new clothes after being treated. Although Denny had to raise private funds to establish the centre, called the Thuthuzela Room, she considers that the hospital is actually "supportive and wishes to provide the best possible service to rape survivors". Groote Schuur Hospital has contributed money and facilities such as a shower to the rape centre. The hospital also provides post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) to the rape survivors who come into the room to minimise their risk of contracting HIV.

Subsequently, in 1998, the Western Cape Province adopted a set of protocols designed by Denny to integrate the clinical and forensic care of rape survivors. The protocols consist of a comprehensive form which the attending doctor must go through with the survivor and meticulously complete – a lengthy process taking roughly three hours. Denny checks through the documentation of every rape case, severe and non-severe, that is seen at Groote Schuur Hospital to ensure that the process is being correctly followed. To this same end, registrars are re-trained on the protocols every six months.

Denny celebrates the adoption of the protocols as "a move from policy to practice". Together with the training accompanying them, they serve to demystify rape for young (and older) doctors. They normalise the care of survivors as "something that a doctor does". Indeed, Denny reports that junior doctors who previously felt intimidated by the prospect of working with rape survivors now say that they feel able to do so with greater ease and professionalism. She has taught them that their responsibility to these survivors is not to presume to pyschologically heal them. Rather it is to create a safe and contained space for these women, and to examine and interact with them with respect.

Changes to the teaching curriculum have also helped institutionalise care for rape survivors at Groote Schuur. Denny's curriculum for students includes input from NGO's (such as Rape Crisis) on the issues facing survivors of sexual assault, so that student-doctors can begin to situate their own responsibilities as medical practitioners within a wider spectrum of services and support. Denny and Mbatani say that questions on handling rape cases now regularly appear specialist gynaecology exams.

The care of male rape survivors at Groote Schuur has been a more contentious issue. This speaks to the gendered culture of the institution against which Denny and Mbatani work. Mbatani explains that male surgeons at the hospital initially refused to examine male rape survivors, agreeing to be called only if it had been determined by another doctor that these patients required surgery. These surgeons argued that male survivors, like their female counterparts, should be seen by a gynaecologist. This was of course an illogical argument given that gynaecology is the specialisation on the female reproductive system, and that the physical damage experienced by male survivors did not require the expertise of gynaecologists. Ultimately, the reluctance of the surgeons to see male survivors stemmed from the view that such men were likely to be homosexuals, and it seems likely that homophobia (and a lack of understanding about rape as a form of assault) lay at the root of the male surgeons' attitude.

Male rape is still widely misunderstood within South Africa; to the outrage of many feminist activists, it has not been legally defined as "rape" within the new Sexual Offences Act. Male rape is, in the public mind, mostly associated with the gang-cultures operating within prisons, and so ignored as an issue of crime amongst criminals.

According to Denny and Mbatani, the male surgeons' prejudice placed both male rape survivors and gynaecologists at Groote Schuur in an untenable position. On the one hand, male survivors tend to recoil from examination by a woman doctor because of the sensitivity of their experiences. Conversely, before the establishment of the rape centre, the gynaecologists did not know where to examine these patients. Mbatani recalls once seeing a male rape survivor and explains that she did not know where to ask him to wait. Had he waited for examination in the gynaecology room, he would have stood out as the only man there and would therefore have been subject to great curiosity, such that his privacy might have been compromised. In this particular case, the patient ended up pacing the corridors of the hospital, before eventually seeing a doctor hours after he had come in for treatment and care.

The standoff with the male surgeons over the care of male rape survivors was eventually resolved when the hospital administration intervened and made it mandatory for them to see such patients. As suggested, their initial reluctance to do so could be read as indicative of the gendered institutional culture that prevailed within the hospital institution, if not officially sanctioned by it. Arguably, the surgeons' attitude towards male rape survivors, as described by Denny and Mbatani, was premised on two fundamental notions about rape. The first is that rape feminises; the second is that there is stigma and shame in being raped – which, for a man is also, therefore, to be feminised. These ideas translated into the care of rape survivors in that this caring itself was perceived to be feminising. Within the culture and hierarchies of doctors at a hospital such as Groote Schuur, the care of male rape victims was regarded as being something that male surgeons, at the top of the pecking order, should not be bothered with.

In the end, it is interesting that despite entrenched ideas about rape as "something which happens to women, and which women must address", the hospital as an institution took an official position on this matter. That they did so arguably relates directly to Denny and Mbatani's medical work and efforts on behalf of rape survivors. Denny states that their work for rape survivors "has made the hospital very sensitive; its made sure that we provide a very high-level service". Certainly, the adoption of protocols and policies do not guarantee that

every survivor will have a positive experience in their interaction with the hospital institution and staff. Yet Denny's explicit activism, consolidated by Mbatani's medical and surgical work for rape survivors, is implanting the roots of a new culture at the hospital in attitudes towards rape survivors. It is increasingly expected as a matter of due professional course that rape survivors, female and male, must receive due and diligent medical care; compassion too.

The ramifications of this for the Faculty of Health Sciences at UCT are powerful. Feminist medical science and practice are being embedded and normalised as part of the day-to-day routine of teaching and healing.

Denny and Mbatani are not starry-eyed about their work, acknowledging that there are continuing institutional, professional and personal challenges in taking on the politics of gender injustice. But, their collaboration has already demonstrated the power of alliances of science and activism in the critical work of re-imagining the spaces of professional medicine as spaces in which women's lives and dignity are cherished.

Professor Denny and Dr Mbatani were interviewed at UCT's Health Sciences Faculty.

Endnotes

1   Eight of fifteen surgeons in the "obs and gynae" unit are women.

2   South African research on the ratio between reported and un-reported rapes is complex, and an area in which there are numerous debates about how to quantify gender-based violence. A study of the prevalence of rape by the South African government statistics body, Stats SA, in 2001, suggests that half of those who experience rape report it. Another study based on interviews with women in a health care facility for rape (Medical Research Council, 1999) suggests that 29% of the women had reported. Rape Crisis Centres report much lower figures for reporting, and point out that what gets called "rape" covers a very diverse range of sexual assaults.

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In Conversation

Women's Leadership is a Key:
Fay Chung speaks with Teresa Barnes

Dr Fay Chung is well known to activists in Zimbabwe and students of
Zimbabwean history. Born in colonial Rhodesia, she joined the liberation
struggle in exile in the 1970s just after graduating from and working as a
lecturer at the then University of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Her commitment
to national liberation led her to the guerrilla army camps in Zambia and
Mozambique, where she helped develop a new educational methodology and
curriculum for what was hoped would soon be an independent Zimbabwe.
After independence came to Zimbabwe in 1980, she served as Minister of
Education. Dr Chung's dedication to the ideals of women's education has led
her to activism for higher education for women in Africa.

This conversation with Feminist Africa 8 co-editor Teresa Barnes, was
prompted by the 2006 publication of Dr Chung's memoirs, *Re-living the
Second Chimurenga: Memories from Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle,* pub-
lished by Weaver Press in Harare and the Nordic Africa Institute in Uppsala.
The conversation was conducted online between April and July 2007.

TB: Dr Chung, although you were born in Zimbabwe, your professional life as
an activist and educator has always had an international dimension. Where are
you currently based?

FC: I have now officially retired and I live in Zimbabwe, although I still
do some consultancies in different parts of Africa. My last job was as Director
of the UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA)
located in AddisAbaba. I retired at the end of 2003. Prior to that, I worked
as Chief of Education at UNICEF in New York.

During the liberation struggle, I worked in Zambia, Tanzania and Mozambique.
I taught at the University of Zambia, whilst in Tanzania and Mozambique I was
working for the ZANU Education Department.

TB: You have always fought for the cause of women's education. Do you
see continuities between the days of living and working with ZANU-PF's
Education Department in exile, and the work you do now to support the
Women's University in Africa (WUA)?

FC: My interest in the education of women has increased, as I now see that women's leadership is a key to all forms of development in Africa. Unless we develop a strong and progressive leadership of women, we will not be able to go forward. Women in Africa have not been able to play their full role in development, as a result of feudal traditions which place women in a supportive role, with little economic and political power. Women are not well represented at tertiary level, particularly at university level, and this has serious repercussions for the type of leadership that women enjoy.

TB: Your concern for the lack of training of women must have motivated your decision to set up WUA, a private university for women in Zimbabwe?

FC: Yes, I now think that unless you specially target women, you are not going to be able to make a big difference. I began to realize this about ten years ago, so I was trying to convince others of this.

In the case of WUA, it was a group of Zimbabwean women academics, led by Hope Sadza, who took the initiative when I was still working for UNICEF in New York. I supported their efforts, and have continued to do so. These women realized that they needed to break out of the state-directed university mould, which has become so highly politicised in Zimbabwe, with the state beginning to dictate on leadership, student numbers and other matters. This contrasts to the previous situation – when I was the Minister for Education, we assiduously tried to protect university autonomy, and did not interfere.

TB: Is WUA a contact or distance education institution?

FC: So far we are doing only face-to-face teaching, but for the past two years we have been preparing to launch a dual-mode approach with some courses being available through distance education. We have started liaising with the University of South Africa (UNISA) to utilise some of their courses for our students. We have also embarked on developing our own distance education courses in areas which are not covered elsewhere, such as on gender, and on HIV/AIDS. We are going to launch the distance education components in the next academic year, beginning in September 2007.

TB: It was set up in 2002 – how many classes have graduated so far?

FC: WUA has had two sets of graduates so far. It is presently targeting mid-career women, with an average age of about 40, who missed out on university education. This is a way of addressing the fact that before independence in Zimbabwe in 1980, less than 1% of blacks could go to university, and women then comprised only 24% of the total enrolment, and now, after 30 years women are still 24% at university level! However, because of the overall

increase in enrolment, the overall number of women going to university is about ten times what it was before Independence.

TB: How many students are registered now?

FC: Presently we have about 1 000 students, 75% of whom are women (we also take men if we have adequate places). The academic areas offered at present are reproductive health; management and entrepreneurship; social studies which includes primary education; and agriculture, animal science and horticulture.

We also offer short courses for 1–3 weeks in areas such as women's leadership and horticulture.

TB: How did WUA go about recruiting academic staff?

FC: On staff recruitment, we have had a lot of problems because of the economic crisis. Since 2002, Zimbabwe has lost 50% of its academic staff. At present, we are mainly able to recruit people who have retired (like myself) and people who have just completed their masters' degree. This is the challenge presently facing all universities in Zimbabwe.

WUA has been fortunate enough to get a generous grant from the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) of US$2.5 million, which will be devoted to staff development and to strengthening our courses.

TB: I congratulate your colleague Dr Hope Sadza, WUA vice-chancellor, on winning the award, "Africa's most outstanding female in education" presented in Nigeria in March 2007 for her work with WUA. Do you think this award has translated into more publicity and support for WUA?

FC: It was wonderful that Hope Sadza managed to win this award. It has been a very hard battle for her to establish this university in the face of much opposition and many difficulties, and she well deserves this recognition. We hope that this will enable us to form better and closer linkages with other universities both in Africa and globally which specialise in issues related to the empowerment of women.

TB: The post-liberation state in Africa has been something of a disappointment for women. You have shown how the inequalities in public higher education made it necessary to set up a women's university in Zimbabwe. Do you think that there is still a role for the model of women working within state structures for change, or should more effort go into setting up alternative networks and institutions for the education of women? It also seems that it has also proved extremely difficult to sustain non-governmental initiatives for more that a few years. Can you share any thoughts on these issues with us?

FC: One of the problems in the post-liberation state is that we tended to revert back to traditional social and political systems and values, at least this is so in Zimbabwe. Our conceptualisation of the challenges we faced focused almost entirely on the problems of colonialism, imperialism and white racism, and we assumed that if we removed these three things we would be able to develop. There was a romanticisation of the African past, the idea was that we were doing very well before colonialism and then the whites came and spoilt it all. As a result, the governments which took over after Independence kept state structures and systems as they were, and so tended to reproduce the repressive characteristics of the past. We really need to change the whole state structure and systems. What happened instead at Independence, was that most people saw themselves as apprentices, learning to do what the colonial governments had been doing, when in fact this was not enough at all.

The situation of women is an important test case. Under traditional values as well as under colonialism, women's roles were rigidly circumscribed. "Well-behaved" women accepted these values, and obeyed them. They were rewarded for their obedience. Women who chose to question these values were regarded with some suspicion. It is because of this "obedience" that we find so much tokenism within state structures – yes, there are women in state positions, but they do not necessarily wield a lot of power.

In terms of women's rights, some major gains were made. We secured changes in the laws that enabled women to inherit and own property. However, these changes have mainly benefited educated middle-class women. They are not accessible to peasant and working-class women, who are not able to use the legal system to protect their rights. Their rights are not respected, not even in the courts. In the infamous Venia Magaya case, which I mention in my book, the Supreme Court judgment was that a married woman could not inherit her father's property (whereas a married man can!). Apparently, marriage destroys the property rights of women.

The disjuncture between middle class women and peasant/working class women reflects a similar disjuncture in society as a whole. Independence was pretty good for the middle classes, but not very advantageous to the poor.

Men found it easy to exploit peasant and working-class women, and through patronage, they have ensured that more pliable and less-educated women have been appointed to positions of power. Some of the women who hold decision-making positions do not actually make decisions, but still wait for instructions from their patrons. In Zimbabwe, there is still a culture of obedience – you follow orders or else! This is part of tradition, part of colonialism, and part of the military heritage.

What I think is missing is clarity on the part of all women regarding exactly what they want to achieve, and strategic actions that will ensure that they do make these gains within a specific time. Women need to tackle the power structure, which is still embodied in the state.

There is need for greater self-criticism within the women's movement regarding the focus of our objectives. Perhaps these are middle-class aims that neglect the needs of poorer women? Perhaps we are not ambitious enough, and all too easily satisfied with ephemeral gains? Unfortunately, some of the earlier gains we did make have been lost, for example in the area of education. In Zimbabwe, we had almost universal primary education from the 1980s to the early 1990s, but this is not true any more, as only 62% complete primary education today. Similar losses were registered in Tanzania and Zambia after the initial successes after Independence, although both of these countries have now managed to regain some of the lost ground.

I think non-governmental organisations have a very important role to play in working out innovative, practicable models which can be massified by the state sector.

I also think we need new institutions because the inherited institutions are totally inadequate and backward. For example, for many people "democracy" is equated to "elections" once every five years. However, democracy is much more than that, and we do not have sufficient democratic institutions to assist us in asserting our democratic rights. There are many institutions which need to be reviewed:

- Banking systems are not geared to cater for the needs of poorer people, particularly poorer women.
- Marriage as an institution needs to be re-visited. Polygamy is much practised by wealthy men, while less wealthy men practise casual sex as a substitute, fuelling the spread of HIV and AIDS. What are women's rights to health, if her husband is practising either polygamy or casual sex? If she chooses to divorce a philandering husband, she will most likely lose her rights to see her children.
- Property and inheritance rights need to be re-examined very carefully. In Zimbabwe, women's land rights were not carefully considered during the recent land resettlement programme, whereas the land rights of white farmers received a lot of attention.
- Women's access to education remains limited, particularly at higher levels.
   On the question of sustaining non-governmental initiatives – I think it is

difficult because we are too donor-dependent. We need to find innovative ways to fund initiatives, such as looking for local rather than only overseas sponsors; providing services which can be paid for; being more modest and less reliant on flashy donor funded responses, etc.

TB: I would like to turn to a discussion of your views on the publication of your memoirs, "Reliving the Second Chimurenga: Memories from Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle ". To my knowledge, there is no other book written by a Zimbabwean woman about her experiences and perspectives on the liberation struggle – and it is also one of only a few written by an African woman on this topic.

What has been the general reaction to the book?

FC: As you see from the introduction written by Preben Kaarsholm [a Danish cultural historian who specialises in Zimbabwean studies – TB], I am criticised for not supporting the new "democratic" initiatives, which are the various political formations in Zimbabwe since 2000, such as the National Constitutional Alliance (NCA) and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). Although the MDC was originally based in the trade unions, it appeared to move rapidly towards the right, in what I see as a betrayal of the workers they purport to support. Probably this was a result of the enthusiastic support they received from all quarters, as they were the only opposition to the one-party state run by ZANU-PF. This move to the right translated into generous financial support, and to them splitting up over how the money was to be utilised.

We do need more political voices and political pressure groups, rather than the monopolisation of power by ZANU-PF. The monopolisation of the political arena has created a lot of problems: the high level of corruption in government; the repetition of policies and strategies from the past, and the demonstrated failure to find innovative responses to new challenges. The aging leadership, with the top leadership in their seventies and eighties, is alienated from more educated and younger people. Violence has been adopted as a political strategy, utilising the less-educated peasant and worker youths as the instruments of violence.

The MDC's response has been to personalise the problems, attributing these to the "dictatorial" tendencies of President Mugabe. I personally do not see the problems as a personality problem, which can be cured by the removal of the "dictator". I do not find this analysis to be accurate. The removal of Mugabe will not necessarily provide a solution to the problems, and if that is all we do, the problems will remain, and may even get worse.

On the other hand, my book has also met with some hostility from within ZANU-PF, as I am seen as too critical of both the past record and the present

situation. In particular, I have received a lot of criticism of my depiction of General Josiah Tongogara, whom I do see as a military genius dedicated to the liberation of Zimbabwe. What people criticise is my inclusion of his implication in killings and sexual exploitation as part of the picture. This is not acceptable in the now-sanitised picture of Tongogara as the perfect hero.

The present government does not accept any blame for the current situation, which they blame on sanctions imposed by Britain, the European Union, and the US. Of course, it is true that these three power blocs have been well organised by Britain against Zimbabwe, initially as a result of the takeover of the white farms. Blair, as you know, openly admitted that he is supporting the opposition MDC for "regime change". The fiction imposed by the West that the stringent sanctions are only aimed at a few individuals is of course not true at all. The sanctions include closure of all bank lending facilities and investments from outside. Donors now provide food, but no development funding, as even the funding of seeds or fertilisers are subject to sanctions.

However, the truth is that many of the problems we face are also home-made. The government will not accept such self-criticism. Not surprisingly, they keep repeating the same mistakes.

TB: What prompted you to write the book?

FC: I wanted to write it for the future generations, who do not understand the past. Now there are so many partial versions of the past, such as the heroic perfection depicted by ZANU-PF, the assertions that "things were better under Ian Smith" by some whites and even some blacks. But our future must be built on a real knowledge of the past, with its successes as well as its failures and weaknesses.

I started writing it immediately after Independence in 1980, but somehow found it too painful to complete. I only managed to complete it when I was away from Zimbabwe, and could have some distance from what had happened. I did rely on various notes I have written in the past, but I did not have the opportunity to interview people.

TB: Do you see your own history differently, now that you've written it, than before you began?

FC: I do see that I dealt with many aspects very superficially, and they do require much more in-depth analysis. Hopefully my book will spur many other people to write down their experiences and views. I gather that there is going to be a biography of Tongogara to rebut my views, which have been termed a "caricature" by his supporters. I think Preben's friend Wilfred Manda is also

writing something – he criticised me very fiercely, and 1 think dishonestly, as he was the greatest critic of Tongogara in the 1970s, but is now an uncritical admirer.

TB: The end of your book outlines a set of national development priorities for Zimbabwe. Given the extreme difficulties in Zimbabwe today, do you have any advice for those who will be following in your footsteps as activists for national development?

FC: 1 think it is when situations are difficult, as they are today in Zimbabwe, that real and substantive transformations can take place. 1 think everyone can see that the continuation of the colonial and traditional systems and structures after Independence have led us into a developmental cul-de-sac. In Japan and Germany after the Second World War, and in China after the truly traumatic Cultural Revolution, everyone had to re-examine and re-think their inheritance. This is happening today in Zimbabwe.

What can we do? What should we do? Quite a lot. Women should participate more actively in the political process, including in government. This means participation in politics, women's groups, and NGOs.

We need more training of women, and much more networking. Women are weak because we remain isolated.

TB: Finally, what advice would you give to the readers of Feminist Africa about the many challenges facing the intellectuals and educators who are working so hard to broaden and deepen higher education for women in Africa?

FC: 1 think the biggest challenge we face as intellectuals is how we are often divorced from the realities experienced – and suffered – by the grassroots women in the rural reserves and in the urban townships and slums. We may be more concerned about what is happening to us elite women, such as our promotion prospects, etc. Not that our concerns are not important – they are, but we also need to be more sensitive and knowledgeable about what is happening to women at the grassroots level. It boils down to the class differentiation within our societies – we as women intellectuals and educators need to look at the educational needs of all women and girls, of every level of society, if we are to make breakthroughs. Particular areas that require our attention are:

- Leadership education and training for women leaders, including at the grassroots, and in all educational institutions.
- Special attention to the education of girls at school. So many girls are dropping out at Grades 3 and 4 in Africa, often because they are needed as

unpaid housemaids at home or because poor families are already betrothing these little girls to richer men as fourth or sixth wives. I heard a horrible story the other day of a school girl whose parents are farm workers in Zimbabwe, and who is being forced by her parents to marry the guard on the farm. Apparently a guard is regarded as prestigious and powerful amongst farm workers. Such girls are not protected by their families, and although they can appeal to the police, I seriously doubt whether they will receive a sympathetic hearing. We need systems which can help them, based on careful research and understanding of the local conditions in each country.

TB: Thank you very much for sharing these insights with us!

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Review

Lauren Van Vuuren

Women's Organisations and Democracy in South Africa: Contesting Authority by Shireen Hassim. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006.

Women's Organisations and Democracy in South Africa by Shireen Hassim is a lucid and sometimes fascinating account of the evolution and struggle of women's organisations in the context of South Africa's turbulent recent past. Hassim's study is part historiography, part political analysis, and clearly activist: it proposes policy and despairingly critiques the limited gains of gender equality movements in post-apartheid South Africa. Given that South Africa's democracy, now in its teens, is currently gripped by urgent debates around the palpable effects of the reform and redistributive policies of the ANC government, this book is timeous. It gives us a broad view of the development of women's organisations in South Africa, which allows for greater understanding of the post-apartheid context, where the rhetoric and practice of revolutionary politics has had to filter into and be redefined by the hierarchies and processes of state bureaucracy and liberal democratic governance.

The book can be broadly divided into three sections. The first is the struggle against apartheid, the second is the politics of the period of transition to democracy and the third is an analysis and appraisal of the post-apartheid, ANC-led era. Hassim begins in the introduction and chapter one by outlining the conceptual apparatus utilised in her argument, including a literature review of the key feminist theoreticians that have influenced her arguments and methodology. Chapter one explores the structure of the organisations that constitute the focus of this study, and also and significantly the "world of discourse" in which these organisations operated. A sharp distinction emerges between the concerns of Western feminism (read: "academic/elitist" feminism) and the particularised challenges of the nationalist liberation struggle against apartheid, the urgency of which often overwhelmed a feminist agenda. Hassim expands upon the battle of ideologies in chapter one, where she discusses the often conflicting demands of feminism and nationalism in the struggle against apartheid.

In chapters two and three, Hassim considers the development of women's organisations during the apartheid era according to particular themes. Chapter two is a broad assessment of women's organisations as they battled out a position in the repressive conditions of 1980s South Africa, where, after a brief surge in successful feminist activism in the early 1980s, the internal UDF-led[1] liberation struggle took precedence at the expense of the autonomy of women's organisations such as the Natal Organisation of Women and United Women's Organisation in the Western Cape. Chapter three looks at the slowness of feminist activists in exile to win real support within the ANC, given the curtailment of their autonomy by the hierarchical structure of the organisation in exile. This chapter considers the incremental gains made by women fighting in Umkhoto we Sizwe for legitimization of feminist concerns and the struggles of younger women in the organisation (the "generation of '76") to gain autonomy within the ANC in addressing and expressing the concerns of women. Hassim also highlights the significance of international networking for sharpening awareness of the particular needs of women amongst activists, laying the groundwork for greater gender sensitivity in the ANC and creating awareness of the significance of women as a constituency.

Chapters four to eight look at the transition period and post-1994 democratic South Africa. Working through the complexity of politics within and between various women's organisations, and their relations to the power-brokers of the transition negotiations, Hassim considers the influence of the ANC Women's League, the influence of returning exiles, the struggle for women's groups to enshrine gender rights into the new constitution and the momentarily successful effort to create a multi-racial, multi-party women's organisation in the form of the Women's National Coalition. In the final two chapters, Hassim considers the realities of gender politics and policies in post-apartheid South Africa, assessing the successes and failures of gender activists as they repositioned themselves in government, the bureaucracy and powerful, internationally funded NGOs; as she critically assesses the limits and successes of the gender machinery instituted by government.

Throughout the book, Hassim's analysis is nuanced, charting the successes and failures of South African women's organisations through a rigorous exploration and critique of the exigencies of real politics beyond mere ideology. The struggle of marginal women, the double standards and rhetoric of politicians within and without the ANC, the debilitating effect of petty politicking within

women's organisations and the enduring battle of women activists to overcome deeply entrenched opposition to gender parity makes for challenging reading.

There are some minor quibbles. The book is overtly an "academic" text, one that a lay reader would struggle with due to the sophisticated utilisation of theory and the thesis-style of the writing. There is an intrinsic irony here: Hassim is consistently concerned with the tendency of feminist activism, especially when it is bound to the state, to stray from an engagement with marginal women, such as the rural poor. Yet the rich content of this book will undoubtedly be of use mainly within the academy, or by people trained in academic reading and writing. Perhaps this is a necessary evil given the care taken by Hassim to avoid "Manichean dualities" and to allow her subject matter to speak in all its complexity.

The book is also overwhelmingly a study of the women's organisations in relation to the ANC and its internal politics and external policies, which sometimes leaves the reader wondering about a title that implies a broader palette. Whilst not ignored, the book deals rather fleetingly with organisations attached to other political parties.

Overall this is a fine contribution to feminist scholarship in South Africa. Hassim's analysis reveals the degree to which women across the cultural and racial spectrum in South Africa continue to face deep seated prejudice as second class citizens. *Women's Organisations and Democracy in South Africa* is a complex and challenging study of the successes and failures of gender activism in the complicated context of a developing country, and is of great use for historians, sociologists, political scientists and gender and human rights activists.

Endnote

1   The United Democratic Front was the ANC-aligned, extraparliamentary political movement that led internal opposition to apartheid in the 1980s.

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Review

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Student Power in Africa's Higher Education: A Case of Makerere University.
by Frederick K. Byaruhanga. New York and London: Routledge, 2006.

This book recounts the history of student activism at Makerere University in Uganda by tracing the chronology of various critical incidents that occurred between 1950 and 2005, tracing their immediate and remote causes, and changing national and institutional contexts. The book also questions the role of the Ugandan government and university administration in fomenting and quelling this activism, examining the strategies they employed to manage students, and the institutional changes that have taken place at the university in response to these crises.

Byaruhanga is particularly interested in the motivations and perspectives of students at Makerere University, and to this end interviews and extensively cites former student activists, many of whom are now in the national government. He takes into account students' historical positions both as agents of social transformation and victims of the repressive Ugandan state operating in the context of multiple crises. He also charts the internal forces that have propelled student agitation over time, including the politics of pan-African identity, self-interest, and the various forms of social experimentation and social obligation students have sought to assume.

Starting from the dying days of the colonial enterprise in Uganda, Byaruhanga's detailed work describes and analyses the progressive disempowerment of students in the national political, economic and social spheres. He shows how student activism at Makerere began with largely apolitical protests in 1952 about the quality of food at the university, but were soon influenced and politicised by broader anti-colonial and pan-African struggles taking place on the continent in the 1960s. He describes, in the 1970s, a turn in student protests to focusing on internal, national politics, responding to the rise of the repressive Idi Amin regime in 1971. In 1976, for instance, a cohort of Makerere students planned a rebellion that would lead to the ousting of Amin. Their efforts were unsuccessful and led to the arrest and torture of student leaders. The deployment of soldiers on campus led to the rape of a number of female students. Byaruhanga argues that the will of these students to overthrow the national government and thereby

contribute to the future direction of the state reflected their sense of their "elite status as the conscience of the nation" (76).

There is an incipient crisis in African higher education, beginning in the 1980s and continuing to this day. Byaruhanga alleges that one consequence of this has been the de-ideologisation of student activism at Makerere. The protracted crisis in African higher education is symptomatic and part of the broader social crises following two decades of structural adjustment in Africa. It has been character-ised by diminishing state funding for education in the face of rapidly growing enrolment rates, a massive brain drain and overstretching of facilities. Byaruhanga argues that student protest, responses and "tactics" at the university are now driven by the quest of students to survive and reclaim lost ground. The late 1980s and early 1990s saw protests around escalating tuition and user fees imposed by the national government upon students, for example.

Byaruhanga explains that student resistance at Makerere has met with increased state repression since the era of Idi Amin, often with the connivance of university authorities. Efforts to crush student movements have led to deaths, imprisonments and expulsions. At the same time, the author notes and prob-lematises the tendency for student protests, in some instances, to assume rather violent forms, leading to the destruction of university and private property and sometimes, unfortunately, the loss of life. The interface of student versus state power is explored in the book, though I would have welcomed more detail on the tactics deployed by both the state and the university administration as they sought to infiltrate and subvert student politics.

Byaruhanga does not present Makerere students as an undifferentiated whole in his book. Quite the contrary: he traces the political cleavages and the contradictions that emerged within student organizations, even as they sought to contest the university and the state. The engagement of students with national politics is seen to be a reaction to the broader power struggles taking place in the body politic, and an articulation of students' self-interest in the face of economic stagnation, pauperisation and rising graduate unemployment. This is so because Byaruhanga contends that from the 1980s onwards, certain student leaders were directly connected to the ruling party, and could even attribute their dominance to their interference of the party in student politics.

Where the author's analysis of the internal differentiation of student politics is notably silent, however, is in terms of gender. In fact, Byaruhanga does not explore the gender dimensions of the history of student activism at Makerere, and only cites the words and experiences of a few women activists. The reader

is left to wonder if women participated in student movements at all, given the evidence that they are likely to be even more affected than their male counterparts by poverty and unemployment, the issues which increasingly led students to manifest their discontent. At the end of the book, the author discusses this omission, and proposes a gendered analysis of student activism at Makerere as a possible extension of his work. However, he does not explain why he did not incorporate gender as as a salient category of his analysis.

Methodologically, the book draws on a good combination of interviews and individual case histories that showcase students' personal experiences. Together, these methods enable the author to come up with interesting and original analyses. However, there is a paucity of documentary evidence in the work. There is very little reference to any of the primary documents that underpin economic and educational policies and regulations as they have affected students and the university. Similarly, little effort is devoted to reflecting on the role(s) of other stakeholders (local, national, regional and global) in the educational sector, and the ways these may affect student politics.

Byaruhanga does not sufficiently examine student activism at Makerere in relation to the challenges posed by globalisation, nor does he delve into the relationship between these challenges and those national politics and policies affecting higher education.

These shortcomings notwithstanding, Byaruhanga provides a clear and interesting history of student politics in Uganda. This book is bound to be of interest to researchers in African higher education. Social scientists and historians, scholars and policy-makers in the fields of education, human development and development may also want to consider Byaruhanga's analysis and policy prescriptions, as these are relevant to the challenges confronting higher education in most parts of Africa today. Bringing a historical perspective to bear on the matter, the book complements the growing literature on this theme.

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