



EGUZKILORE

(Flor protectora contra las fuerzas negativas)

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UNIVERSITY EDUCATION OF CRIMINOLOGY IN AFRICA

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The objective of University education is generally accepted to be two fold which are not unrelated. One is to enlighten and broaden the mind of the individual, and the other is to meet the man-power needs of the country. The enlightened and broadened mind will bring to bear on his Society directly or indirectly the benefits of his University education either in terms of filling specific man-power need of his society or country, or in engaging in occupation which will enhance the economic, social and cultural status of his society.

The role and relevance of University education in Africa, especially in Africa South of the Sahara are being questioned not in terms of the need for University education but in terms of the type of education that the Universities offer. It is sometimes pointed out that the Universities educate graduates away from their roots and traditions making the graduates alien to their culture and background: Quite often University education, instead of making the mind more inquisitive, makes the diploma or certificate the end of learning. The way University education is perceived in a country where the level of literacy is very high is bound to be different from the way it is perceived where the level of literacy is very low like in Africa South of the Sahara. It is like a one - eyed man being king in the country of the blind.

The attitude to scholarstic learning will be different between a student who has come generations of scholarly background and the one who is first generation, which a large proportion of African students are.

It is against this background that this presentation should be taken.

Furthermore it is necessary to call attention to the problem of generalising about Africa. The independent countries of Africa have inherited the educational traditions of their past Colonial overlords and these traditions are being modified in different degrees to suit their present situations and to reflect their national educational objectives, and their economic capacities.

Some generalisation is however valid in view of similarity in national aspiration, economic circumstance, rate of development etc. The following statements should therefore be taken as generalisation deriving from some specific national situations.

Necessity of Criminology: For those who already know something of criminology, and those who are involved in the control of crime and treatment of offenders, especially at a higher level, the need for a broader and deeper knowledge is obvious. It can be argued and easily proven that policies based on sound knowledge of criminology are likely to be more effective than those based on anecdotes and untested assumptions. The practitioner who has a broader knowledge of criminology than what is only needed in the performance of his duties is likely to be more effective than the one who does not have broad knowledge.

The cost of crime in terms of the machinery set up to prevent and control crime, in terms of the material and non-material losses due to crime is enormous enough to call attention to the importance of criminology at least with the objective of reducing the cost, the gain from which can be diverted to other constructive and development programmes.

The administration of Criminal Justice interferes with the much valued area of the fundamental human rights of the convicted citizens. It also interferes with the liberty, property and even life of the offending citizens. Some of the measures taken against the convicted citizens also impinge on the non-offending citizens- like spouse, and dependants of the criminal

From a theoretical and philosophical point of view, the study of criminology adds more to our knowledge of men. **Institutions where Criminology is taught:** So far there is no Institution in Africa South of the Sahara which is concerned with the teaching of criminology exclusively. There are however several institutions in which it is taught as part of a bigger programme. Department of Sociology or Social Sciences in a number of Universities teach the subject of Deviance which is mainly criminology at both Undergraduate and Post Graduate levels. In University Law Departments, criminology is taught at the Undergraduate and Post graduate levels.

In addition to these University programmes, there are also in some countries Prison Staff Colleges, and Police Colleges in which criminology is taught. These colleges often use University dons in relevant subjects in teaching where they are readily available and accessible.

Without a diploma or degree in criminology, one therefore needs to see the Course content of the Sociology or Law Departments to know how much criminology is taught. It is to be expected that criminology taught in the Sociology department will have a different emphasis from that taught in a Law Department. This difference

may be reduced and minimised if there is inter - departmental cooperation and participation.

General Structure of teaching, hours of lectures, percentage of theoretical and practical classes

All these will depend on the availability of staff to teach the subject. In some University department of Law there are 3 hours per week devoted to Criminology in the final year of a 3 year programme. There are lectures and tutorials given during this 3 hour period. In addition to this there may be visits to law courts, Police installations and Penal Institutions. The students may also participate in research activities in the department.

At the Post graduate level in law, depending on the interest of the student, the programme may be more focussed on criminology. The student will be expected to present a desertation based on some research project under guidance and supervision of an appropriate don. The minimum period required is usually stipulated and it may not be less than one year of full time engagement in the programme.

In the departments of Sociology, deviance or criminology may not be taught at all if there is no qualified staff to teach it and if there is no inter departmental relationship and collaboration with the department of law. Where it is taught it is usual to have at least 2 hours lectures and one hour tutorial per week in the final year of a 3 year undergraduate programme. The students are expected to present a desertation on a modest research project.

At the one year post graduate level at least 2 hours per week may be required for lectures and tutorial. A desertation based on a research project may take more than one year to complete under the guidance and supervision of a don. It may be only during the process of collecting data for research that the students come into direct contact with criminological institutions like the police, law courts and corrections.

Conditions of accessibility for the professors and students

In some Universities there are academic advisers or students who are designated for students for their guidance. On the other hand professors can utilize their students in their research projects as part of the education of the students. The level of interaction between professors and students will depend on the personality of the professors, the number of students in each class, and the physical facilities available.

Diplomas and Certificates

What is awarded at the successful completion of a University programme is a degree in the relevant department like Bachelor of Law or Bachelor of Science, and the Post graduate can be Masters and Doctorate. This applies to Anglophone countries which are similar to the British, Canadian or American tradition.

The Prison Staff Colleges, and Police Colleges award their own certificates the value of which may be limited to the enhancement of the career of the candidate within the system. The certificates do not have the same general significance as a University degree or diploma where this is awarded by a University.

Financing of Education and Investigation

The trend in Africa is towards tuition free under-graduate education. Which means that it is the government which carries the brunt of the financing of University education and Research. It is sad to note that in general the funding is most inadequate. The classes are over crowded and the departments are under staffed.

To curb the empire building tendency of some departments, some Universities have embarked on a Rationalisation Exercise, to combine courses, in order to avoid duplication of similar programme etc.

There is usually some departmental vote for research, but in these days of economic crunch, a central research Committee with limited funds tends to be the vogue. In short there is little or no money for research.

Text Books

Practically all the text books of Criminology and related subjects used in Africa South of Sahara are foreign from Europe and North America. Moreover most of these text books are beyond the economic reach of the students. Even the University libraries these days cannot afford to stock up-to-date text books.

This is unfortunate because what is learnt from most of these text books are culture bound and a number of students do not appreciate this. The theories propounded in most of these text books have social, cultural and economic specificity which is not usually stated as they are written usually by the authors for their own students in their own country.

Publications

What regular local academic or professional journals are available in the field of Criminology in Africa South of Sahara? There is practically nothing. The result is that academics in Africa tend to publish their papers in European or North American journals. In doing this they have to strive to conform with the expectation of the foreign academic community ideas for their papers to be accepted for publication. Journals with a transcultural perspective will of course accept such papers more readily than others.

Future Prospects

At the end of the XXth International Course in Criminology on Non - Institutional Treatment of Offenders held in Lagos 4th - 11th August 1970, the Proceedings of which was published in 1971 in Anne Volume 10 - No 1, a concluding resolution

was passed. "That an Institute of Criminology be established with immediate effect within the University of Lagos".

Permit me to quote at some length, some relevant statements from the Proceedings:- In addition to this resolution the paper by Professor Elias. "A report on Problems of Penology in Nigeria", which was not discussed, stated "It is the hope of the Nigerian Society of Criminology that the International Society of Criminology persuade the United Nations "to establish a Regional Institute of Criminology in the University of Lagos for English speaking Africa. That the teaching of Criminology as a Science, and as a subject of University study and research is a sine qua non of any meaningful system of penology does not need any emphasis in the context of the contemporary need of the developing countries of Africa.

"The Institution of regular courses in the various aspects of the problems of penology should serve to encourage a wider diffusion of progressive ideas in the prevention as well as the detection of crime. The Institute of Criminology should run courses not only for undergraduates and post graduate students, but also for those working in the police force, the prison service and the social welfare organisation.

The holding of regular seminars, conferences and public lectures in all the main cities and towns should be an additional means of inculcating the right knowledge about the criminal in Society, thus fostering a greater sense of social obligation among an ever increasing circle of public - spirited individuals. The scientific teaching of criminology should also encourage legislative reform by serving as a means for the dissemination of the latest results in research and comparative study; the international practices and experiments in this field should be made available to the independent African countries by the continued interchange of experts between these countries and the more developed areas in Europe and America. While, therefore, the institute will be located within the University of Lagos, it will remain truly international both in personnel and in orientation, thus making it to be of greatest possible value to Africa and to United Nations".

Further to the resolution, it was also agreed that it is most necessary and desirable to have a Journal of African Criminology to carry papers dealing particularly with experience, research, observation in Criminology in Africa. In other words, the focus should be on Criminology in Africa. In the absence of this, papers on African Criminology are scattered all over learned journals in Europe, particularly England, France and Belgium, and North America, and it is difficult to keep track of them.

To achieve this essential objective of a Journal of African Criminology considerable help will be needed financially and morally from International and even national organisations.

Even though the International Course was held nearly two decades ago, when we thought the climate was auspicious partly by virtue of the powerful positions held by some active participants then and later, there has been very little or no progress made in the implementation of the recommendations made. In fact the only progress that has been made in the direction of creating an institute is the establishment of

the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders located in Kampala, Uganda and which is still to get off the ground.

This is not the same as a university based Institute, and going by the tradition and experience of older United Nations Regional Institutes for the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of offenders especially ILANUD, the South American Institute located in Costa Rica it cannot achieve the academic status of a University Institute. In fact its clientele will be limited mostly to those already in the Criminal Justice System of African member states. It may however depart from the tradition by persuading African member states of the United Nations and Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to establish Institutes of Criminology in at least one of their Universities. Such Institutes will provide a wide field from which teaching participants in the training programmes on the United Nation African Institute can be drawn. Furthermore such national Institutes can be designated Collaborative Centres for the United Nations Institute for teaching and Research. It is certainly advantageous for academic subjects, to use teaching and research staff of academic Institutes because of their academic freedom:- not tied to their national government policy. This is not to exclude entirely experienced practitioner in the Criminal Justice System because their wealth of experiences will complement academic input.

A University programme for Criminology which will involve not only teaching but also research, also has the advantage of offering a common forum for personnel from the different arms of the Criminal Justice System. This will lead eventually to mutual understanding in the pursuit of their different professions.

It is not enough to have Criminology taught in University, it is equally important to ensure that those with the Criminological training have a place to work to use their acquired knowledge, other-wise, the programme may not attract as many students as one would wish. There are also known cases of graduates of Criminological Institutions who have been frustrated out of the service for lack of job satisfaction and adequate incentive. This type of situation should be avoided, if the programme is to be attractive and fruitful.

Adequate recognition and reward should also be given to those in the service who go to acquire the diploma certificate in Criminology.

Part of the recommendation also addressed the issue of publication calling attention to the necessity of developing African Criminology. Much has been said about some aspects of the treatment of the subject in Africa being sound in conception and practice. The issue of the victim of crime is one example of those aspects. How can these aspects be expounded and developed if not through publication? Yet there is no African Journal of Criminology let alone any national Journal of Criminology.

What there are in terms of publications are Proceedings of Conferences. On this issue of Conferences, there are also problems regarding the frequency. Since there is no active Society of Criminology or Department or Institute of Criminology which can make convening of Conferences part of their objectives, there have not been regular Conferences on Criminology in Africa. This will also suggest the need

for the formation of national Societies of Criminology which can act as pressure groups to promote Criminology.

Much as the need for a Criminological Institute within a University has been appreciated in Africa for many years the fact that none has been created means that there are formidable constraints - the obvious one being financial. This is an area where external assistance can help and this help can take various forms. The endowment of a chair of Criminology and all that goes with it is one form. Another form can be in improved version of a project under taken by the Comparative Criminological Institute of Montreal in Abidjan, Ivory Coast some years ago. This project involved the secondment of teachers from Montreal to start a programme in Abidjan. The envisaged improvement is the identification of Local counterparts of the seconded teachers so that the departure of the foreign teacher will not create a vacuum. In other words the local counterparts who should have been working closely with the foreign teachers will easily step in their shoes in their departure.

Of course these depend on the readiness of the local institutions and the political will of the country to explore the possibilities of these and other options of collaboration. It is not going to be a one - way traffic as the helping foreign institutions also stand to gain from the programme by the addition of a new dimension to their home programme in the form of a different exposure.



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