Introduction
Leadership is a widely written about subject but one which has not sufficiently been problematised. There is need for an engagement with various concepts that are used in describing and analysing power and leadership processes. It is these processes that generate conflict. Leadership should explore the dynamics of empowerment.

The African University is a central institution in the infrastructure of higher education provision. It is a unique social domain, a principal avenue for knowledge production and dissemination that plays a very significant role in the socio-economic and political development of any nation. It fosters the capacity of individuals and communities (Nyaigoti-Chacha, 2001:2). Because of the prospects it offers and because of the community and individual aspirations and demands it generates, several dynamics are put into motion. Which create conflicts that call for prudent management and resolution.

The process of defusing antagonism and reaching agreement between conflicting parties is what is generally referred to as conflict resolution. For effective conflict resolution, the African University ought to be constituted as a domain of morality that legitimises efforts at negotiation given that the university is a domain whose intellectual texturing cannot claim to be free from political, cultural and religious influences. Effective conflict resolution mechanisms cannot be devised in the African University that is not ready to embrace change in the ways institutional affairs are handled. The crucial role of leadership and management in maintaining harmony and staff and student morale to enhance performance and productivity cannot be gainsaid. Conflict resolution involves deployment of conflict management skills in order to foster social harmony.

The notion of conflict resolution is based on the idea that it is better to expose and resolve conflict before it damages people's relationships or even before it degenerates
into virulent violence. Social conflicts in educational institutions demand moral authority and leadership integrity to resolve them. If not resolved they can have a destabilizing effect on institutional performance in all learning, training and research processes. The importance of conflict management relates to the central need of engendering sustainability of these specialized processes in the academy entrusted with providing higher learning to humanity.

Management of conflict through conflict resolution strategies is made possible through the proper exercise of power, including the power of moral, judicial or other forms of authority. As a term conflict resolution refers to strategies of diffusing conflicting situations. Strategies of diffusion were developed during the second half of the 20th century as alternatives to litigation models of settling disputes and continue to be theorized to-date.

The academic and administrative cadres of staff are indispensable components in the relations of power based on the structuring of mechanisms of resource management and sustainability in their respective institutions. The social structuring of the academy has a lot to do with styles of leadership, their moral legitimisation and the existence of an institutional cultural repertoire in various universities in the form of rules, regulations, mores and values relating to resource creation, nurture and utilization. Conflict resolution strategies in international relations, legal settings and approaches developed in educational settings in the 1980's point to the importance of negotiation in the settlement of disputes. There is little hope of negotiation where there is no trust or moral integrity, and that is why university leadership must be characterized by the highest fibre of moral integrity. Lack of moral integrity undermines one’s moral authority and without moral authority, one’s leadership is contested. In other words, there is loss of leadership legitimacy. Many institutions are therefore in a crisis of legitimacy.

According to the principle of conflict resolution, the only true solution to conflict is one that attempts to satisfy the inherent needs of all parties involved. The structure of every legal order directly influences the distribution of power. The academy is a legal order. The imposition of bureaucratic structures with their inherent systems of authority is responsible for a number of tensions that intensify and generate various
types of conflicts in the academy. Forces of change in the management of the academy have their roots in social experiences emanating from the processes of recruitment, training, welfare, conflicts generated over time, conflict management, institutional memory in the form of precedence and tradition and negotiation over options availed by these processes.

The existence of institutional sanctions and mechanisms for achieving social justice and for ameliorating the realization of effective and efficient management are embedded in practices whose efficacy is enforced by appropriate social leadership norms, based on moral authority and leadership integrity. There is need to promote innovation, leadership development and an intellectual enterprise culture in institutions governed by the highest level of moral integrity, ethical standards in management, openness and fairness underpinned by a reward and recognition system that is performance driven (Addae-Mensah, 2001:3).

The intellectual leadership culture must therefore provide room for negotiation. In negotiation, the parties hold conversations to settle their disputes. There must be dialogue, what Habermas calls purposive or communicative dialogue. Unfortunately, some administrators attempt to resolve conflicts through domination. Domination is one of the most destructive elements of social action. It institutes a special case of oppressive power (Weber, 1992:28). Violence prevention, conflict resolution, peer mediation, nurture and maintenance of peaceable classrooms are growing concerns in educational processes. The intellectual leadership culture must provide room for negotiations in institutional conflicts. In negotiation conflicting parties enter into conversations called dialogue in order to settle their disputes. There is an exercise of patience, understanding, humility and flexibility in this exercise in order to realize the resolution of the concerned conflicts.

There is no question that higher education has long-standing problems in Africa. Its development problems can be analysed from the standpoint of the dialectic of domination that defines the state choice of university leadership instead of relying on a morally defined framework of meritocracy. The state appointed kind of leadership choice which in itself is influenced by a host of factors including pervasive ethnic considerations and biases against gender undermines prospects of sustainable dialogue and the creation and nurture of a spirit of consensus.
The politics of university institutional leadership and control therefore directly relates to the formulation of institutional policy.

Politics is a struggle for power and the ultimate response to abuse of power is resistance. Conflict may involve actual confrontation between persons or merely symbolic confrontation through words or deeds. There are many times when conflict has been expressed in the academy through hot memos, verbal exchanges, accusations and counter-accusations, threats, or has been manifested in the form of physical violence through students' fights or physical exchanges between colleagues or even causing of physical damage to one's property.

Conflict has also sometimes remained unexpressed. Resistance is an expression of an unresolved conflict. There are forms of resistance: active and passive resistance. Active resistance may be virulent and violent. A bad executive expression of power does undermine public interest in the management of higher education or the concerns of what has come to be called stakeholders. The abuse of office spawned by such expression of power may generate either active or violent resistance depending on who plays the role of spokesperson to articulate this interest and with what options of action they resort to.

The above concerns about national interests point to the urgent need for the improvement of governance in our institutions of higher learning. Therefore the institutionalisation of better mechanisms of management of social conflicts and the need to provide for conflict resolution processes to be undertaken in a social setting of leadership integrity and moral responsibility when and where conflicts arise is imperative. These concerns have become critical in this era of globalisation characterized by a proliferation of conflicts in the academy despite the growing importance of knowledge as an important social factor.

Knowledge has today supplanted physical capital as the source of wealth and technology. In essence it has become the driving force of the development process (World Bank, 2000:9). Information technology, biotechnology and other innovations that have led to remarkable changes in the way people live and work must become a
new focus in the African academy, its management visions and its control of inherent social conflicts.

**Exploring the Nature of Conflicts in the African Academy**

Unresolved conflicts in the academy have a tendency of breaking into open violence as an expression of active resistance. What initially begins as passive resistance may also end up as active resistance if not addressed and the issues driving the social disaffection accordingly resolved. A given conflict may be expressed in terms of issues that caused it or the strategies used to address it. It may also be expressed in terms of the outcomes or consequences it generates. Violence can be perceived as nothing more than the most flagrant manifestation of power. It is power of resistance expressed in the language of rights as it is often claimed in street demonstrations of university students in Africa.

Leadership as a process entails interaction. With the poor conception of societal good and what constitutes national interest, universities are constantly under-funded, although they face escalating social demands for higher education. The legitimacy of higher education is under attack from many directions. In the last twenty years, Universities have been expected by stakeholders to do far more than they can cope with in the face of rapidly dwindling resources. Governments have drastically reduced subventions to them but expect them to increase their intake to meet national manpower needs (Addae-Mensah, 2001).

Consequently, the potential of higher education to promote development is being realized only marginally. The state attempts to get out of its conflicts with the intelligentsia at the universities by adopting the defeatist option of avoidance, while the intellectual fraternity has, on many occasions, sought to resolve conflicts by resorting to courtroom litigation. This is a form of confrontation. A new vision of what higher education can achieve is required through the adoption of a diplomatic option and the exercise of negotiating skills. According to the World Bank (2000), this vision must be combined with better planning and higher standards of management.
Some of the conflicts in the management of higher education arise out of failure by the state to perceive the important contribution of higher education to social, economic and political development by those wielding state power. With various government bureaucrats assuming roles as directors rather than advisers of higher education institutional managers, the stage is then set for grand conflicts driven by interest politics that are antithetical to national interests. These are socially divisive and irreconcilable interests, which are destructive to national institutions, apart from generating protracted conflicts.

Leaders who, in their policy-making and implementing roles, do not allow creativity of higher education to emerge from among the professionals, create a major problem in laying of the foundation of institutions of knowledge production. Institutions of knowledge production are a complex of units. They are social systems that create, experiment, communicate and use knowledge. They are organisations with specific missions (Alvarez, 1994:). Poor policy frameworks at the national leadership level have prevented the formulation of parameters within which success in institutions of higher learning can be achieved. The shortage of resources in Africa increasingly requires that universities be prioritised and be run efficiently.

The question of treatment of staff, money and premises is growing in importance and is becoming more difficult to handle. The issue of management is thus becoming the focus of attention in modern Africa (Wohlegemuth, 1998). Education is a critical and sensitive sector that requires responsible leadership at national and institutional levels, and a leader is an agent of change. He is an individual who is an atom of ideological representation of society with its leadership culture. Leadership culture is a function of a given ideology in which the subjects are interpolated.

There are therefore fundamental conflicts in higher education. These conflicts are largely over resource mobilization, the transformation and professionalisation of the teaching and research enterprises, the professionalisation and use of managerial human resources, and the adoption and use of information communication technology. There are also conflicts over the reform of the statutory provisions governing the functions of the university and the adoption of revision measures for effective and efficient management, renewal of academic programmes and research, and also in
infrastructural development of these institutions. The media has particularly gone to lengths to expose the relationship between inefficiency and ethics. It has often ended up by pointing fingers at the educational system. Problems in higher education are linked to the absence of norms and values given the lack of codes of ethics in a number of institutions.

Subterranean networks of ethnicity, family ties and factions of patrons and clients (Aseka, 1999:) demarcate the parameters within which abuse of power in the academy unfolds. There can be no meaningful or fruitful conflict resolution where there is no ethical referent. There is a deterioration of the level of civility and the tendency to use violence to resolve differences is part of this deteriorating civility. There is need for an ethical framework in which disappointment, mistrust, suspicion and violence are all addressed in the quest to obtain a certain moral value. Preservative instincts to perpetuate ethnic identity have undermined objectivity and created a mismatch between what universities are doing, the scope of expectations and the governance structures. This has bred some degree of mediocrity in public management.

Where mediocrity exists, it breeds insecurity, much of which is expressed in open violence or other forms of confrontation such as litigation. There is an increasing polarization along ethnic, religious, racial and political lines. This has contributed to the monumental increase in social and interpersonal conflict. Conflicts over definitions of identity are often violent (Frederiksen, 1994).

How do we then manage politics of identity in the African academy in these days when ethnicity has been highly politicised? Is the answer to this problem in instituting good governance mechanisms? How do ethnic demands in an academic community undermine merit and social justice? In Cameroon, Ouendji talks of university authorities being behind ethnic manipulation. Ethnic politics therefore adversely affected admission and promotion processes within the university in a reigning atmosphere of tribalism in Cameroon in the 1990s (Ouendji, 2000:). That is why every university must formulate systematic, objective and codified ways of doing things.
Managing institutions by executive fiat creates and exacerbates conflicts. Such conflicts may lead to a divided executive along religious, ethnic or gender lines. Many leaders are bogged down in trivial matters because of lack of skills and management integrity. Resistance to executive fiat is born of the resentment of exclusion. Resentment is a surge of destructive emotions; grief or anger, fear or anxiety where marginalisation of groups or individual is resorted to in institutional management. It undermines trust and goodwill that are crucial in fostering institutional stability.

Apart from ethnic problems, violence in institutions of higher learning as an expression of declining levels of civility takes many forms including sexual harassment. Even though different institutions have tried to address the issue of sexual harassment, it has been a more difficult area to handle and a lot more remains to be done (Mlama, 2001). If a university has a vision that excludes gender equity, then it opens up the doors to gender inequities and abuses. Therefore a proper vision starts with a leadership that is gender conscious and which defines the university mission and vision in a gender sensitive manner. There can be no good governance committed to transparency and accountability if there is no good leadership culture. Leaders need moral authority and humane posturing since coercive leadership institutionalises popular withdrawal, alienation and distrust. As Mlama (2001) rightly states, a leadership that is gender insensitive cannot effectively lead gender equity transformation required of African Universities today.

Failure to incorporate women leadership in university management will therefore generate various forms of resistance by the female members of the academy. Gender sensitisation must be part and parcel of conflict resolution strategies in Higher education leadership and management. There must be developed appropriate policy processes to cater for the management and resolution of conflicts emanating in the spheres of gender, religion, ethnicity, class and other concerns. Conflicts and tensions are said to be lived and worked out imaginatively (Frederiksen, 1994:61).

Tamale and Oloka-Onyango (2000) give an account of the stark reality of gender struggles that continue to pervade the intellectual arena. The antagonism towards issues relating to gender parity and feminism abounds in the academy sometimes
expressed in foul language. Women sensitive agendas and the struggle for gender equality continue to meet a great deal of resistance and resentment from within and outside the academy. Ayesha Imam and Amina Mama point to the under-funding of gender related research (Imam and Mama, 1994).

Mbilinyi and Mbughuni (1991) demonstrate the existence of these struggles on the issue of affirmative action in the hiring of academic staff in institutions that are led and controlled by men. The remedy is to implement changes in institutional structures that eliminate inappropriate discrimination in institutional policies and practices. Among structural factors are discriminatory processes of appointment and promotion, male resistance to women in management positions, absence of policies and legislation to ensure participation of women and limited opportunities for leadership training (Kamau, 2000).

The institutional structures of power and governance must strive to develop frameworks of ethical paradigms and practices that engender justice to both men and women. These should be paradigms and practices that are capable of transforming students and staff of the African academy through the transmission of skills and practicable knowledge of necessary ethical expectations and practices. The notion of good governance must be examined and articulated beyond notions of transparency and accountability. Unfortunately, it is merely conceived in narrow terms of public accountability of public funds. The concept of good governance must seek to redefine regime structures and argue for policy environments and frameworks that enhance the creation and maintenance of an intellectually productive and self-renewing process in the academy. There is need to institute an interactive process in the academy that values integrity in leadership and consensus among social actors in the academy.

The need to create a balance between competing forces within the executive echelons of the university through job clarification is imperative. Ambiguous job descriptions should be avoided and so should duplication of roles that generate unnecessary clashes. Apart from consensus building mentioned hitherto, there is need to institute and sustain a spirit of teamwork, professionalism and encourage departmental autonomy as part of the decentralization initiatives which gives lower cadres of managers responsibility of decision-making both inside and outside the organisation.
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staff resulting in the formation of the academic staff union in Tanzania (Yahya-Othman, 2000:). Students were organized under the Dar Es Salaam University Students Organisation (DUSO) that fell under the jurisdiction of the University from the time of its inception in 1970 as a full university.

As members of Tanzania's first university, the onus fell on the academic staff to wage the struggle for more democratic governance of the University. The University Act of 1970 had made no provision for such an organisation and therefore the period from 1970 to 1980 was one of the most repressive for the staff and students of the University of Dar Es Salaam. To get round the University Act, in 1980 the first academic staff association in Tanzania was launched. The University of Dar Es Salaam Academic Staff Assembly (UDASA) was created as a Committee of Convocation which later attempted to register as an autonomous trade union organisation covering all Universities (Yahya-Othman, 2000).

The African Charter on Human and peoples' rights which was ratified in 1994 by 49 African states offered a framework of protection of academic freedom including freedom of expression, freedom of movement, the right to education and the freedom of association. Article 10 on Freedom of Association states that every individual shall have the right to free association provided that he abides by the law and that subject to the obligation of solidarity provided for in Article 29, no one may be compelled to join an association (Busia, 1995:). Is the right to form a trade union a special aspect of freedom of association?

Tanzania's biggest crisis came in 1978 with the dismissal and retirement in the public interest of six members of staff who were picked for their own leftist teaching and research triggering it. Like it was to become the case at the University of Nairobi over a long time, the University administration could offer no explanation for the forcible retirement of some academics. The University of Dar Es Salaam also refused to renew the contracts of several expatriates who were deemed to be instilling a foreign ideology among the students. Yet another big crisis occurred in 1990 when the whole country was shaken by a serious unrest at the University of Dar Es Salaam triggered by the student demands for democratic reforms that resulted in the closure of the University.
There was also a boycott of classes in 1992 over deteriorating economic conditions including poor living waves for academic staff, demand for greater freedom of speech at the Universities and open discussion on the cost-sharing measures. Similar repressive measures have taken place in Kenya. These culminated in the suppression of the Universities Academic Staff Union (UASU) in 1992.

UDASA in Tanzania resisted state punishment of three lecturers for being involved in the struggle for greater democracy. Following this protracted struggle, they were reinstated and this was followed in 1993 by the first ever strike by lecturers (Yahya-Othman, 2000). In Ivory Coast, from time to time politicians or police officers ordered the arrest of lecturers and demanded that they explain the content of their lectures or their stance on certain national issues. In the heydays of the one party state, intimidation was widespread (Degni Segui, 1995).

The integrity of the University depends on the exercise of academic freedom. At the University of Malawi, there was a conflict in 1995 between the Department of Theology and Religious Studies over a paper presented by a member of the Department that had led to vandalisation of the lecturer’s house by students. The lecturer concerned complained of hindrances by the University from attending conferences in violation of his academic freedom (Phiri, 2000:). Conflict resolution in matters concerning violation of academic freedom calls for a framework of justiciability. Aggrieved individuals or peoples can recourse to court in what I have described as confrontation in the form of courtroom litigation. Justiciability in this sense means that alleged violations of these rights by the state and its agencies can be taken to court. Denial of academic freedom can be the subject matter of litigation or judicial proceedings (Busia, Jr. 1995:).

The universities in Africa must institute management innovations that are democratic and respond creatively to internal deficiencies and pressures that may break off into violent conflict if not well handled. They need to undergo structural transformations and adopt creative ways of increasing and managing resources as well as adjust their management of human resources in order to deal effectively with all the conflicts arising in the academy. Key in these institutional transformations is the premium that should be attached to academic freedom. Degni-Segui says that academic
freedom is to Universities and academics what immunity is to members of parliament and diplomats. It contributes to guaranteeing a law-abiding state by protecting the university from political tribulations and by safeguarding the requisite serenity, objectivity and scientific nature of education and research, to enable them to fulfil their noble mission (Degni-Segui, 1995).

Principles relating to higher education ought to be promoted to a constitutional status rather than remain merely at the level of fundamental principles of education. The principles of freedom of association, freedom of teaching, freedom of conscience, the independence of higher education lecturers and the right of free communication of thought and opinions require conventional guarantee limits. They need to be raised to constitutional principles (Degni-Segui, 1995:). The right of teaching is closely related to the right of freedom of opinion. It is tantamount to the right of the lecturer to express himself/herself freely and give the contents he or she deems fit to various activities related to teaching per se and to the lecturer’s scientific activities.

Conclusion
The African University is a unique social domain of knowledge production and dissemination at which new paradigms of conflict resolution should be developed and tested. It also ought to be constituted as a domain of morality, which, even though its intellectual texturing cannot claim to be free from political, cultural and religious influences can provide an ideal setting for communicative and integrative partnership. There ought to be put in place an ethical mechanism of managing difference alongside checks and balances that restrain officers from abusing their power.

Effective conflict resolution mechanisms cannot be devised in the African University that is not ready to embrace change. There can be no consensus where there is no trust and commitment to defuse antagonism and reach an agreement between conflicting members of the academy. Trust is an attribute of moral integrity. It is earned over a period of time. A truly genuine effort at consensus building is an exercise in generating mutual trust and respect through a distributive or integrative process of bargain and negotiation. It is important to emphasize the primacy of morality in the harmonization of relationships and arbitration of conflicts in the
African Academy that arise out of interactions therein. Morality has a political and cultural context. Ethical concerns are an important part of how people view their relation with others. There can therefore be no meaningful conflict resolution where there is no moral authority and leadership integrity.

Moral authority, moral validity and moral obligation are concerns in addressing the question of legitimacy of authority. Leadership is an opportunity to exercise responsibility. Responsibility is the ability to respond to challenges. Such response calls for correct exercise of discretion. Authority is vested in various moral rules and practices used in determining matters, defining procedures of deciding and making appeals to precedent. Conflict resolution in higher education requires public morality. Higher education promotes values that are important in the public domain than any other civic avenue as noted before and that is why higher education leaders must have a certain configuration of positive character traits.

Public morality means the proper conduct of peace in public service, governed by certain fundamental and universally recognized ethics that form a code of conduct which is formulated in a manner that codifies respect of every employee and provides sanctions against abuse of office. It takes a strong willed person to tame unruly emotions of anger, bitterness and jealousy in decision-making. Higher education leaders need to be ethically grounded in a public morality. The University statutes must be all embracing as to provide for institutional arrangements that are defined in an administrative logic of efficiency that harmonises the centres of power in the institution to a common goal.

Education is a form of investment in human capital and therefore higher education to be streamlined in order to maximize on its returns. Public higher education is a mutual responsibility between government and citizens and therefore the latter have a right as taxpayers to be involved in decision-making processes that affect them. The specifics have to be worked out but the principle needs to be established. There should be some form of reciprocity whereby citizens obtain some reciprocal services in return for their tax contributions.
Every university should develop its unique but good organisational culture. Access to information should be part of this because an organisation with a poor flow of information will give room to a lot of suspicions and unfounded rumours. Foucault's dictum that Knowledge and Power operate in shared axes finds its organisational equivalent in the circulation of information. Restriction of access to information deprives staff of knowledge-ability about future trajectories of work. It also affects the sense of control that members of staff have over their work environments and capacity to contribute to decision-making. Leaders are the cornerstones in any organisation and they play a major role in shaping behaviour. There is need for the transformation of the institution of leadership.

Bibliography


