The Idea of a Post-Colonial University

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Abstract

Universities in the English-speaking world may trace their origins to England, where the first universities of Oxford and Cambridge were established. These universities were, for centuries, the models for universities to come both in terms of structure and philosophy; and they also became a tool of British colonial policy. With the progression of British expansionism, many English men penned their ideas of a university; some of which were brought to fruition. In the 21st century, we have a multiplicity of independent nations which were formerly under British rule. While in most societies there was a phasing out of colonial institutions, many universities established during the colonial epoch seem to have withstood the test of time. It would be interesting therefore to assess some of these institutions and their evolutions in a broader endeavour to examine developments in higher education in societies post-independence. What conversations were had prior to independence regarding higher education? What ideas of a post-colonial university prevailed and what ideas should have been put forth? Were there shifts away from what constituted a colonial university? This paper is also an attempt to include universities in the post-colonial discourse and to propose an ideals of the university from a post-colonial perspective.

Keywords: University, Postcolonialism, Higher Education, British Model, Pan African University

1. Introduction

When Newman wrote about the The Idea of a University, his use of the word 'idea' referred to the Greek sense of the word which speaks to the perfect form of something. Thus, it was his conception of a university, in its perfect form, as it should be (McCartney et al., 1990, p. 39). For him, it was a 'place of concourse whither students come from every quarter for every kind of knowledge' (Kerr, 1991, p. 346). Newman, who was a cardinal and founding Rector of the Dublin Catholic University in 1851, was perhaps influenced by Platonism in terms of his philosophies of what is and what should be (Newman, 2020). In Newman's idea of a university, theology should be permitted a place in the university curriculum, as then, theology was an integral part of students' general moral training and went with clerical tutors, compulsory chapel attendance, and subscription to the Articles of the Church (Dale, 1972, p. 6). He thought it should have been included because in its absence the pursuit of knowledge as a

whole is "prejudiced", as it contradicts the idea that the University by its very name professes to teach universal knowledge (Ker, 2011). He also conceived of the organisational structure of universities, which would be divided into departments such as (but not limited to): a school of useful arts, an Observatory, an archaeological department, and a school of medicine. A university, according to Newman, should have an established printing press to bring scholars into correspondence with the centres of intellect throughout Europe. He also had a preference for the hiring of local professors to fill university positions (with the exception of foreign language teachers); and he recommended the hiring of tutors who would work in tangent with the professor (McCartney et al., 1990, p. 122).[1]

Newman's ideas surfaced at a time of worldwide colonial expansion. By then, Britain, for example, had already amassed a vast global empire and pursued educational policies across the territories of its empire; these policies included the establishment of colonial universities.[2] Moreover, universities were already instruments of the Spanish colonial empire, with the first universities being established in Santo Domingo (1538), Lima (1551), Mexico City (1551) among other places (Brand, 1940). Today, universities have grown in status, with many becoming internationally acclaimed. Indeed, universities are some of the few institutions which continue to exist despite intact (in comparison to other historical institutions), despite shifts at societal and global levels; further consolidating Alexandre's idea of the university as being "eternal" (Alexander, 2019). One of these shifts includes the transition from colonial status to independent-country status.

In most cases, if not all, universities are institutions which have survived the transition to independent status. In the present context where universities have become targeted as part of the growing call for decolonization, it is timely to turn the spotlight on to them, and to scrutinse their post-colonial rhetoric.[3] A post-colonial critical lens is used here in an effort to understand and illustrate the repercussions of colonialism. As such, drawing on historical accounts and scholarly works on universities in former British colonies in Africa and the Caribbean, this paper proposes a synopsis of the development of higher education within these societies, with the aim of conceptualizing the idea of a post-colonial university. It is hoped that this paper will be instructive for the current discourses and policies related to the decolonisation of higher education.

2. The development of colonial universities in Africa and the Caribbean

Britain created universities across the different countries within its empire, as part of a colonial development scheme especially in the period following the second world war. The Colonial Office appointed two commissions to plan the new institutions: the Asquith Commission and the Elliott Commission.[4] The Asquith Commission published a report in June 1945 recommending the establishment of an inter-university council for higher education in the colonies (Kolinsky, 1983, p. 40). This council was formed in 1946 and its aim was to advise and assist in the development of facilities for higher education in colonial areas subjected to British administration (Clarke, 1946). At that time, only four small universities existed, and less than ten post-secondary colleges were in all the territories covered by the Colonial office (Kolinsky, 1983).[5] The Council's

[1] Here, the word "local" meant Irish.

[2] The term 'colonial universities' is used here as the origin of these institutions may be found in Royal commissions or through papal bulls at the time.

[3] One contemporary example entails the #rhodesmustfall movement which started in South Africa and has had worldwide reverberations.

[4] The Asquith Commission (established in August 1943) was mandated to advise on policy over the whole range; and the Elliott Commission (established in June 1943) was tasked with advising on particular policies to be followed in the special circumstances prevailing in West Africa.

[5] The universities were Malta, Jerusalem, Ceylon and Hong Kong; and the colleges were in the West Indies, Malaya,

purpose was to promote the expansion of universities in British Colonial territories as comprehensive institutions offering both liberal education and professional training (idem).[6]

In terms of the design of a colonial university, we can refer to the writings of Clarke (1946, p. 649), who argued that[7]. these universities should be designed according to the British model, but with some adaptations: Clarke prescribed that social and cultural idioms be taken into consideration. Furthermore, it was the task of the Inter-University Council to assist the nascent institutions in achieving intellectual integrity and adequate intellectual standards. Special consideration needed to be given to the staff therefore, and as Clarke recommended 'for some time to come, staffs will have to be recruited very largely from Britain' (Clarke, 1946, p. 649). This therefore formed one of the core tasks of the Council, that was prescribed by the Asquith Commission: 'to provide a supply of British University Teachers to the new and developing institutions in the colonies and to aid in the training of local graduates of promise so that academic staff could be recruited increasingly from within the territories themselves' (Kolinsky, 1983, p. 40).

In addition to staffing, colonial office planners also ruled on the degree-granting powers of the local institutions, as 'the maintenance of standards by external examination became a paramount concern' (Hargreaves, 1973). This was perhaps in response to the Nigerian context with regards to the Yaba Higher College in Lagos which was founded by the colonial government in 1934. This college would have allowed the replacement of British colonial officials, who received high wages and allowances, with Nigerians who would be paid less (Livsey, 2016). However the college was also criticized for having poor facilities and that entry was severely restricted by the availability of positions as assistants in the civil service (Kolinsky, 1985). Furthermore, Yaba students received a diploma tenable only in Nigeria, rather than a university degree recognised across the empire or internationally (Livsey, 2016). Colonial planners thought that prestige and very high standards would be achieved by issuing external degrees through the University of London. Furthermore, the latter acted as a guide, and assumed wide obligations in matters of advice, assistance, adaptations of courses of study, and provision for the participation of local staff in the work of examination. It did so in close cooperation with the Inter-University Council (Hargreaves 1973). The Ibadan University College was then created in 1947 as an affiliate to the University of London and Yaba Higher College was converted to the University College (University of Ibadan, n.d.).

Furthermore, the recommended medium of instruction was English, which would implicate the responsibility of secondary schools to adequately prepare university entrants. This would also require teachers to have mastered the English Language and to become competent in pedagogical practices (Clarke, 1946). This was perhaps once more in response to earlier challenges and criticisms regarding the lack of proficient English-Language speakers in the colonies.

With regards to the development of higher education in the West Indies specifically, the Asquith Commission put in place the Irvine Committee. It was named after its Chairman Sir James Irvine, and departed from precedent by including four West Indians among its seven members (Springer, 1962). Upon news of the appointment of the committees for West Indian Higher education, Williams (1946) formulated his own ideas as per what a British West Indian university should be of which a few will be highlighted.[8] For Williams, a colonial university should be established with vast knowledge of the region it intends to serve, it should address the challenges

West Africa, East Africa and the Sudan. Indian affairs were dealt with by the colonial office.

[6] The Council later was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in October 1970.

[7] Sir Fred Clarke (1880-1952) was director of the Institute of Education, University of London (IOE) from 1936-1945 and chairman of the Central Advisory Council for Education in England.

[8] Eric Williams was the first Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

currently faced by the people therein and the education that is intended to be imparted must therefore be of relevance to the context. Williams also put emphasis on the imperative to address the question of curriculum which did 'not sufficiently prioritize science and which used textbooks foreign to the student's environment and experience' (Williams, 1946, p.149). For Williams, the university should serve as a powerful lever towards economic readjustment as well as social and political change (1946, p. 150). Moreover, for Williams, the university should also pay keen attention to the other languages of the Caribbean area, to deliberately promote multilingualism in the Caribbean citizen. On the topic of university affiliation and the young colonial university having a "big brother" in the metropolitan country, Williams thought that 'the British West Indian University should be an independent university, subject to direction of indirection from no other university, standing on its own feet, creating its own traditions, shaping its own development'. Furthermore, by initially equipping universities with first class equipment, university standards would be less of a concern (1946, p. 153).

Yet, we can refer to Priestly's unpublished journal, 'West Indian Journey' wherein he documented recommendations by the committee set up by the Government of Jamaica which departs significantly from William's assertions and recommendations.[9] In terms of the proposal to establish a special relationship with the University of London, Priestly notes: 'We have decided that, in its earlier years, for the sake of the prestige of any West Indian degree, the new institution shall take rank as a University College preparing its students primarily for the Degrees of London University. It follows from this that, so far as the first phase of its existence is concerned, entrance tests will be those recognized by London, and the curriculum for the Degree courses must also conform, except in so far as London can be persuaded to approve modifications intended to make the courses germane to West Indian conditions and needs' (Sherlock & Nettleford, 1990). Thus, the British university would play a patriarchal role in overseeing the development and quality assurance in the nascent colonial university. In October 1946, the University College of the West Indies was formally established and Dr. T.W.J. Taylor, a chemist from Oxford, was appointed Principal (D'Aeth, 1961, p. 104).[10] It was conceived as essentially a residential university on the pattern of Oxford and Cambridge (Braithwaite, 1965, p. 79). Moreover, teachers were imported from Britain in the effort to 'to achieve and maintain an academic standard comparable with that of a British university' (1965, p. 81). This had a significant impact on the cost of higher education because salaries had to be paid at a somewhat higher level than that in the United Kingdom; passages to and from the UK had to be provided with adequate leave packages, and housing had to be provided for the substantial expatriate staff subsequently recruited (idem).

3. Universities in the post-independence era

For former British colonies, universities are one of the institutions that they inherited. In the Caribbean, The University College of the West Indies gained independent status in 1962, the year that Jamaica obtained political independence.[11] However, although Jamaica took charge of its own destiny, the inherited structures and systems could not be changed immediately (Nkrumah-Young et al., 2008, p. 217). In fact, by 1965, the University was still granting London University degrees (Fergus, 1998, p. 70). Furthermore, there could be no immediate radical change as the University had become enveloped by a matrix of mechanisms that linked the British colonies

[9] Raymond Priestly was a member of the Committee on Higher Education which visited the West Indies in 1944. He, alongside four other members of his committee left the UK for the Caribbean to start investigations pertaining to the establishment of a university in the region. The last entry is June 10, 1944 and may be viewed online at the University of the West Indies' website.

[10] The University College was established in Jamaica and it was to provide for the higher education needs of the British Caribbean.

[11] It is now called the University of the West Indies.

in the region. Indeed, up until the dissolution of the West Indies Federation the university was being funded by the British exchequer (Ganzert, 1953, p. 112).[12]

Nonetheless, at the time of independence the "west Indian feeling" had already grown tremendously and this was reflected in the composition of staff. Prior to independence, the proportion of West Indians on the teaching staff fluctuated between a quarter and one-third and yet administrative posts were all held by West Indians (Springer, 1962, p. 13). Following independence, this situation had evolved as Stone (1983) notes: 'the Mona campus has evolved from being part of a University College awarding London University degrees and dominated by expatriates to becoming part of an independent University with a majority of West Indian Faculty' (1983, p. 21). Furthermore, In a part chronicle, part memoir of the difficulties, problems and achievements of the university in the 1970 and 1980s, Rex Nettleford and Phillip Sherlock noted that the university did indeed continue to have an inward-looking stance in relation to composition; this lead to the 'demand that West Indians should [become a] very high priority in the staffing of the University' (Cumper, 1993).[13]

Moreover, efforts to "West Indianize" the curriculum also intensified in the post-independence period. As Goveia (1969) recalls, the History Department of the University College of the West Indies first came into existence in 1950; at the time, on a regional scale, very little West Indian History was being taught. It was through pursuing a degree in History that most of the undergraduates came to formally teach the hisrtory of the West Indies; this meant that for some, what they learnt came as a revelation. Moreover, a decision by the University Council to conduct a Survey Course in West Indian History became 'compulsory for the majority of undergraduates attending any of the University Campuses'. In 1969 this was incorporated into the syllabus for the General Degree (1969, p. 61). Most students who graduated from the U.W.I. could therefore be expected to have a 'general knowledge of the historical development of the west indies'.[14] The university continued in its effort to sensitise students to contemporary issues in Caribbean society, by offering a compulsory module in Caribbean civilisation to undergraduate students in the Faculties of Social, Medical and Pure and Applied Sciences (The University of the West Indies, n. d.).

According to Zeleza (2009), universities, at least in the African context, went through what he refers to as the "golden era", following independence. During this period, which lasted from the 1950s to the late 1970s, there was much excitement owing to the establishment of new universities, and the expansion of old ones; this operated to underpin a triumph of African nationalism (2009, p. 112).[15] As Mamdani (2019) acknowledges, the development of higher education in Africa is basically a post-independence phenomenon. With the exception of South and North Africa, where the number of universities founded in the colonial period could be counted on two hands (2019, p. 23). For example, there was only the Ibadan University in Nigeria at the end of the colonial period; however by 2012, the country boasted 118 universities (Ejiogu & Sule, 2012, p. 259). Having a national university was considered as much a hallmark of national independence as having a flag, an anthem, a central bank and a currency (Mamdani, 2019). We can therefore say that efforts were made

[12] The West Indies Federation was a brief political association of states in the Caribbean. The association was endorsed by the British Colonial Office as it allowed for better management strategies in the sense that the funds would be allocated to one authority as opposed to several governments in the Caribbean basin.

[13] Phillip Sherlock was involved in the Irvine Commission, developed the Mona and St. Augustine campuses and ended as was Vice-Chancellor of the UWI. Rex Nettleford was an alumnus and Pro-Vice Chancellor at the Mona Campus.

[14] Books written by west Indian history teachers were required course books such as *The Making of the West Indies* and *A Short History of the West Indies.*

[15] The Golden era started especially in the 1950s with the independence of Ghana in 1951.

to "massify" higher education and to increase access for African students after independence.

For Paul Zeleza, there were also vigorous efforts to 'decolonize the disciplines, to "strip" them of their Eurocentric cognitive and civilizational conceits' (Zeleza, 2009, p. 112). Following independence, Africa sought to promote the dreams of African nationalism: decolonisation and new developments emerged and replaced the old regional universities, which were dismantled and reconstituted as national universities. It is interesting to note that the universities created after independence were much larger in size than their colonial predecessors, broader in their missions and they expanded their disciplinary and curricula offerings (2009, p. 116). The new universities were designed as 'engines of socio-economic transformation and centres of epistemic emancipation, as the African intelligentsia readily rediscovered and rewrote their peoples histories and humanity so cruelly seized and denied by Europe' (2009, p. 116). There was a complicity between governments and academics, which unabigously endorsed this emancipatory mission; for example, Ghana's First President, Kwame Nkrumah, opened the Institute of African Studies at the Universities of Ghana in 1962 (Allman, 2013).

However, the euphoria of nationalism and decolonisation was apparently challenged by what Zeleza (2009) terms as the crisis era. The crisis era was characterized by the erosion of the universities' institutional and intellectual standing due in part to pecuniary or political crises. For example, in independent Nigeria, a civil war broke out in May 1967, after the declaration of an independent Biafra (Arnold, 1999). In Nigeria, after the civil war had ended, the universities still enjoyed visits and communication with the inter-university council. Kolinsky (1985) informs us that Nigerian vice-chancellors wanted the continued advice of the council on financial and administrative aspects of university planning. Dr. Oluwasanmi even indicated that help with the recruitment of members of staff was important to Ahmadu Bella university and to his own university. Hargreaves also notes that there was pressure to maintain (what a Nigerian commission of 1960 called) the "intellectual gold standard", which colonial university teachers, African and expatriate, treated as an over-riding priority (1979, p. 108).

In Ghana, the crisis era came about following the rising tide of austerity – or neo-liberal economic restructuring – and authoritarianism, which became especially pronounced from the late 1970s through to the late 1990s. To the overseers of the state, the university had not only lost its mission but it was becoming a potentially dangerous site populated by volatile educated youths and devious academics who revelled in purveying "foreign ideology" and "irrelevant" theoretical research (2009, p. 116). Zeleza noted that in the 80s, there was a rise in state-sanctioned anti-intellectualism which found succour in the "strange gospel from the World Bank, that Africa needed primary schools rather universities". There was then the influx of expatriates and the concomitant emigration of skilled labour, including academics (idem). As Zeleza notes, the liberatory mission of the post-colonial university gave way to imperatives of survival, as middle-class comforts slipped from the lives of academics in many countries. Moreover, diminishing resources, combined with mounting state tyranny, led to the deterioration of research, teaching and physical infrastructures; the demoralization of faculty and students; and a social devaluation of the status of academics and the scholarly enterprise. This ultimately led to a greater brain drain; all challenges that post-colonial African societies would have to contend with.

4. Idealizing the post-colonial university

In more recent times, efforts to develop higher education in post-colonial Africa ensued when in 2008 the African Union Commission sanctioned the creation of the pan-African university (PAU). This was in response to the recurring question of 'why' African universities existed; and, for example, should they be seen as Western Universities in Africa (Ndlovu, 2014, p. 138). The issue of the identity of an African university was crucial as it had a bearing on the nature of graduates that universities produced, and was of utmost concern with regard to the ongoing Eurocentrism in the majority of universities in Africa (2014, p. 141). The PAU would therefore be a way for

Africans to not be mere passive spectators in the making of university education in Africa by undertaking the quest for pan-African education. The PAU came to be in five geographic sub-regions of Africa, namely: Northern Africa, Western Africa, Eastern Africa, Central Northern Africa and Southern Africa. However, Ndlovu (2014) identifies a number of drawbacks to the PAU, which serve to undermine the idea of a postcolonial university. For example, Ndlovu notes that PAU has institutes located in existing universities in Africa; these have been characterised by Patricia Collins as having a 'Eurocentric, masculinist, knowledge-validation process, whereby certain types of knowledge, theories and methodologies are validated, while others are invalidated'.[16] Ndlovu suggests that these institutes have inherited Eurocentric knowledge and validation processes, which tend to marginalise African world views and aspirations. Secondly, the PAU is also criticised as the result of its prioritisation of particular programmes of study. Ndlovu (2014) refers to the Southern African mode of the university has a model that has chosen to focus on "space sciences', a curricular attention which is thought to be misplaced and out of context. Ndlovu recommends that focus should be placed on programmes that could bridge socio-economic inequalities or bring about a better understanding of them. Thirdly, Ndlovu (2014) asserts that by recieving external funding from Germany and Sweden, the university does not generate educational programmes that serve developmental needs, interests, and aspirations of indigenous communities in Africa. Furthermore, in not adopting an ideological position that committed to the recruitment of teaching and research staff with an interest in the decolonisation of knowledge in Africa, the PAU inadvertantly supported a Eurocentric model of the university (Ndlovu, 2018, p. 105). In order for the PAU to transform the heavily Eurocentric model of education thorughout Africa, it is 'not enough to recruit Africans: it needs to consciously exalt the African knowledge that has for so long been subalternate through recruiting Afrocentric scholars, as well as opening up space for indigenous knowledge in the curriculum' (Ndlovu, 2014, p. 143).

In the Caribbean, the higher education landscape has evolved to include a wide variety of providers.[17] Notwithstanding, a few elements have been identified for further focus and improvement for post-colonial Caribbean universities to consider. For example, Peters (2001, p. 51), asserts that universities in the Caribbean should be 'cognizant of global and international economic trends', and these should be instructive in terms of designing programmes that will 'enable Caribbean students to develop the necessary knowledge and skills that will make them worthy and competitive players in the global market place'. Moreover, Peters asserts that 'the tertiary education sector will need to be dynamic, reoriented and restructured [for the] students who come through our national and regional institutions' (Peters, 2001, p. 51). Furthermore, it would appear that post-colonial universities in the Caribbean will need to pave the way toward financial independence as higher education systems are 'adversely affected due to insufficient funding and minimal resources' (Browne & Shen, 2017, p. 176). For example, in the Eastern Caribbean tuition cost is relatively too high for the locals of the country in which the university is located ranging from 20,000 USD to 180,000 USD depending on the type and level of programme (Browne & Shen, 2017, p. 176). This therefore negatively impacts the number of students who can easily access higher education and leave debt-free.

Moreover, it is also a challenge that Caribbean universities have a heritage of importing foreign academic staff. As Browne & Shen (2017, p. 176) note, 'the countries have to import foreign professors and auxiliary to work in the country, to meet the basic requirements for these institutions and also the private universities are furnished form abroad. Persons from the countries are employed, but on a very small scale, which means reduced spending power for the local worker'. Moreover, universities in the post-colonial Caribbean still have to contend with

[16] As seen in (Small 2012:71)

[17] The Caribbean region boasts many universities, colleges, and institutes. The University of the West Indies now has campuses and offices throughout the region and there are also other public universities including private ones.

new external influences coming from North America and Europe as they develop in a globalized world.[18] This influence tends to also be indirect in the sense that it is transmitted not predominantly from an overarching colonial power like in the past but through a more intangible and almost inconspicuous manner. As De Wit and Escala (2019) inform us, 'many of the elite from each country in the region have been trained in the higher education systems of these colonial powers and one can still observe an outward mobility trend to these colonial states and dependence on their funding, teaching and learning, structures and cultures and their quality assurance processes'.

Based on the above positions, one can therefore theorize that a post-colonial university should strive to be three things: independent, relevant and indigenous. The idea of an independent university has already been put forth by Beloff (1974) but from another perspective than that which is advanced in this paper. Professor Max Beloff was giving the Edmund Rich Memorial lecture in Britain and was proposing the idea of the independent university – for British universities. Then, Professor Beloff was referring to the fact that higher education was still a prerogative of the State which provided funding through the university grant commission, as opposed to in the United States where universities were being privatized and thus could pursue their own funding ventures (Beloff, 1974, p. 506). For the purposes of this paper, the word "independent" here not only means that the institution has acquired university status with degree-conferring powers; but also in terms of its capacity to fulfil its mandate without relying on an overarching colonial structure. We can recall that this was the case where colonial universities were associates of British universities as part of a quality-assurance rationale. Moreover, during periods of political and financial crisis following independence we also showed that universities in Africa as well as in the Caribbean, there was still reliance on assistance from the "motherland". An independent university would depend on its country having a robust economic situation and also give high priority to higher education in order to fulfil the needs of its population with regards to tertiary education.

Post-colonial universities should also be relevant where its programmes and curricula are concerned, equipping the students to face the challenges of their socio-economic realities. For example, in the Caribbean the economic and social context has changed from what it was several years ago; there has been a shift from traditional agriculture to more service-based economies among other industries (Rhiney, 2016). The post-colonial university should also consider the background, profiles, and realities of the students that they serve. One can make the link between this criterion of relevance with the ongoing #liberatemydegree campaign. This campaign was launched by the National Union of Students in Scotland in 2016 and advocates for a more student-led and student-centred approach to curriculum design. It aims to combat 'rigid curricula and assessment methods that privilege certain groups while systematically shutting out those most marginalized from education: women, working class, disables, LGBT+, black students and those with caring responsibilities' (NUS Connect, 2016).

Finally, a post-colonial university should also be an indigenous one – both in terms of its staff composition and the promotion locally produced knowledge. From the African context, Wright (1992) argues that one wrong that must be righted through reform (following independence), is the neglect of African writing in school and university syllabi. It is imperative that indigenous works be brought to the fore, so that local students can read and study the literature of their own country and of Africa. For Peter (2019), among other things, the postcolonial university should seek to decolonise the university, its curricula, and rehabilitate its traditional knowledge base, to restore indigenous languages, histories and knowledge systems (Peters 2019). We can also make note of Rossouw (2018) who asserts that much more should be done to enable university students in post-

[18] The development of short cycle programmes is an example of that influence.

colonial societies to study in their first languages (2018, p. 73).

5. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to identify some of the ideals that universities in the post-independence era could pursue in a context where much focus is being turned the injustices of colonial heritage. It has done so by establishing the antecedents to the establishment of universities in the British colonies, and looking at some of the reforms that have been undertaken following independence. With the example of PAU, it showed that even universities (which, by definition, were not colonial universities), can still be vulnerable to the vestiges and impacts of the colonial experience as well as its lingering external influence. Furthermore, after synthesising existing knowledge of the higher education systems as well as the social and economic situations of former British colonies, the article posits that independence, relevance and indigenisation are ideals that post-colonial universities should either aspire to or embark upon. It is hoped that this paper can be used a theoretical template which could be used for further research on other aspects which, although very much deserving of further attention, were not addressed in this paper.

6. Disclosure statement

The author declares no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

7. Open Access Policy

8. References

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