

Chapter 13

African Studies: Evolution, Challenges, And Prospects

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The Uniqueness of African Studies

The Institute of African Studies (IAS) has the mandate to research, teach, and disseminate knowledge concerning African and African diasporan cultures (African Studies) at the University of Ghana, Legon. Affiliated to both the humanities and social science disciplines, African Studies seeks to equip students with the “knowledge about the peoples and cultures of Africa through past history and through contemporary problems” (African, ‘The African Genius,’ 1963) from African perspectives.

The Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana is unique for several reasons. First and foremost it is considered one of the first, if not the *primus inter pares*, to handle all African Studies programmes comprehensively in African universities, focusing on researching and teaching of the discipline. The idea of African Studies was mooted during the planning of the University of Ghana in 1948/1949. As Agbodeka (1998, p. 60) writes, “it was among the departments grouped under the Faculty of Arts in 1948/1949 academic year as the School of African Studies which should not be confused with the Institute of African Studies established much later.” Secondly, it is distinctive because it was formally opened on 25th October, 1963 by the president of Ghana, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, himself, who also laid the framework or policy for the sort of institution it should be, outlining even its content, scope, methodology and purpose in a speech dubbed: ‘The African Genius.’

In ‘The African Genius’, he recalls the “years of bitter political struggle for our freedom and independence,” from which “our Continent is emerging systematically from colonialism and from the yoke of imperialism” and he appeals to the Institute to make a conscious effort to restore “the personality of the African”, which was stunted in the process of the named historical events.

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On methodology, Nkrumah instructs:

First and foremost, I would emphasise the need for a re-interpretation and a new assessment of the factors, which make up our past. We have to recognise frankly that African Studies, in the form in which they have been developed in the universities and centres of learning in the West, have been largely influenced by the concepts of old style “colonial studies”, and still to some extent remain under the shadow of colonial ideologies and mentality. (The African Genius)¹

One essential function of this Institute must surely be to study the history, culture and institutions, languages and arts of Ghana and of Africa in new African centred ways. (‘The African Genius’)

The foregoing indicates that the foundation of the Institute was well prepared and laid. It highlights Nkrumah’s special interest for African Studies and his intent to have this interest imbibed by Ghanaians and Africans in general. As the leader of Ghana’s independence from British colonialism and a campaigner (or freedom fighter) for the total liberation of Africa, this intention was not surprising, having himself experienced what it means to live as an African in Europe and America and the (mis)conceptions these foreign peoples had about Africa. Zeleza (2009, p. 116) substantiates Nkrumah’s African consciousness aptly as he writes: “Nkrumah was schooled in the civil rights struggles of the segregated diaspora and the nationalist struggles of colonial Africa, and he was passionately committed to Africa’s regeneration in all spheres.” He also buttresses Nkrumah’s role and passion for African Studies in the decolonising processes through the acquisition of self-knowledge as follows:

The emancipatory mission of African studies was unambiguously articulated by Ghana’s first President, Kwame Nkrumah, when he opened the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana.... and when he addressed the first Congress of Africanists in Accra in 1962. Nkrumah, a Pan-Africanist, urged his academic audience to produce genuine knowledge about Africa through scientific and academic rigor—knowledge that would promote Africa’s development and transformation—and to share their discoveries with the rest of the world Zeleza. (2009, p. 116)

Enabling Factors for the Rise of African Studies

The establishment of African Studies in the 1960s came also as no surprise as it fitted into the context of a general global agitation for change. The 1960s was a historical epoch *par excellence* in every aspect of life. In America, the Civil Rights Movement was surging; racism changed dramatically in various ways. Changes involved the passage of bills into laws and the general attitude of the American people. Racism was largely based on white people’s hatred towards blacks until

¹ See also Nkrumah’s books: *I Speak of Freedom; Africa Must Unite*, 1998. and *Consciencism* 1964, and *Neo-Colonialism* 1961 www.marxist.org/subject/african/nkrumah/neo-colonialism/ch01.htm accessed April 2011).

the 1960s, when several major events increased animosity and saw sustained responses also from Black people towards Whites.² Additionally, the students' strike of 1968–1969 forced the establishment of the departments of Black Studies and that of other minority groups in America, beginning with San Francisco State University (SFSU). The Black Student Union at SFSU drafted a political statement, "The Justification for African-American Studies," that would become the main document for developing African-American studies departments at more than 60 universities,³ and by extension African Studies as the fundamental component of African-American Studies.

The 1960s saw also the western world's Women's Movement metamorphosed into different Feminist Movements questioning the ideal social order of things (Tong 1989.) It was an era of the beginning of "rejection of meta-narratives (large scale theoretical interpretations purportedly of universal application (Harvey 1989, p. 9)." This includes the monotony of universal modernism's vision of the world, generally perceived as positivistic, rationalistic; belief in linear progress or [evolution], absolute truths, standardisation of knowledge and production (see Harvey 1989, p. 9).

In France, the global student revolt that grew throughout the 1960s was fuelled by the crisis of imperialism and its increasing brutality in trying to crush revolutionary and anti-colonial movements, and the expansion and changing nature of higher education gave students a far heavier social weight as a group. The French revolutionary communist youth organisation was fomented in the Latin Quarter in Paris,⁴ the same location where African and the Caribbean students in France in the mid 1930s had re-vitalised the Negritude Movement, among who was the West African, Leopold Senghor (Bell 2002).

In terms of ideology the idea of postmodernism began to crystallize as scholars and artists from various disciplines focused their analytical gaze more systematically on the concept and the phenomena it sought to capture. To some, postmodernism simply came to be identified with the 'attitude' of the 1960s counter culture or the new 'sensibility' of the social and artistic avant-garde (Zeleza 2003, p. 233).

For Africans in the continent, the 1960s marked a terminal date of the colonial period when several African countries attained independence from colonial rule thereby ushering in new African identities and ideologies. Some of these ideologies include the pride and emphasis on the essence of blackness or African Personality; the decolonising the mind of colonised Africans (Wa Thi'ongo 1994; Rodney 1982; Nkrumah 1965; Nyerere 1968). It was an era when Africans, particularly, philosophers, began to analyse and interpret philosophy from their own perspectives. Reviewing works by African philosophers who, according to Mudimbe (1991, p. 45), "proclaim the reality of an African tradition as a canon of truth and knowledge. They believe that there is an African tradition in itself and consider themselves as the interpreters of this particular experience" (See also Moore 1994; Zeleza 2003).

² <http://www.cyberlearning-world.com/nhhs/project/racism6.htm>.

³ <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1742/African-American-Studies.html>.

⁴ See also <http://www.dsp.org.au/node/168>.

Antecedents of African Studies in Ghana

Prior to the establishment of the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana there were few Western universities that offered Programmes in African Studies/Courses about African people or studies on African affairs, classified under the category of studies called Area Studies which generally refers to the study of specific geographical or culture of the world, using multi-disciplinary approaches. In Europe, for example, the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London, UK founded in 1916, focuses on the study of Asia, Africa and the Middle East. African Studies has a long, fascinating history in the former Soviet Union. Before the Revolution of 1917, Russia's African scholarship consisted of translations and writings on Ethiopia and South Africa and was strongly anti-British and pro-African. Soviet African studies started in earnest in the 1920s and underwent several phases (Zeleza 2009). The spread of African Studies programmes centres, departments, institutes began after World War II. For example, the Afrika-Studiecentrum, Leiden, in the Netherlands was founded in 1947 and in America Melville J. Herskovits of Northwestern University Evanston, USA established a **Program of African Studies** there in 1948.

There is no doubt that the Second World War and the Cold War had a profound impact on the development of area studies, and that the end of the cold war brought in new contexts but area studies or African Studies certainly antedated both wars (Zeleza 2009; Melber 2009). A debate on the history of African Studies has been challenged lately by "Afro-centric orientations" but also by "European-based scholars beginning to occupy more discursive space" (Melber 2009, p. 186). Rebutting the history of African of Studies in America, Zeleza in his publication, *Rethinking Africa's Globalisation* (2003) contends that the establishment of African Studies was pioneered by African-American scholar-activists from historically black colleges and universities long before it got co-opted by historically white universities after World War II. It was W.E.B. du Bois who laid the foundations of Black Studies or African American Studies in America through the Atlanta University Conferences held from 1898 to 1914. These conferences under the auspices of W. E. B. Dubois marked the inauguration of the first scientific study of the conditions of black people.⁵

In most of these western universities mentioned above, however, African Studies was not a stand-alone discipline but integrated with other area studies, including those of Asia and the Middle East. Many authors, both Africans and non- Africans, from various disciplines have questioned the approach to African Studies as a subjugated one because it was studied within other disciplines such as, ethnology in continental Europe, or anthropology, history, philosophy, African Affairs or Area Studies (see Onunwa 2010). Early exposé or depictions of Africans in the western world tended to please the muses of the *Zeitgeist*, that is, they were made to fit the perceptions of the epoch in which they lived. At the universities, the discipline's content was still very much of a travelogue, and its method generally that of an armchair approach.

⁵ <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1742/African-American-Studies.html>.

African Studies in Ghana

African Studies at the University of Ghana (then the University College of the Gold Coast) was one of the programmes to be included in the university curricula. According to Agbodeka (1998, pp. 60–61), the idea of African Studies, precisely a School of African Studies, evolved in the early stages of the planning of university education in the 1948/1949 academic year. The proposal to establish an African Studies programme was probably a response to “the age-long pressure for inclusion of African Studies in the curricula of proposed African universities” (Agbodeka 1998, pp. 60–61). Initially, the School of African Studies would be a research institute concerned with the study of African languages, traditions and culture which would systematically and gradually generate suitable material to teach an undergraduate course as well. In this endeavour, Agbodeka continues, Kofi Abrefa Busia, with a D.Phil in Social Anthropology was employed in 1949 to start the School of African Studies. It was proposed that the School should consist of three divisions: Sociology, Archaeology and African languages. The School which was housed in the current Sociology Department was short-lived and was closed in 1950. This closure did not end research on African Studies. J. H. Kwabena Nketia sustained the idea of African Studies when he continued to research into African traditional Music, Folklore and Festivals. In this way, African Studies research continued to flourish under the research fellowship of J. H. Kwabena Nketia which enriched the material Busia had gathered earlier (Agbodeka 1998, p. 61).

African Studies (AFST) in its current niche at the Institute of African Studies (IAS) located at the main entrance to the university owes its existence to President Kwame Nkrumah in 1961, as stated above. Nkrumah had visualized *ab initio* what the new discipline should be. It was to be “a many-sided Institute of African Studies which should fertilise the University, and through the University, the National, and [Nation].” It was to be a discipline that “identified with the aspirations of Ghana and Africa. In that way Ghana would make its own specific contribution to the advancement of knowledge about the peoples and cultures of Africa through past history and through contemporary problems” (The African Genius 1963).

Not only did the ‘the African Genius’ lay the foundation for the Institute’s methodology but also the relationship between students and faculty. “In order that the students may obtain the maximum benefit from their education in our Universities, it is imperative that the relationship between them and their teachers should be as free and easy as possible. Without this close interaction between mind and the common fellowship of a University, it will be impossible to produce the type of student who understands the larger issues of the world around him.” (‘The African Genius’ 1963, p. 25).

However, the appointment of Thomas Hodgkin, a British man, as the first head or director of the newly reconstituted African Studies with J. H. Kwabena Nketia as Deputy Director, at the first instance may seem ironical if not a defeat of purpose considering the vehement advocacy for an African-centred institution. How could the directorship of a British in a country still being weaned from colonialism and

imperialism be able to achieve this objective? Perhaps, this could be understood in the sense that Ghana as an emerging state had not much experience in running universities which was a foreign concept in the country. Nonetheless, Nketia⁶ explains that the position was for three tactical reasons. Firstly, the university was still predominantly white (only one-third of the faculty was African according to the African Genius) and thus the choice was rightly so. Secondly, being a white man he could relate better with his fellow white men and convince them as well as attract foreigners to the Institute and University as a whole. Thirdly, Hodgkin was an Africanist with regard to his research experience in Islam in Africa; his own philosophy also made him suitable for the position at IAS. Nketia spoke of him fondly about his relationship with him. Hodgkin did not stand in his way; he gave him chance to work freely, consulted him and copied him with every correspondence about the Institute. Soon the headship gave way to Ghanaian leadership and J. H. Kwabena Nketia became the first African or Ghanaian director. Nketia had been among the research fellows recruited into the short-lived School of African Studies. He therefore integrated the knowledge gathered into the new Institute of African Studies. Nketia not only incorporated and his body of research into IAS but also upheld the African-oriented approach to the study of the discipline as the African Genius had perceived.

Initially, Nketia's Music and Related Arts Department became the nucleus for African Studies courses (AFST). Later, the need by the Department of English for a place to perform British drama and plays gave him the impetus to establish a School of Performing Arts to be operational to produce and act African plays instead, an idea which according to Nketia was also shared by Nkrumah. This gave birth to the School of Performing Arts which then became the undergraduate wing of the Institute of African Studies. The idea of a national dance company was also born and established while orientations to African Studies as a whole or what Richard Greenfield called "an assembly of Africa-centred courses at the undergraduate level"⁷ became a mandatory for first year students at the university. Following a long reign of male leadership, female research fellows at the Institute gained assertive visibility and were elected to the directorship. From 1998-date there has been four successive female directors of IAS: Irene K. Odotei, Takyiwaa Manuh, Brigid M. Sackey and Akosua A. Ampofo.⁸

Teaching of African Studies in Ghana

The Institute of African Studies (IAS) is a multifaceted semi-autonomous organisation. It offers programmes in African Studies at the graduate and undergraduate levels at the University of Ghana. The IAS also offers orientation courses for special

⁶ Personal conversation with the 91 year old JHK Nketia, Emeritus Professor of African Ethnomusicology and First Ghanaian Director of IAS, at his residence in Accra, 19th November, 2012.

⁷ See a minute in a letter from Richard Greenfield, senior research fellow and administrative secretary at IAS to the Finance Officer on 14th January, 1970. See File No. IAS/CONF.3, Institute of African Studies- Financial Autonomy.

⁸ Irene Odotei and Brigid M. Sackey were directors in acting capacity.

admission students from other institutions and agencies as well as foreign students (Study Abroad Programmes). In fact, the Institute is the first point of call for many international visitors and dignitaries who want to acquaint themselves with African culture. Some also specially request short courses that would introduce them to Ghanaian cultural values to help them apply themselves to ‘culturally correctly’ comportment during their sojourn in Ghana. Aside the well-sourced Institute’s library that “supplements the Africana collection of the Balme Library”, the Institute manages the Ghana Dance Ensemble—a resident professional dance company which was started in 1962 by the then Ghana Institute of Arts and Culture to link the University of Ghana with the national theatre movement. (See also IAS Website, University of Ghana Homepage and Undergraduate Handbook).

Table 13.1 represents a view of the courses and enrolment in African Studies which may be taken at all levels (100–400) but before graduation.

Graduate Programme

The Graduate Programme admits students to MA/MPhil/PhD degrees. Aside a compulsory multi-disciplinary Research Methods course, the Graduate programme at the Institute has five specialised areas or sections namely:

- Societies and Cultural
- History and Politics
- Language and literature
- Religions and Philosophy
- Music and Visual Arts

Undergraduate Programme

The undergraduate programme in African Studies is compulsory for every student who is admitted to the University of Ghana, Legon. African Studies is among the compulsory courses now called University of Ghana Required Courses (UGRC) formerly classified as FUE (First University Examinations). It was therefore taken in the First Year when the Bachelor’s Programme at the University was of 3-year duration. Following Ghana’s education reforms at the basic/primary and secondary levels in the 1980s which consequently increased the duration of the Bachelor degree programmes to 4 years, and the Ministry of Education request for a shift from a British model of a three-term academic year to a two-semester system more characteristic of American higher education in 1992, African Studies became a Second Year or ‘Level 200’ course, meaning it was offered in the second year instead of the first. With the inception of the UGRC programme, IAS undergraduate programme has reverted to its original status as a Level ‘100’ (First Year) course.

It is imperative for every student who enters the University at the Bachelor’s level to obtain a ‘pass’ mark in African Studies before graduating. Indeed, this policy

Table 13.1 IAS Level 200 Courses UGRC 220 Introduction to African studies, 2011/2012 Academic Year

	Course module/title	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013
1	Appropriate technology for rural development	625	655	446		
2	Africa and the contemporary modern world				40	134
3	Africa and the diaspora	603	710	453	80	87
4	The social framework of economic development	564	627	864	210	175
5	Our African heritage through literature	563	604	250	23	16
6	Chieftaincy and development	601	665	474		196
7	African popular culture: festivals and funerals	636	652	477	150	218
8	Culture and development	599	658	455	180	198
9	Issues in Africa's population	577–		457	130	49
10	African art				20	16
11	Philosophy in African cultures				50	65
12	Gender and culture					205
13	Gender and development				91	194
14	African drama	667	648	409	80	
15	African music	1,117	1,317	1,248	150	45
16	African dance	714	1,026	969	130	43
17	Twi	470	472	500	80	50
18	Dagbani	536	563	350	50	20
19	Ewe	398	320	350	20	23
20	Ga	653	700	800	120	46

also obtains in subsequent and all existing the state-owned or public universities in the country and a 'pass' in the African Studies course is a pre-requisite for obtaining a university degree from these institutions in any subject be it English, Sociology, linguistics, history, geology, chemistry, medicine, etc.

Changes in the Teaching of African Studies

African Studies was much a part of anthropology in the sense that this discipline had been its predecessor and even continued to be its mentor after its semi-autonomous status. Though methods of research were anthropological and sociological, team work as well as individual research oriented, the qualitative method had the upper

hand. Through the field research data, for example on music and funerals by J. H. Kwabena Nketia and African dance forms by Mawere Opoku, theories from African perspectives were formulated. Their approaches are African oriented as they use and interpret African data through African lenses.

At the onset of African Studies, courses for undergraduates were not optional. There were no electives and students had to take all the courses offered for 1 year after which they took examinations.

The following insights were given by Albert Awedoba a professor and alumnus of the Institute of African Studies. In the 1960s, there were no options and students had to take all the courses offered at the undergraduate level. The topics were taught by faculty from all departments of the University, and accordingly each had his or her style. Everybody sat in the same class, and class sizes were large. “In my day, about 800 sat in.” Then options were introduced and individual lecturers from the IAS were assigned to teach them. Initially (in the 1980s) the classes were reasonable—150–300, but they grew with the increase in University admissions. No public address systems were provided and the work of the lecturer was not an easy one.

In the 2006–2007 academic year, the university of Ghana administration embarked on a comprehensive action to ensure that the university would retain its national prominence in Ghana and among the leading universities in sub-Saharan Africa. The effort was inaugurated by assembling a review team of national and international experts to examine all phases of university operations (see Agyei-Mensah and French 2010, pp. 32–35). One of the areas that needed most attention was the large uncontrollable class sizes (between 800 and 1,000 students in one class), among many others things, including a lack of teaching logistics.

The changes in the university as a whole affected all disciplines though in African Studies while the graduate programme remains intact the mandatory undergraduate programme has undergone drastic structural and teaching changes. Since 2011–2012 academic year African Studies is now taught under the University of Ghana Required Courses (UGRC, formerly FUE) where the classes are smaller and the interaction is more effective. The introduction of options afforded a choice, and students selected those options they liked (see Table 13.1 above). It has been argued that the reasons for these selections were sometimes academic, but sometimes merely the personality of the lecturer and his or her perceived generosity with examination grades is a decisive factor.

Change is inevitable and Nkrumah was aware of this when he opened the Institute of African Studies. “The Institute of African Studies should work closely with the people—and should be constantly improving upon its methods for serving the needs of the people—of Ghana, of Africa and of the world. Teachers and students in our Universities should clearly understand this.” (The African Genius 1963). The positive aims of the changes were to foster a better accommodation and management of the huge class sizes of the undergraduate programme in African Studies and thereby enhance teaching and enable scholarly work. However, the status of African Studies, which used to be a stand-alone discipline, in my opinion, had been compromised as the new African Studies Programme has been hooked to Liberal Studies

creating thus a new programme called: “Liberal and African Studies (UGRC).” Thus African Studies which was established with much enthusiasm and vitality to stand out and serve a specific purpose has been relegated to the background. With this change the study of Africa, one may argue, seems to have reverted to its colonial European status. Such a position in modern times may not only make Nkrumah ‘turn in his grave’, but put the discipline of African Studies and a whole continent on its head and give credence to the protagonists of neo-colonialism.

Comparison of African Studies at UG and UCC

African Studies at the University of Cape Coast (UCC), which started as African and General Studies (DAGS) makes an interesting and significant comparison with the mandatory courses at Institute of African Studies, (IAS) of the University of Ghana (UG) in relation to its programme structures and transformations. The Department of African and General Studies (DAGS) of the University of Cape Coast, which was set up in 1963 had under its purview three units namely General African Studies Programme, Information Retrieval (InfoRet) and Communication Skills (CS) and was located at the Faculty of Social Science until 1994. The general expectation was that African Studies was multi-disciplinary, but since it was more inclined towards the humanities, it should be relocated in the Faculty of Arts. Hitherto, African Studies as an academic degree awarding course was read at the post graduate level at the Institute of African Studies (IAS), University of Ghana, Legon and shared by both Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Social Sciences. Indeed, the need to make the study of African Studies more accessible at undergraduate level was the overriding consideration for the introduction of the BA African Studies degree programme in the 2003/2004 academic year. Following the final disintegration of DAGS, Communication Skills also became a fully fledged department.

Thus African Studies at UCC has two programmes at the undergraduate level, the General African Studies Programme (ASP) which is equivalent to the mandatory African Studies at the IAS, (AFST, now UGRC) University of Ghana and other public universities and a B.A Degree (AFS) course at the undergraduate level which IAS, Legon, does not offer. Just as UG the courses in UCC the ASP courses are read by every fresher with the exception of the BA African Studies students. It is a two semester course that attracts three credits, two in the first and one in the second semester. Students must obtain three credits in African Studies. Some of the courses complement as well as supplement those taught at the mandatory level at IAS, though a survey of courses at the two universities shows that UCC has more course choices that are also more inclined to local global events than IAS courses. For example, Religion in Africa Sexual and Domestic Violence, Philosophy of Education: African Traditional Education Perspective, Conflict Management and Prevention, Comparative Analysis of Economic Development in Africa and the Caribbean, The African Family and Cultural Impact of Tourism are uniquely taught at UCC.

BA degree (AFS) in African Studies has areas of specialisation namely:

- Socio-Cultural
- History and Politics
- Language and the Arts

African Studies degree programme at UCC has the following mission statement, which as follows, also reflects in the designation and all course contents available at DAS:

To equip students with indigenous knowledge of Ghana and Africa broadly defined to include inherited ideas, beliefs, values, legends, mythology, institutions and practices, science and technology. The goal is to nurture in the youth of Ghana and Africa the desire and the skills to fashion home-grown solutions to Africa's problems.

Currently, the B.A. African Studies Programme feeds the Graduate programme at IAS as its products continue to do their post graduate degrees at IAS, Legon. It appears that while African Studies is being promoted in UCC, African Studies at UG is losing the glamour with which it was established.

Challenges

The Place of African Studies in Academia

Since its emergence the position of African Studies in the academia has generally become contentious. Some have described it as belonging to the category of Area Studies while others place it within the context of postcolonial studies, as its emergence coincided with post colonialism. They think decolonisation created African Studies as a new terrain for knowledge; others deny African Studies as a postcolonial subject discipline. Rita Abrahamsen (2003) has summed up this debate and concludes by advocating a collaboration of postcolonial studies and Africa Studies.

According to Melber (2009, p. 187), the challenge starts with the efforts to define the subject and reach a common understanding. According to an US-American survey "mainstream Africanists across the spectrum of U.S. higher education appear to be divided with respect to what constitutes 'African Studies'", quoting Alpers and Roberts 2002, p. 13, who summarize what African Studies is according to rankings:

1. Study of sub-Saharan Africa (22 %);
2. Study of the entire continent of Africa (33 %); and
3. Study of the people of Africa, both in Africa and the Diaspora (41 %).

Alpers and Roberts sum up African Studies to be a study "about peoples, both on the continent of Africa and abroad, rather than about a continent called *Africa*" (original emphasis). In this context one could not but agree with the idea of an "invention" of Africa (Mudimbe 1988) or the "manufacturing" of Africa (Zeleza 1997) just as Edward Said (1979) believes *Orientalism* or Asian Studies was created by the west. Said defines orientalism as "a [European] way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western Experience". "The

Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience and is indeed part of European material culture (Said 1979, pp. 1–3).” Zeleza (1997) is strongly convinced that studies of Africa, from colonial times to the present, as well as the solutions arising from them, have in fact contributed their fair share to Africa’s crises; be they man-made or natural, were in fact manufactured by the studies. Sean Hanretta, a historian who studies Islam in West Africa at Stanford University corroborates this view when she says that “Colonialism” defined what it meant to be African.⁹

It was within this background that Nkrumah sought to make Africans write their own history because according to an African saying: Unless lions write their own stories, tales of hunting will always glorify the hunter.

According to Alpers and Roberts 2002, p. 11:

Despite the intellectual enthusiasm surrounding the launching of Area Studies after World War II and the underlying pressure from Washington to support these fields for purposes of national security, African Studies as an interdisciplinary initiative always has struggled to maintain its legitimacy against the dominant academic, if not intellectual, constraints of established disciplines. (Alpers and Roberts 2002, p. 11)

The idea of African Studies was ridiculed and dismissed as a legitimate academic pursuit and one of the biggest contention that has plagued African Studies is “Disciplinary scepticism” which argues that the study is “not linked to the prevailing theoretical trends in the social sciences” (Alpers and Roberts 2002, p. 11; Abrahamson 2003, p. 210).

That colonialism defined what it meant to be African in my opinion places African Studies in both colonial and postcolonial realms because Africans are still the “other” and still under the scourge of colonialism in new ways. Western academics could not imagine how people they have colonised and still look upon with denigration could produce a discipline that should be seen to be on par with those of the colonisers. Nkrumah foresaw this prejudice as neo-colonialism and as a result proposed an Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana which would use an African approach to African Studies, “an Institute of African Studies that would study Africa from the African’s own perspectives”. (The African Genius 1963).

Perspectives of University of Ghana Faculty

Ironically, the idea of African Studies not being comparable with the other academic disciplines is also shared by Ghanaian lecturers in the University of Ghana, and indeed African Studies is ridiculed to date. They share the western idea that it is not academic enough because the graduate programme (M.A) was rushed or was started too soon as the Institute did not have competent faculty members. To these, the institute should have done research for a few years to build up sufficient data to inform its Master’s programme. Also, lecturers from different departments were forced to teach the undergraduate F.U.E course in African Studies: “You will be in

⁹ <http://multi.stanford.edu/features/africa/>.

your department and they bring in these requests and the next term you go and give lectures and at the end of the year you are required to put down one question.”¹⁰ Again in reference to the teaching of F.U.E African Studies someone who described himself as dogmatic argued that “the F.U.E in African Studies is not serving any useful purpose. At the moment the university is primarily a social studies university and.... a large number of students are in the Faculty of Social Studies and these courses in the Faculty of Social Studies are already very much African oriented”. Therefore, the idea of African Studies was greeted with agitation and antagonism by some university of Ghana faculty who did not appreciate it. Some have argued that if they had to duplicate their teaching by participating in undergraduate African Studies then they might as well develop and teach the courses in their own departments. Neither did they welcome the mandatory policy attached to the discipline. Some of the leading opponents included the historian Albert Adu Boahen, B. H. G. Folson (Political Science), K. E. de Graft-Johnson (Sociology) and Kwamena Dickson of the Department of Geography. They argued that since the university is an African university it presupposes that its orientation in every department should be automatically African. They, therefore, did not see the necessity of an Institute of African Studies teaching African languages, literature, history, religion etc. Others wanted African Studies to be reduced to only a research institution.¹¹ Interestingly, Kwamena Dickson’s senior brother, Kwesi Dickson, later became Director of African Studies in the 1980s and he apparently did not resist his appointment.

Nketia had to vehemently oppose the sentiments against the Institute as a stand-alone, autonomous and directly funded by the state and above all its African-centred approach. According to him, he was not in favour of an “Oxbridge Institute of African Studies” as was being proposed.¹² What was wrong with pursuing an African approach at the Institute of African Studies in Africa? Ngugi wa Thi’ongo (1994) undoubtedly suggests a decolonisation of the mind of indoctrinated Africans that reject everything African; their customs, beliefs, marriages, languages, and even their names as inherently inferior.

Perspectives of Students

Students’ perceptions about African Studies as a mandatory programme for first year students have been mixed. Some think they have to familiarise themselves with university education in general before doing special subjects like AFST. It was ob-

¹⁰ Series of Interviews conducted by K. A. Busia into African Studies to consider the scope of its work and objectives; how it should be organised, and also to consider its relations with other departments of the university. Retrieved from Archival File titled: Review-Institute of African Studies: Interviews by Dr. K. A. Busia (no date, no file no).

¹¹ Series of Interviews conducted by K. A. Busia into African Studies to consider the scope of its work and objectives; how it should be organised, and also to consider its relations with other departments of the university. Retrieved from Archival File titled: Review-Institute of African Studies: Interviews by Dr. K. A. Busia (no date, no file no).

¹² See Report of the Interim Committee for African Studies at the University of Ghana.

served that the majority of students do not appreciate the mandatory African Studies courses until later in life. This is because most of them did not have fore-knowledge about it being compulsory. Out of the 100 students interviewed 21 of them representing 21% had a fore-knowledge that African Studies (AFST) popularly called 'Afro-Studs' was a mandatory course for all undergraduate entering the university. They found out because they made initial visits to the university to make enquiries in the overall programmes offered. Others made enquiries from other alumni or from their siblings who have had university education at Legon. Still others never made enquiries of any form because they live in towns and villages far away from Legon.

Below are some of the reactions of students who were aware/unaware of university policy on African Studies and some reasons for choosing particular courses some which were based their pre-assessment on how easy they thought the course would; others choose courses they already have a background in:

I got into a state of confusion

I thought it was a course that wouldn't contribute to my main aim at the university, that is, to study accounting. I contacted friends in higher level and sought their opinion for less demanding AFST courses.

I had no choice since it was a requirement to qualify for a first degree.

I was curious to know more of African Literature

I was already there and so I had to do it

Well there was nothing I could do

It added to what I already knew.

I had some background in Literature which made African Literature easy for me.

I chose African Music because it was a practical course which complemented the semester's course.

I chose African Drama and Culture and Development. Drama comprised poetry, rhythm and dancing and it was interesting.

I chose music because I like to sing.

I wanted to know about things I didn't know before.

I chose Dance because dance has no theory; only practicals.

Every Freshman feels it is an initiation or 'rites de passage' that imparts knowledge of the African roots. But seeing University students indulge in especially drumming and dancing rather than cerebral [intellectual] work makes it demeaning.

Some of the students ridicule African Studies because of the "dance aspect of it." Yet, ironically African dance is the most preferred choice of students as shown in Table 13.1. Asked how they feel when people demean African Studies one student replied: "indifferent because I did the same thing; another felt "sad"; "It's creativity is said to be "all brawn and less brain"; "It is because of prejudice"

A research fellow and one of the pioneers at Institute of African Student reminiscing his reaction to do the compulsory African Studies course says:

Resigned it, but also felt it was an opportunity to learn something new. It was great to be in the university in those days, and to have the opportunity to learn. So, if part of the package included Afro Studs, so be it. We did not object to the General Paper at Sixth Form, so why should I object to Afro studs! It was a great feeling to walk up the Legon Hill in quest of knowledge like the scholars of ages gone by. But I must say some of the lectures were not exactly what you hoped to get. Some of the students were also rascally and tried to mess the lecture with obscene remarks.

From the questionnaire most students choose courses they think are easy for them to make the required pass mark which also tallies with Table 13.1 above. These include African Dance, African Music because in their view African Music did not require that much theoretical work since it was a practical course. However, this view about the course not being theoretical is incorrect because the course outline for the AFST 280 African Dance clearly indicates that “the course is in two parts: lectures deal with the theoretical aspects of dance and practical session aimed at providing first-hand kinetic experience in selected African Dance Forms”.¹³ Perhaps the idea of its being ‘cheap’ is that everybody thinks they know how to dance since it is part of our daily activities. Also the course outline only requires students “to attend a one hour lecture or practical dance session per week.” They did not realize that course was about the scientific or academic study of dance as well as getting a broader knowledge about other forms of dance in Ghana and Africa that would broaden their horizon.

The languages course restricts students who are native speakers of a particular language to a different language other than their mother tongue; so for example, a Twi speaker will not be allowed to study Twi but another language (Ga, Ewe, Dagbani). Those who choose languages did so either for fun; for pride in knowing another language of Ghana; to understand their partners or spouses from other ethnic groups, among others.

Perspectives of the Public

The public have also ridiculed African Studies. The public argue that they expect students to learn “proper” disciplines that would fetch them employment after studies in order not to become a burden on the family and society. Others think culture is something they grow up with and have knowledge of it already from the home and so do not see the relevance of it at the university.

The public viewpoint affirms that of the academia which refers to AFST courses as “Afro Studs” (also *dondology*—studies in drumming and dancing—when the School of Performing Arts used to be an integral part of the Institute of African Studies). The reason was that the work of the Institute was mistaken to comprise cultural dancing, music and drumming, things that students thought also by the public were not deserving of a place on the University curriculum. There were drumming rehearsals by groups like the Ghana Dance Ensemble in the open or under the shades of trees. Students thought it was all practical with very little theory. They could not see the difference between what was supposed to be happening at the IAS and what uneducated people in the rural communities did for entertainment.

¹³ See Institute of African Studies Programme, 2006/2007, Level 200, p. 41.

Relevance of African Studies

Relevance- Students Perspectives

This brings us to the question of the relevance of African Studies today. How relevant is African Studies in contemporary times? What benefit does it have specifically for science students? Should it be maintained on the university curricula?

Generally, most of the students think African Studies is relevant but should be well structured to reflect current and relevant issues in African and Ghana. Below are some of their views:

It is useful for reminiscence.

It is a waste of time because it is non-scoring [no—credit course]. I think getting a ‘credit’ instead of a ‘pass’ for it will make it more appealing

It ensures cultural independence in a globalised world.

Helps students appreciate their roots, their cultural environment and how they can use their academic knowledge to improve society.

It equips students to reason from an African perspective.

A benefit accrues from learning about local culture. This knowledge helps students to fit into the society where field work may be conducted for research activities.

The following response came from a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with MA students in Social Policy Studies of the University.

Coming from the rural setting, I chose the Appropriate Technology (Approtech) course. It taught me how we could use readily available material for our houses that are not expensive.

Yes, Approtech is good for the nurses. They like it a lot.

Culture has a role to play in Technology, science and communication.

We need to know our culture. Our children don’t know our cultural values but based on that we can analyse what can be improved and what to throw away. Foreigners also come to learn our culture so why should owners of the culture not study it?

Pure science is all part of society.

The way Issues in Africa’s Population lifts your horizon into what is happening in other African countries is instructive. Modernisation and culture are integrated but we can leave out what is outmoded.

Music exposed me to my own culture, to understand it better. For example, some songs we used to sing as children became more meaningful after being taught how to analyse them in the AFST course.

AFST is good. Africa and the Diaspora course taught me about Rastafarianism and it helped me do away with prejudice because I now understand their religion.

African Studies is relevant because it teaches us about our worldviews. You can talk about a people well if you know their world view: perceptions, cultural beliefs and practices.

People think western life is unique and Africans don’t know about Human Rights. This is wrong; we practice and promote Human Rights. Professor Gyekye’s book on African cultural values tells us that human rights are innate; we are born with them.

Relevance- Lecturers Perspectives

Generally, African Studies faculty, both at UG and UCC, agree that the object of African Studies is to give students a grounding in their own cultures, especially

people who may never be given that opportunity (e.g. Science students) following a normal, university education. University education was too foreign centred the Institute of African Studies was established to do Africa centred research and teach from a multi-disciplinary approach. There was much ignorance and that is why there is the need for African Studies. Indeed, there is still much ignorance about the whole discipline which leads to its denigration and even rejection as students responses have clearly indicated. In this regard, the university must endeavour to have orientations for aspiring students before admission, and not after admission as has generally been the practice.

Preservation of practice traditional institutions structures and practices within the broad framework of peaceful co-existence, freedom, fairness, justice, equity and moderation will promote governance on the continent (UCC view).

The study of African Studies that teaches the knowledge and basic understanding of African peoples to realize that science and technology derive from the environment and cultural space for its applicability, sustainability and growth rids the continent of the mis-education of the past (UCC's view).

UCC information on the relevance of AFST indicates that the in-depth and sustained study of the corpus of indigenous knowledge forms in Africa enables peoples of African descent to improve upon and tell the African story from an Afro-centric perspective. This way we can ensure the sustainable development of the continent's human and material resources.

A study of African Studies that enables students to know and understand their roots, inherited past traditions, norms and lore re-define the African personality

Inculcation of time honoured African values of truthfulness, humanness, rectitude and honour should redefine youth immorality and indiscipline and ultimately ensure a more just and orderly African society.¹⁴

I put the question on the relevance of African Studies today first to my own colleague research fellow at IAS and I appreciate the barrage of counter- questions I received that set me thinking about my own thoughts on AFST, especially religion, which seem to be congruent with his. He asked: "The relevance of AFST today? Is this not Africa? Is AFST not studies about Africa? Are we not Africans? We all have a duty to learn about our backgrounds and our current aspirations. It is important to remember." His answers made me recollect my impressions about so-called African Traditional religions when people try to demean it. These are a body of tried and tested indigenous religious beliefs and practices them that have shaped our lives till today. With or without foreign intrusion and influences we still believe and practice aspects of these overtly or surreptitiously, or as a last resort to solve problems which confront the contemporary technology affecting Africans. Contemporary courts cannot deal with, or give redress to questions bothering on justice (customary issues such as witchcraft accusations). Therefore, many dissatisfied citizens seek remedy at the traditional courts, religious shrines, and spiritual/pentecostal/charismatic churches that understand the African cultural complexities; and it works

¹⁴ I am indebted to Douglas Nnuroh and Dr. Wilson Yahoh (Head of the Dept of African Studies University of Cape Cape) for the information on UCC African Studies).

for them (Sackey 1991, 2001, 2006; Mbiti 1975). How would such people find appeasement—even if a temporary psychological one as critics of African beliefs and practices would make believe—if all our customs and traditional institutions were made mockery of and scraped in favour transformation and globalization? These are some of the cultural issues that, though rooted in the past, are manifested on daily basis in Ghana and other African countries. AFST should be concerned with these African realities that we live with. Here, a contribution by a medical officer at the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital in Accra and an alumnus of the University of Ghana is illustrative. He told me even though he enjoyed African Studies when a student he is now appreciating it more in his profession as a medical doctor. He says he gets patients who complain of “pains all over the body; no medicine seems to help. Such people attribute their sickness to witchcraft or other evil spirits. I understand these patients because of my background in African Studies.”

Other faculty responded to the weight of African Studies in contemporary times. Some argued that while AFST courses broaden our knowledge about African and local cultural issues, it is important to understand that they comprise the culture of the people of Ghana which is useful to learn. They comprise the cultures of the people of Ghana and all students are part of it. Some responded that students do not read beyond their area of studies which is why it is important. For example, it offers those in the natural sciences at least knowledge about aspects of the disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. Since African Studies has both social science and humanities components science students get something from each of these. Also, African Studies teaches courses on health, e.g. traditional medicine, which is of great benefit to science students. “In fact if we don’t enforce African Studies in African universities, we would be mis-educating our students.”

Also, they get exposed to social and cultural issues—issues that many would otherwise have taken for granted. Many are ignorant of issues that have an important bearing on their lives and their professions. AFST, therefore, helps to make even the science student a more rounded professional. Even science too has to be made relevant to culture and the society’s needs.

AFST now, UGRC, is multi-disciplinary. It provides learning opportunities for students beyond their mother disciplines and this cannot be a bad thing.¹⁵

Some students took it for a joke. They saw it as “Afro Studs”—something not really worth the bother. Some, it would seem realised the importance of the subject years later after graduation. Again the illustration by the medical officer above affirms the idea that students tend to appreciate their world view better when they are out of school and are faced with the realities.

I had the privilege of teaching one these Afro-Studs, precisely AFST 250 *Festivals and Funerals* for one semester of 2008/2009 in the academic year when the regular lecturer was incapacitated. It is one of my most memorable African Studies courses in relation to students’ attendance, attention and reactions. Despite the large class size of over 800 students, I allowed the class to be interactive and students

¹⁵ Personal interview with Professor Albert Awedoba, IAS, March 2012.

could interrupt the lecture at any time. With the help of visual aids I projected aspects of funerals that are performed in private, for example certain rituals, tensions and conflicts that accompany the preparation of the body and the various roles played by family members, students who have had such experiences nodded in agreement as they understood the meanings and symbolisms in funerals they had observed. Others shared their own experience with the rest of the class. Remarkably, the majority of students has never had such exposures and was interested to know more. This shows that funerals in African societies are not 'children's business' as students are considered not grown up enough in these matters, and they appreciated the seriousness attached to the correct performance of the rituals.

The Institute also has made strides in both academic and infrastructure. On infrastructure is noteworthy that the new one storey edifice currently harbouring the Institute of African Studies came into being through the efforts of one of the female directors, Professor Irene Odotei (2000–2004). IAS was starved of funds after the overthrow of Nkrumah. However different directors tried to make a head way in whatever they could to keep the institution running but of remarkable performance in my assessment is Professor Irene Odotei who made a striking and enduring impact. During her tenure, there was what I call a research boom at the institute as she managed to get external funding for so many research projects and get all research fellows on board. For example, the *Asafo* project which investigated the history and role of traditional military forces (*asafo*) was funded by NUFU research donors from Norway. Another aspect of the NUFU funding saw a collaboration of academia and the public (notably chiefs and queenmothers) to explore both current and traditional perspectives on the chieftaincy institution. Professor Odotei also received financial support from Ford Foundation of the USA that enabled research into the passing and funeral rites the late Asantehene, Otumfuo Opoku War II as well the installation of his successor, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, the present Asantehene. These fundings produced at least three books and journal publications and several workshops. These books include, *Chieftaincy in Ghana*, *The King has gone to The Village*, and the *King Returns*. As at the time of writing this chapter, the IAS was planning an international conference with the theme: "Revisiting the First International Conference on African Studies," which was held in the University of Ghana, Legon in 1962. The IAS has linkages with Europe and North American universities from where students from these continents come to the University of Ghana to specially have courses on African Studies for them. Above all, foreign universities continue to open African Studies departments as a way of teaching new course designs that tend to correct previous erroneous depiction of Africa.

The Institute also has outreach programmes to basic schools in the country who patronize the Institute's museum of rare cultural heritage collections. Mention must be made of the Manhyia Palace Archives of the Asantehene in Kumasi, Ghana, that is administratively under the management of the IAS. These are a few of the events that are evident of some of the prospects and continued advancement and usefulness of African Studies in contemporary times.

African Studies and Nkrumah's African Genius

The questions whether African Studies (AFST) has lived true to the mandate it was given by President Nkrumah as espoused in his "The African Genius" attracted mixed responses. Some faculty members believed it had; while others did not because Ghanaians still think everything from the western world is better (education, material goods, even food) than in Ghana or Africa. Some faculty and students were not even aware of the famous "The African Genius" that Nkrumah espoused at the official opening of the Institute of African Studies. Neither were they aware of changes in teaching methods.

Interviews with former and current research fellows of the Institute of African Studies recounted the impact of the semi-autonomous status of the institution on its establishment as a great incentive and drive for their work. Funded by the state, African Studies started in earnest with a big bang whereby with available source of funding by government research fellows embarked on field work with great enthusiasm and academic accuracy. Invaluable ethnographies on various aspects on African Studies: Stool Histories, Family Studies, Music, Folklore, festivals, funerals, religions. This status of the Institute generated some jealousies among other faculties.

The near self-sufficiency or financial autonomy of the Institute died when Nkrumah was overthrown in a military coup in 1966. Funds, therefore, became scarce for anything Nkrumah started and this affected the academia and especially the Institute. Since regular, flowing funding was the backbone and survival of any endeavour or project, the overthrow of Nkrumah thus marked the beginning of the declining research zeal in Africa Studies and in the country as a whole. The idea of African Studies and antagonism by other faculty of the university of Ghana faculty who did not realize the prominence that had been hitherto been attached to studying Africa in a grand style had also resurged.

"Afro Studs" was continually being ridiculed because the work of the Institute was mistaken to comprise cultural dancing, music and drumming, things that students thought were not deserving of a place on the University curriculum. There were drumming rehearsals by groups like the Ghana Dance Ensemble in the open. Students thought it was all practical with very little theory. They could not see the difference between what was supposed to be happening at the IAS and what uneducated people in the rural communities did for entertainment.¹⁶

Nevertheless, many voices want AFST to continue as a mandatory course for undergraduate, though some liberals think "we should not ram things down people's throats." At the same time, an argument for the university's concept of holistic education should apply. In this respect, "we the University still hold the view that a more rounded education can be afforded our students by making UGRC compulsory."¹⁷

¹⁶ Personal interview with Professor Albert Awedoba, IAS, March 2012.

¹⁷ Personal Interview with Professor Albert Awedoba, IAS, March 2012.

The Way Forward

If there should be any prospect for African Studies in the future, we must make concerted efforts to understand its historical, sociological and psychological background. We must be conversant with the meaning of African Studies from the perspectives of Africans, though many westerners and non-westerners would want to be part of it because they focus on issues about Africa both past and contemporary as the debates; above have shown. Ours is to make our perspective clear to our students, communities, societies, and nation.

First what is an African Approach to African Studies? What is an African approach? There are non-Africans who study African Studies but they do so from their perspectives. “We are in the culture and we probably look at African problem in a different way, from our cultural background.”¹⁸

An approach to a study depends on how the material is collected and how it is interpreted. Regardless of Nkrumah’s vision African studies was still looked at with a British lens by some Ghanaians. An African takes its culture differently; his orientation is African in the sense that his data is interpreted from his own epistemology and experiences. His data is not subject to fit European theories however, it is however un-academic it might seem to outsiders. Self-knowledge of his culture, country and environment should be key determinants. Oral histories method was initiated by African historians and has withered the storm.¹⁹

Ghanaians who continue to apply erroneous designation used by the West to African Studies must be taught to desist from them. These include terms such as fetish priest, juju, and animism. Kofi Asare Opoku (former Professor of African Religions and Philosophy, IAS) in a conversation bemoaned this practice and argued that, when for example, the western concept of quantum physics says energy is never destroyed, we accept it but when Africans say, “*nyimpa wu a nna owui*,” to wit the dead are not dead, we tend to dispute that. To him there is no difference between the two ideologies. Energy links different things and libation for example is one method of keeping energy between the dead and the living intact. This brings to mind the concept of libation in African cultures. Libation is a recognition of a reality and African scholars, including Idowu 1970; Mbiti 1975; Sarpong 1999; Opoku 1978; Hountondji 1996, among others, have spent much time in debunking foreign misconceptions and attempted to educate Africans about the value of their endogenous knowledge and their epistemology but these are yet to sink into the colonised African psyche as foreign religions, technology, globalisation seem to draw us into their realm the moment we feel we are getting nearer to our African destination or direction.

¹⁸ Personal Interview with Emeritus Professor in African Studies, J. H. Kwabena Nketia, at his residence in Accra, October 2012.

¹⁹ Personal Interview with 91 year old Emeritus Professor J. H. Kwabena Nketia, Emeritus Professor of Ethno-musicology and first Ghanaian director of the Institute of African Studies at his residence in Accra, October 2012.

Conclusions

Not all university programmes are professional oriented. There are professional as well as non-professional disciplines. Some give broad knowledge to advance and prepare oneself for life; they enable one to understand and operate in one's society effectively. A medical doctor who has done African Studies will be better placed to understand the aetiology of his or her patients better in order to make a more accurate diagnosis. Through social transformations and new life styles many Ghanaians may be inclined to alienate themselves from their cultures, yet they live within the very cultures they shun

African studies should lead to the desire of Afrocentricity that fashions home-grown solutions to Africa's problems. The clarion call is that imported development paradigms that ignores the social structure will not and cannot work in Africa. (UCC)

Much depends also on the leadership. Some directors of the Institute have facilitated outreach programmes with chiefs because chieftaincy is one of the enduring indigenous institutions which is still not without a myriad of changes and enduring problems. An academic encounter and approach to chieftaincy will help sustain this time-tested institution which is proudly African. Historical military institutions like the *asafo* have also been brought to the limelight in a series of university workshops and conferences at the Institute to highlight their functions in peaceful times. Again, the future depends on the authorities, leadership of the IAS, and the university in general. Additional courses, that are problem-solving oriented could be sought to address issues such as expensive funerals that most people complain about, the problem of growing filth, child abuse, domestic violence, etc. How these were dealt with successfully in the past and whether some of the methods could be adaptable to current situations. Biographies of Great Africans of the Past should be reconstructed to serve as role models for students and young persons in general. There should be more efforts to teach about the family at the undergraduate level because the concept of family is changing drastically in the world including Africa.

However, much still needs to be done by way of seeking more interaction with the community. Nationwide the Institute could do something, for example, organise short courses for civil servants or teachers in the field of teaching courses in African Studies at the basic and secondary levels so that we could relate research to the context of application.

In fact African Studies could go on forever if we adhere to the African Genius which has given the blueprint to the epistemological deductions of African Studies. There is much hope for the discipline because so long as Africans exist there would be African Studies. Nonetheless, we must justify its existence through innovation as times would demand, without compromising its African-centeredness, and in order to do this the Institute must strive to generate its own internal funding since depending on external grants definitely compromise African interests, to some extent.

I would end on a more exciting note using the words of Melber (2009, p. 197) that in spite of all its world-wide challenges and ridicule, "African Studies and, in particular, scholars within African Studies, are very much alive and kicking. Their

interests and goals, motivations and self-understanding seem to be open for a variety of controversies, divergences and misinterpretations. Such ambivalences might even be a desired result of a non-homogenous, multi-disciplinary area such as the one called African Studies.”

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