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Generational differences in University Students:
Challenges or opportunities?

ARTICLES

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Making the university more international: An exploration of higher education internationalisation strategies in Africa from a continental perspective

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Abstract: Internationalisation is one of the contemporary issues in the higher education (HE) academic and policy discourses. Since the 1990s, scholarship on the internationalisation of HE has burgeoned. Nevertheless, the internationalisation of HE in Africa is relatively under-researched. Using the African Quality Rating Mechanism (AQRM), an education framework of the African Union, this article explores the approaches to the internationalisation of HE in Africa. A qualitative descriptive design underpinned the study and the data was analysed using content

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analysis. The findings show that the AQRM comprises five dominant Eurocentric HE internationalisation strategies: student and faculty mobility, academic mobility, international research collaboration, dissemination of research at international conferences, and curriculum internationalisation. However, despite the similarity in the form, the substance of the internationalisation shows that attempts have been made to decolonise the Anglo-Saxon models of internationalisation. It can therefore be concluded that: (a) mobility (of persons and programmes), the elitist version of internationalisation, is integral to most internationalisation practices in the AQRM; (b) the AQRM was designed within the framework of the decolonial lens which repudiates the dominant colonial conception that what qualifies to be "international" must be associated with Europe and North America; and (c) political and academic rationales dominate the internationalisation discourse at the continental level.

Keywords: Internationalisation; strategies; collaboration; regionalisation; harmonisation; mobility; curriculum internationalisation.

I. Introduction

International higher education and the internationalisation of higher education are inescapable, yet distinct, concepts in the contemporary higher education (HE) academic and policy discourses. The twin concepts emerged in the HE lexicon at different pivotal moments. International education is as old as European medieval universities (Yang 2002; Guri-Rosenblit 2015; Bamberger and Morris 2024) and dominated the HE landscape from the 11th century to the late 1980s. The ethos of international education included, *inter alia*, the use of Latin as a common lingua franca, the recruitment of international students and faculty (Altbach and de Wit 2021), the movement of professors across borders to disseminate knowledge and learn from other nations (Maringe 2009). The 19th century witnessed the emergence of the nation-state in Europe and the resultant de-Europeanisation and nationalisation of universities (de Wit and Merkx 2022). However, the nationalistic orientation did not deter the universities from engaging in some form of cross-border activities. The post-World War II period altered the landscape of international education. The global HE landscape experienced an unprecedented increase in international educational exchange programmes (Egron-Polak 2012) based on the Soviet or the American model (Huang, 2007). The hallmarks of both models were: (a) the domination of the North in international education; and (b) the use of similar internationalisation strategies: mobility (of well-to-do and academically gifted students from the Global South to universities in the Global North, and scholars from the Global North to the Global South), technical assistance to the Third World,

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and stimulating cooperation between individual countries in HE matters (Huang 2007; de Wit and Merkx 2022) to promote the political ideologies of the superpowers and their allies. Nevertheless, international education strategies were manifestly "ad hoc, fragmented, and implicit rather than explicit and comprehensive" (de Wit 2020a, p.i); and reactive.

Internationalisation of HE is a relatively new concept (Altbach 2004; de Wit and Altbach,2021; Knight 2003; Maringe 2009). There is a consensus in the academic literature that the internationalisation of HE emerged in the education lexicon after the Fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 (Bamberger and Morris 2024) and has since replaced international education. Unlike international HE, internationalisation of HE – a concept which was occasioned by the imperative to globalise and regionalise economies and societies, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of global (American) capitalism, and the dictates of the knowledge economy (de Wit 2020a; Bamberger and Morris 2024) – approaches the infusion of an international dimension in universities from strategic and proactive perspectives. The internationalisation of HE dictates that the operations of universities ought to transcend state systems. Furthermore, universities should position themselves as actors, rather than spectators, in the global knowledge network (Guri-Rosenblit 2015).

Internationalisation of HE is a strategic agenda (Maringe et al. 2013; Guri-Rosenblit 2015; de Wit 2020a; de Wit and Altbach 2021) and a policy priority at institutional, national, and supranational levels. It is now an established thematic field of research in HE (Kosmützky and Putty 2016). It has, and continues, to attract considerable attention in academic research (Tight 2021, 2022) in the last three decades. Nevertheless, the extant studies on the internationalisation of HE are biased towards the Western world (de Wit 2020b; Lee and Stensaker 2021) and "heavily reflect Western timelines and perspectives" (Bamberger et al. 2019, 205). Tight (2022), after an extensive survey of the existing studies on the internationalisation of HE across the world, concluded that "[t]he internationalisation of higher education in Africa appears to have been relatively little studied, or, at least, relatively little research on it has appeared in English language outlets" (p.249). The paucity of research implies that a dearth of knowledge exists on how universities in Africa should and/or are pursuing the internationalisation of their classical (teaching and research) and contemporary (or public service) missions in the post-colonial era. Against the above backdrop, the article answered the question: How should universities in Africa internationalise their missions from the perspective of the African Union and the Association of African Universities?

II. Literature review

The literature review hinges on the meaning of internationalisation, typologies of internationalisation and their attendant strategies, and the theoretical lens for the article.

II.1. Conceptualisation of internationalisation

Internationalisation (of HE) defies a single definition. The concept has, in the last three decades or so, attracted a plethora of definitions. The proliferation of the definitions, and the contestations surrounding them, attest to the fluid and slippery nature of the concept. Jane Knight coined the earliest, and most-quoted, definition of internationalisation (of higher education) as: "the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education" (Knight 2003, 2). de Wit and colleagues modified Knight's definition. The authors decoded internationalisation as "[t]he intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff and to make a meaningful contribution to society" (de Wit et al. 2015, 29). The definition introduced the word "intentional" to stress the idea that the process of internationalisation ought to be carefully planned and strategically inclined (de Wit 2019) and also promoted the notion that internationalisation should be viewed through the lens of enhancing the quality of HE and positively contributing to society (de Wit et al. 2015). The (modified) definition underscores academic and public service (or impact) rationales of internationalisation.

However, scholars from Africa, argue that the modified definition partially suits Africa (see Teferra 2019, 2020). Teferra, in both publications, argues that the internationalisation of HE in Africa is not a purely intentional process. In most HE systems on the Continent, internationalisation of HE is usually a coercive process. Teferra, therefore, calls for a more neutral, and "intention-free" definition of internationalisation of HE.

II.2. Typologies and strategies of internationalisation

The majority of the extant studies on the internationalisation of HE underscore two typologies of the concept: internationalisation abroad and internationalisation at home. Internationalisation abroad has a cross-border component and relies on strategies such as student mobility, academic staff mobility, and provider mobility (de Wit and Altbach 2021). Internationalisation

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at home – "the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students with domestic environments" (Beelen and Jones 2015, 69) – has gained popularity in HE since the 1990s. It entails the internationalisation of the curriculum. The internationalisation of the curriculum connotes "the process of incorporating international, intercultural and global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods and support services of a programme of study" (Leask 2015, 9). The internationalisation of the curriculum is an inclusive and less elitist approach to the internationalisation of HE that is intended to benefit non-mobile students.

Mittelmeier et al. (2019) have advanced another typology of internationalisation: internalisation at a distance. Under internationalisation at a distance, students remain at home but register for online or distance learning academic programmes at institutions based in other countries. This typology of internationalisation overlaps the classical classifications of internationalisation but can neither be nested into internationalisation abroad nor internationalisation at home.

The foregoing discourse has focused on the internationalisation of the teaching mission of universities. Universities' second (research) and third missions are also candidates for internationalisation. International (or intercultural) doses can be infused into research through international research collaboration to solve global challenges, and co-authorship (de Wit and Altbach 2021). Conversely, the third mission (or the public service role) of universities can be internationalised through, among others, creating opportunities for students in health disciplines, for example, to gain experience through clinical placement in other countries (Jones et al. 2021).

The extant literature on internationalisation, albeit Eurocentric, provides useful insights into the strategies for making HE international. However, scholars recognise that "the understanding of internationalisation, the rationales presented, the strategies applied …differ between contexts" (Ndaipo et al. 2022, 1). Therefore, the internationalisation strategies shaped by the cultural tradition of the Global North cannot be generalised to the African context.

II.3. Theoretical framework

The neo-institutional theory, developed by Meyer and Rowan in 1977, serves as the theoretical lens for the article. It is often used in organisational studies. It nuances understanding organisational responses to environmental

pressures. One of its fundamental assumptions is that organisations operate in environments with prevailing expectations of acceptable behaviours which hinge on policies, rules, and structures. The expectations of the external environment put organisations under immense pressure to align their policies, practices, structure, and behaviours to the requirements of the external environment to attain legitimacy. Generally, attainment of legitimacy – and reduction of uncertainty – override efficiency concerns in organisational responses to environmental pressures.

From the neo-institutional standpoint, organisations adopt new systems, practices, and policies because of external influence or isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Meyer and Rowan 1977). Institutional isomorphism– "a constraining process that forces one unit in the population to resemble other units that face the same set of institutional conditions" (DiMaggio and Powell 1983, 149) – occasions policy convergence among similar organisations. Isomorphic change is occasioned by three fundamental mechanisms: coercive, mimetic, and normative (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Coercive isomorphism is induced by organisations that wield considerable influence over others such as regulators and major providers of resources. Imitation (or emulation) of policies, strategies, structures, and technologies already successful in related organisations is a hallmark of mimetic isomorphism. Under mimetic isomorphism, organisations tend to model after similar, but successful organisations, in the external environment (DiMaggio and Powell 1983) as opposed to searching for their context-sensitive solutions to problems. Finally, normative isomorphism occurs through professionalisation. DiMaggio and Powell (1983, 152) defined professionalism as "the collective struggle of members of an occupation to define the conditions and methods of their work, to control the production procedures, and to establish a cognitive base of legitimisation for their occupational autonomy.

III. Methods

The qualitative tradition and the qualitative descriptive design underpinned the study. The tradition and design are appropriate for exploratory studies that answer the "how" research question(s) and aim to enhance understanding of phenomena. Consistent with the qualitative tradition, document review was the sole data collection method. The data was elicited from the African Quality Rating Mechanism (AQRM) survey questionnaire (AUC 2014) which contains the minimum standards for HE in Africa, including but not limited, to standards on the internationalisation of

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universities in Africa. The AQRM cannot be discussed without referring to the African Higher Education Harmonisation Strategy (AHEHS). The AHEHS – which the Third Ordinary Session of the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union (COMDAF III) adopted in 2007 in Johannesburg, South Africa – provides a framework for the internationalisation of HE in Africa. The AHEHS envisages the creation of a common HE area with compatible national HE systems along the lines of the European Higher Education Area (Nabaho and Turyasingura 2019). Harmonisation of HE aims to, *inter alia*, promote the comparability (or reduce variance) of the multiple HE systems which were shaped by colonial legacies and to "facilitate the recognition of academic qualifications and promote the mobility of African students and academic staff across the continent" (AUC 2018a, 4).

The Harmonisation Strategy – the African equivalent of the 1999 Bologna Process (or Declaration) in Europe – gave birth to the African Quality Rating Mechanism (AQRM) which COMDAF adopted in 2008 (AUC 2018b). Within the AQRM, internationalisation is explicit and is assessed during self-assessment and quality audit (or peer review). The member states of the African Union are required to domesticate the AQRM. The external quality assurance agencies for HE in Africa ought to use the AQRM while conducting quality audits of universities. Therefore, the HE internationalisation strategies in the AQRM are prescriptive for the entire university sector in Africa.

Content analysis – "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from text (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use" (Krippendorff 2004, 18–19) or a method of analysing written messages (Cole 1988) – was employed to make sense of the data. It is one of the available techniques for analysing qualitative data and enables the distilling of a few categories (explicit content of text) which represent similar meanings from the words of the text (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). The three sequential stages in analysing the data — "skimming (superficial examination), reading (thorough examination), and interpretation" (Bowen 2009, 32) were followed. At the level of a thorough examination of the text, consistent with the guidance by Elo and Kyngäs (2008), we generated the main category, generic categories, and sub-categories from the text. The main category which resonates with the research question is the "international dimension of HE". Using inductive content analysis, we created two sub-categories: the international dimension of teaching (or the education mission) and the international dimension of research. Sub-categories were created for each of the generic categories which focus on the classical missions of the university and which are candidates for internationalisation. The sub-categories are the

HE internationalisation strategies that are manifest in the AQRM and describe social reality concerning HE internationalisation in Africa.

IV. Results

This section presents the findings on the research question. Five internationalisation strategies are apparent in the AQRM: student and staff mobility; academic mobility; international research collaboration; international dissemination of research in conferences; and curriculum internationalisation.

IV.1. Student and faculty mobility

This theme of internationalisation, which aligns with the notion of internationalisation abroad and is unequivocal in the AQRM, necessitates that students and faculty engage in non-permanent cross-border movement to pursue full degree programme and take up full-time teaching (or research) positions respectively. The AQRM elicits information, *albeit* not for rating purposes, on the profile of each HEI undergoing either self-assessment or quality audit on two aspects: the number of students and faculty from other countries; and the proportion of international students in the total enrolment of the institutions. The proportion of international students and students is a proxy indicator of the quality of education offered by the institution, and the reputation of the university. Nevertheless, the AQRM is non-prescriptive on the ideal proportion of international students and faculty.

Staff and student mobility is an imperative for Africa's academic and political integration. In the African higher education landscape, the multiple HE systems manifest the Anglophone, Francophone, Lusophone, and Arabophone colonial legacies and militate against cross-border mobility of students and scholars, and recognition of academic qualifications. The African Higher Education Strategy which envisions the creation of a common higher education area devoid of colonial imprints – the African Higher Education and Research Space (AHERS) – aims to eliminate the bureaucratic obstacles to the free mobility of students and faculty. However, there are non-bureaucratic obstacles to mobility. In Africa, institutional policies that require international students to pay higher tuition and low staff salaries may serve as a disincentive to attracting international students and faculty. However, in some regional HE spaces such as the East African Community, the HE harmonisation efforts have gone hand in hand with the harmonisation of tuitions.

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In addition to probing whether HEIs have international students, the AQRM interrogates whether the international students, in case the institution has attracted them, hail from other African countries or outside Africa. The nature of the information sought about international students advances the notion that the internationalisation of HE in Africa should have both a regional (intra-Africa) and a global (inter-regional) focus. Under the regional focus, Africa is viewed through the lens of a region as opposed to the alternative categorisation of the continent as a geographical space comprising Western, Southern, Northern, Eastern, and Central Africa as regions. The tension between the regional and the global perspectives of mobility is illuminated in the standard for quality rating on student and staff mobility which is assessed under the teaching mission of HEIs. The standard for quality rating 4.9 – "The institution has a devoted office to…enhance intra-Africa mobility of students and staff" (AUC 2014, 9) – dilutes the global (or inter-regional) focus of mobility. The strong intra-Africa focus, especially for students, is not accidental. First, it is intended to give effect to the African Higher Education Harmonisation Strategy that is unequivocal on the promotion of intra-Africa mobility. Second, it is geared towards supporting Africa's integration process of Africa that is envisaged in the vision of the African Union. Finally, it is an attempt to decolonize mobility or reduce the hegemony of the Global North in mobility.

IV.2. Academic mobility

Academic mobility has a cosmopolitan orientation. Nevertheless, the kind of mobility inherent in academic mobility, unlike student and faculty mobility, is temporary or is not for the whole academic programme. In essence, academic mobility involves non-permanent cross-border inter-university collaboration that allows students to move between institutions located in different countries, during the study programme, to study. Similarly, faculty can also move between institutions in other countries to teach or research. The duration of mobility may range from a semester to an academic year. Academic mobility is explicit in question 29 of the AQRM: "Is your institution currently involved in inter-university academic mobility programmes?" (AUC 2014, 9). Where the response of the institution in the self-assessment is affirmative, the assessors of the HEI obtain additional information on the name(s) of the programme(s), the thematic area(s) of study, and the number of African and non-African institutions involved in the programmes in question.

The AQRM is silent on specific academic mobility programmes. It merely seeks information on the programmes. However, such programmes may include student exchange programmes, faculty (or staff) exchange programmes; and research mobility programmes. Academic mobility may also entail programme mobility where students travel abroad, enroll at an institution to study for short periods, and transfer credits back to their home degree. The idea that academic mobility should, though not exclusively, have an intra-Africa dimension is explicit in the AQRM. The intra-Africa dimension aligns with the intentions of the African Higher Education Strategy.

Within the internationalisation discourse, programme mobility has the potential to enhance academic experience, provide opportunities for international exposure, and foster cultural understanding.

IV.3. International research collaboration

This strategy for internationalising research is built into the AQRM as a standard for quality rating. The standard for quality rating 5.10 – "The institution has established linkages to promote international joint research and publications" (AUC 2014, 20) – points to international networking research. International research collaborations can take three forms: intra-Africa, South-South, and South-North. However, collaborations in research between universities in Africa and those in the Global North have often been faulted for, *inter alia*, perpetuating Eurocentric domination in knowledge generation, reflecting a junior-superior relationship, and not responding to Africa's unique needs. The AQRM provides a caveat to guide research collaborations: the research should be "…relevant to the resolution of African problems and the creation of economic and development opportunities" (AUC 2014, 20).

The AUC does not advocate global engagement in research and publication in a vacuum. Joint international research can enrich research by incorporating knowledge and insights from different cultural perspectives, introduce fresh perspectives that guard against academic inbreeding, generate high-quality research outputs, unlike local collaborations, and increase research impact. International collaboration in research equally has the potential to strengthen research capacity and increase the volume of patents and innovations. It enables the transfer of local (or indigenous) knowledge to the international audience and allows the sharing of research infrastructure such as laboratories. Finally, it allows the pooling of fiscal resources in an environment where public funding of HE and research has been reduced across many political jurisdictions.

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IV.4. International dissemination of research

This theme is about international conferences and is derived from the standard for quality rating 5.6 – "Researchers are encouraged and supported to present their research at…international conferences" (AUC 2014, 20). The standard agitates for, though indirectly, making opportunities available to scholars to traverse national borders to present their research findings. Such conferences are an avenue for researchers to both publish in peer-reviewed journals and to disseminate their findings to academic and professional communities. International conferences provide scholars with an opportunity to receive constructive feedback on their research work, establish opportunities for collaboration in research and joint publication, and interact with scholars and students from different cultural settings and thereby appreciate their cultures. These conferences can also strengthen the intercultural competencies of the conference attendees.

The watchwords in the standard for quality rating are "encouraged" and "supported". Encouragement can be through articulating the benefits of presenting papers at such conferences. On the other hand, the support dimension may entail partial or full funding of academics to attend international conferences. This necessitates that HEIs should appropriate resources to international conferences in their respective annual budgets. The budget for international conferences is a reliable indicator of the commitment of the HEI to internationalisation through international conferences.

IV.5. Curriculum internationalisation

The previous internationalisation strategies involve (physical) mobility and are therefore elitist. Curriculum internationalisation constitutes an inclusive variant of internationalisation. In the context of Africa, this HE internationalisation strategy entails adding an international subject to the formal curriculum to benefit non-mobile students, who constitute the majority. Question 36 of the AQRM probes whether "internationalisation" is a subject area in the curriculum of the institution. In instances where internationalisation is a cross-cutting subject area, self-assessment teams are required to rate the extent of internationalisation using a scale of 1(weak) to 5 (very strong). It should be noted that the rating scale for the internationalisation of the curriculum is diametrical to the one used for standards for quality rating, which ranges from 1(poor quality) to 4 (excellent). This means that the internationalisation of the (formal) curriculum does not have a bearing on the overall rating of HEIs. However, international quality assurance experts

can report on the internationalisation of the curriculum as either a good practice or as a strength of the institution.

The AUC is wary about entrenching internationalisation as a subject area in the AQRM and according to it the status of a standard for quality rating, which would require every HEI within the African HE landscape to develop and run a stand-alone course unit on internationalisation. Doing so would constitute a breach of the autonomy of HEIs to design and conduct academic programmes. However, the fact that the AQRM interrogates whether internationalisation is a subject area in the curriculum is an indirect way of raising awareness about the subject area and, therefore, a remote way of steering HEIs towards the internationalisation of the curriculum.

Internationalisation of the curriculum – which should also entail internationalisation of learning outcomes and pedagogy – seems to be geared towards preparing domestic students to become globally competent citizens and professionals who are capable of living and working in an increasingly borderless world. Intercultural sensitivity, global citizenship, and tolerance are some of the implied competencies that an internationalised curriculum can engender.

V. Discussion, conclusions, and contributions

The findings provide insights, from a supra-national perspective and the perspective of the African Association of Universities, on how HEIs in Africa should internationalise their classical missions. The majority of the internationalisation strategies in the AQRM – student and faculty mobility; academic mobility, international research collaboration; international dissemination of research at conferences; and curriculum internationalisation – mirror the internationalisation strategies from the Global North (see Maringe et al. 2013; Knight and de Wit 2018; de Wit and Altbach 2021). Studies conducted in some countries in the Global South (e.g. Tamrat and Teferra 2018; Ndaipa et al. 2022) point to similar internationalisation strategies at the institutional level. Therefore, policy convergence in the domain of internationalisation strategies is evident. Thus, the various isomorphic forces account for the convergence of HE internationalisation strategies in the Global North and Africa. This renders the neo-institutional theory a reliable explanatory lens for the apparent convergence. Teferra (2019, 2020), while critiquing de Wit and colleagues' definition of internationalisation which stresses the word "intentional", lends credence to the proposition above by asserting that Africa adopted the Eurocentric internationalisation strategies through a coercive rather than an intentional

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process. The AQRM was funded by the European Union (EU) and the African Union as part of the EU-Africa partnership. It is, therefore, probable that the EU, the principal funder, could have influenced the adoption of Eurocentric internationalisation strategies. However, mimetic isomorphism (or emulation) cannot be ruled out. The African Higher Education Harmonisation Strategy is the equivalent of the Bologna Process. The two strategic policy frameworks, *albeit* of different continents, have similar ends or goals (common higher education spaces) and objectives (e.g. eliminating the obstacles to free mobility of students and faculty). The marked convergence in the goals and objectives necessitated the similarity of the HE internationalisation practices associated with mobility. Therefore, the HE internationalisation strategies attest to the internationalisation of the Bologna Process in Africa. The policy convergence described above lends credence to the power of the neo-institutional theory in explaining organisational change.

Despite the convergence of these strategies, some of which have been labelled Eurocentric, academic colonialism, and neo-colonial in the scholarly literature (de Wit 2020b), there is a trend in Africa to adapt rather than adopt the strategies. The adaptation is evident in the regional rather than global focus of most of the strategies and is a strategy to decolonise (or de-westernise) some of the Eurocentric templates of internationalisation. The extant studies, especially on the direction of student mobility, lend credence to our earlier observation that student mobility in Africa has a strong intra-continental focus.

Maringe et al. (2013, 19) opine that "[a]lthough we have a fairly good idea of the generic internationalisation strategies…, we have little evidence about the relative importance attached to these strategies…in different parts of the world (p.19)". We contribute to this discourse, though without quantification, by asserting that the AUC attaches great importance to student and faculty mobility because the strategy appears several times in the AQRM and the volume of information elicited on the strategy is incomparable to other strategies. Second, the alignment of this internationalisation strategy with the goal of the Harmonisation Strategy is a proxy indicator of the prestige that it enjoys. Conversely, other internationalisation strategies that appear in the AQRM as standards for quality rating and predominantly focus on the research mission – international research collaboration; and international dissemination –are important but do not enjoy parity of esteem with mobility.

We now delve into the strategy which is implied to be least important: curriculum internationalisation. Whereas internationalisation at home, demonstrated through the internationalisation of the curriculum, has come to

the fore across the globe (de Wit and Altbach 2021), it occupies a backseat in Africa because it is not among the mandatory strategies. The AUC's obsession with physical mobility is partly responsible for the low priority attached to curriculum internationalisation. However, the imperative to promote the internationalisation of the curriculum cannot be overstated. As Jones (2020, 181), in response to the unparalleled focus on physical mobility observes, "Mobility needs to be seen as adding value to an internationalised curriculum, not as the focal point of internationalisation efforts."

Internationalisation at home is a peripheral approach to internationalising HE in the AQRM. The focus on mobile students has the potential to militate against the development of the 14th generic competence of African HE– "Ability to work in an intra and intercultural and/or international context" (Nabaho 2017, 21) – among non-mobile students, which necessitates bringing internationalisation at home to the fore. Therefore, the imperative to blend elitist internationalisation abroad with the less elitist and more inclusive internationalisation at home cannot be overemphasised.

The findings and discussion lead to three conclusions. First, most mobility (of persons and programmes) is integral to most internationalisation practices in the AQRM. Student and staff mobility, academic mobility, and international dissemination of research as HE internationalisation practices have an element of people crossing borders to study, teach, research, and disseminate knowledge. Second, the AQRM from which the HE internationalisation strategies in Africa were gleaned, was designed using the decolonial lens. The decolonial lens repudiates the dominant colonial conception that what is "international" must be associated with Europe and North America. The big doses of intra-Africa mobility, intra-Africa research collaboration, and intra-Africa academic mobility lend credence to this conclusion. Finally, political and academic rationales dominate the internationalisation discourse at the continental level. The political rationales hinge on promoting Africa's academic and political integration. The academic rationales constellate around improving the quality of education.

Upenyu and Ress (2018) and Tight (2021), among a plethora of others, lamented the shocking dearth of studies on the internationalisation of HE in Africa while Maringe et al. (2013) underscored limited evidence about the relative importance attached to internationalisation strategies. This article contributes to both concerns. First, we have added to the limited literature on the internationalisation of HE in Africa from a supranational perspective. Finally, we have shed light on the importance attached to the generic Anglo-Saxon models of internationalisation in Africa. Therefore, the article, in addition to advancing knowledge on one of the most discussed topics in HE,

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provides a rich resource who scholars and students who wish to interrogate internationalisation from a comparative/international perspective of Africa and other regions.

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