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# The Politics of Educational Borrowing: Reopening the Case of Achimota in British Ghana

GITA STEINER-KHAMSI AND HUBERT O. QUIST

Scholars in comparative education frequently cite the case of Achimota as an early example of an educational transfer in which an American model— industrial education for African Americans—was transferred to the African continent.<sup>1</sup> Achimota College, located north of Accra, the capital of the Gold Coast (colonial Ghana), was the first British educational institution in colonial Africa to implement the Hampton-Tuskegee model of industrial education. Borrowed specifically from the Hampton Institute in Virginia and the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, this model provided industrial education for African Americans living in the racially segregated South. Upon transfer from the United States to Africa, the model was relabeled “adapted education,” and it was focused on agricultural and manual training of Africans. This particular educational concept for “blacks” and “natives” was heatedly debated both in the United States and in African countries. In colonial Africa, supporters of adapted education kept emphasizing the need to “adapt” the education of natives to their rural environment and tribal practices rather than to European urban and modern culture. In contrast, opponents pointed at the imbedded racism underlying the concept that advocated non-academic and segregated education for Africans. For critics, adapted education was the educational pillar of the colonial order that suffered from the assumption that the education of natives had to be “adapted” to the limited intellectual abilities and needs of Africans.

Although Achimota first adopted this model of adapted education in the

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Philip Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965); Kenneth King, “James E. K. Aggrey: Collaborator, Nationalist, Pan-African,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 3, no. 3 (1969): 511–30; Edward H. Berman, “American Influence on African Education: The Role of the Phelps-Stokes Fund’s Education Commissions,” *Comparative Education Review* 15, no. 2 (1971): 132–45, and “Tuskegee-in-Africa,” *Journal of Negro Education* 48, no. 2 (1972): 99–112; Udo Bude, “The Adaptation Concept in British Colonial Education,” *Comparative Education Review* 19, no. 3 (1983): 341–55; Bob White, “Talk about School: Education and the Colonial Project in French and British Africa, 1860–1960,” *Comparative Education* 32, no. 1 (1996): 9–25; Panayiotis Persianis, “The British Colonial Education ‘Lending’ Policy in Cyprus, 1878–1960: An Intriguing Example of an Elusive ‘Adapted Education’ Policy,” *Comparative Education* 32, no. 1 (1996): 45–68.

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Gold Coast, the model was soon to have an even greater impact for the entire African continent. In 1925, this adapted education model became the ideological centerpiece of the British colonial White Paper entitled “Education Policy in British Tropical Africa.”<sup>2</sup> In other words, an American concept of education—industrial education for blacks in the segregated South—was borrowed for the education of Africans in British colonies. British colonial officers were not passive recipients or borrowers of an educational model that existed elsewhere, nor was it coincidental that they selected an American model for their colonies. The British policy of borrowing complemented active lending policies from the United States, particularly those of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, a New York-based philanthropic society whose mission it was to promote the education of natives and blacks both in the United States and abroad. Throughout the 1920s, the Phelps-Stokes Fund was instrumental in diffusing the American model of industrial education on the African continent. Convinced that what was good for African Americans must be a blessing for Africans, Jesse Thomas Jones, chairman of the Phelps-Stokes African Education Commission, wrote: “though village conditions in Africa differ in many respects from those in America where these activities [of Hampton and Tuskegee] had great influence on the improvement of rural life, the resemblances are sufficiently numerous and real to warrant the belief that the plans above described may be adapted to colonial conditions in Africa.”<sup>3</sup>

Released in 1925, “Education Policy in British Tropical Africa,” the new authoritative document for British colonial education, was almost an exact replica of the Phelps-Stokes report of 1922.<sup>4</sup> In line with the recommendations of the Phelps-Stokes African Education Commission, this White

<sup>2</sup> Advisory Committee on Native Education in the British Tropical African Dependencies, *Education Policy in British Tropical Africa* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1925).

<sup>3</sup> Jesse Thomas Jones, *Education in Africa: A Study of West, South and Equatorial Africa by the African Education Commission* (New York: Phelps-Stokes Fund, 1922), p. 141.

<sup>4</sup> The similarities between the two reports have been noted by other authors; Philip Foster (p. 156) notes the following: “So completely were the principles underlying the Phelps-Stokes report accepted by the British colonial authorities that the policy statement of the Advisory Committee paralleled in large degree the conclusions of the American organization.” Edward H. Berman (“Christian Missions in Africa,” in *African Reactions to Missionary Educations*, ed. Edward H. Berman [New York: Teachers College Press, 1975], pp. 1–53, quote on p. 17) comments on the White Paper (“Education Policy in British Tropical Africa”) issued in 1925: “To a large extent, this White Paper represented a reworking of the earlier Phelps-Stokes Fund’s reports. These reports, in turn, had been greatly influenced by the Hampton-Tuskegee philosophy of education.” Finally, William E. F. Ward, author of the official report, which was funded by the Nuffield Foundation and the Colonial Office, acknowledged that the British colonial government was influenced by Phelps-Stokes; see William E. F. Ward, *African Education: A Study of Educational Policy and Practice in British Tropical Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, produced for the Nuffield Foundation and the Colonial Office, 1953). Ward states: “In accepting and interpreting their responsibility for education, Colonial Governments were powerfully influenced by the two reports of the commission which the Phelps-Stokes sent to West Africa in 1920–21 and East and Central Africa in 1924. By that time, African exports were beginning to bring in some revenue, and under stimulus of this new though modest prosperity and of the Phelps-Stokes reports, the Governments of the Gold Coast and of Uganda established Achimota and Makerere colleges” (Ward, pp. 2–3).

Paper subscribed to adapted education, stating that “education should be adapted to the mentality, aptitudes, occupations and traditions of the various peoples.”<sup>5</sup> The Hampton Institute (Virginia) and the Tuskegee Institute (Alabama) used to be for African Americans in the southern states of the United States what Achimota College (Gold Coast) now became for Africans in Africa and other colonized peoples under British rule—monuments of adapted education that educated their students to accommodate to the limited opportunities of a racist environment. Students learned that they could only improve their social realities as blacks if they gradually worked their way up, cooperated with enlightened whites, and provided proof that they were deserving of being treated with dignity.<sup>6</sup> The educational philosophy of these three monuments of adapted education were firmly rooted in the belief that blacks should be trained for a life of manual labor and should stay away from studies that were too “bookish” and academic.

### Interpreting Borrowing as a Process of Externalization

Historical accounts of Achimota College as the first signpost of British colonial adapted education are numerous.<sup>7</sup> We are drawing from these accounts to shed light on educational transfer, a central research terrain of comparative education. As Gita Steiner-Khamsi has noted, comparativists have been particularly absorbed by the study of adapted education as an interesting case of global transfer processes:

[Adapted education] has been a recurrent theme of research on educational transfer because it constitutes a rare case in which the international transfer of a concept can be clearly mapped. The concept of adapted education was first developed around 1890 as part of the Hampton-Tuskegee model for the education of African Americans in the U.S. South, then transferred to the African continent in 1900, subsequently used in the 1930s for the education of indigenous peoples of the Pacific, and in its final stage in the 1950s diffused wherever the British colonial administration felt pressured to deal with the education of “backward” and “retarded” people, including Cyprus.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Advisory Committee on Native Education in the British Tropical African Dependencies, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> See a detailed description of the philosophy of accommodation formulated by Booker T. Washington, director of the Tuskegee Institute, in Booker T. Washington, *Character-Building* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1902); see also Louis R. Harlan, *Booker T. Washington: The Wizard of Tuskegee, 1901–15* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), and *Booker T. Washington in Perspective: Essays of Louis R. Harlan*, ed. Raymond W. Smock (Jackson and London: University Press of Mississippi, 1988); James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860–1935* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); August Meier and Elliott M. Rudwick, “‘Up from Slavery’: The Age of Accommodation,” in their *From Plantation to Ghetto: An Interpretive History of American Negroes* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1966), pp. 156–88; Ralph E. Luker, “Education for Service,” in his *The Social Gospel in Black and White: American Racial Reform, 1885–1912* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), pp. 125–58.

<sup>7</sup> The most comprehensive history of Achimota has been written by Francis Agbodeka, *Achimota in the National Setting* (Accra: Afram, 1977).

<sup>8</sup> Gita Steiner-Khamsi, “Transferring Education, Displacing Reforms,” in *Discourse Formations in Comparative Education*, ed. Jürgen Schriewer (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2000), pp. 153–87.

There are a variety of research agendas for examining the educational transfer process. Most comparativists are mainly interested in studying the international convergence of educational systems. They use their studies on education transfer to explain why educational systems in various parts of the world are becoming increasingly similar.<sup>9</sup> Their interest in global phenomena (e.g., the move toward decentralization or privatization of education) is by no means surprising given the transnational orientation of the comparative education field. In fact, we agree that no other field in educational research is more predisposed to study convergence, divergence, and globalization processes in education than comparative education.<sup>10</sup> In this study, we take this point one step further and propose that a comparative perspective is also indispensable for a better understanding of how local agents and stakeholders of educational reform encounter global forces. Whereas it is undisputed that a comparative perspective is necessary to understand transnational phenomena such as the diffusion of adapted education around the globe, it appears to be more difficult to make a case for using comparison in order to understand local realities. In contrast to comparative studies that intend to understand global processes by means of educational transfer research, our study uses a case of transnational transfer—adapted education in Achimota—to understand local political conditions in the Gold Coast in the 1920s. There is much to gain from analyzing the reasons policy makers view the import of a global concept such as adapted education as a solution to local problems.

In line with our earlier research, we also argue that research on educational transfer has tended to neglect agency. Research questions—who borrowed (whether wholesale, selective, or eclectic), with what purpose (whether political or economic), and which educational model or educational discourse—generate a different kind of research focus. As a corollary, once we acknowledge the importance of agency, our attention is drawn to examining the local context. Since borrowing always implies a decontextualization process in which a model, practice, or discourse is transplanted from its original context and applied to a new one, the process of recontextualization, “indigenization” or local adaptation, will become key for understanding the educational transfer process. Even more, understanding why and how a transferred model has been recontextualized tells us something about local conditions.<sup>11</sup> Hence, in contrast to other studies on educational trans-

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> See, e.g., Robert F. Arnove and Carlos A. Torres, eds., *Comparative Education: The Dialectic of the Global and the Local* (Lanham: Roman & Littlefield, 1999).

<sup>11</sup> In previous studies using the same method of inquiry, Steiner-Khamsi analyzed, e.g., why German educational researchers selectively borrowed certain arguments from the American academic debates on multiculturalism of the early nineties and dropped other arguments that did not suit their local context; see Gita Steiner-Khamsi, “Universalismus vor Partikularismus? Gleichheit vor Differenz?” in *Das Fremde in der Gesellschaft: Migration, Ethnizität und Staat*, ed. H. Wicker, J. Alber, C. Bolzman, R. Fibbi, K. Imhof, and

fer, this study intends to examine global processes—the diffusion of adapted education in the British colonial empire—in order to understand local realities.

Bearing the local context in mind, this study examines a baffling transfer action: the borrowing of the Hampton-Tuskegee model of industrial education by the colonial government of the Gold Coast at a time when the model was neither new to the Gold Coast (similar models already existed) nor politically uncontested in the United States and Africa. We will consider how and why this somewhat unlikely transfer occurred. The following two specific strands within comparative education research have inspired our analytical perspective.

First, we reopen this classic case of educational transfer and examine Achimota from a new perspective—the perspective of the politics of borrowing. Leading comparativists and educational researchers, such as David Halpin, Barry Troyna, David Philips, and others, have demanded that research on educational transfer also include a careful analysis of the political agenda underlying the transfer of educational models.<sup>12</sup> Halpin and Troyna have studied the increased transatlantic transfer of educational models between the United States and Great Britain, particularly with regard to models of decentralization and site-based management. They point to an interesting phenomenon: the borrowing of educational policies from other educational systems that, in the original context, were seen as failures, ineffective, or at least highly contested.<sup>13</sup> Philips, in turn, gauges the benefits of a transfer for the borrower and the lender systems and helps us to understand what lending systems gain from educational export and transfer.<sup>14</sup>

Whereas this first strand of research leads us to pay attention to the politics of borrowing, a second strand, “externalization,” provides us with an interpretative framework for analyzing the politics of borrowing. According to this group of theories, borrowing can be seen as a means to decontextualize and deterritorialize contested educational reforms. When policy makers fail to receive sufficient political support, or anticipate a lack thereof for carrying through a contested reform, they borrow from abroad to gain le-

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A. Wimmer (Zürich: Seismo, 1996), pp. 353–72, and “Transnationalität und kulturelle Staatsbürgerschaft,” in *Jahrbuch für Pädagogik 1996: Pädagogik in multikulturellen Gesellschaften*, ed., G. Auernheimer and P. Gstettner (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1996), pp. 263–84; Gita Steiner-Khamisi and Carol A. Spreen, “Oppositional and Relational Identity: A Comparative Perspective,” in *Anti-Racist Work with Young People*, ed. Anna Aluffi-Pentini and Walter Lorenz (Lyme Regis: Russell House, 1996), pp. 26–46.

<sup>12</sup> David Halpin and Barry Troyna, “The Politics of Educational Borrowing,” *Comparative Education* 31, no. 3 (1995): 303–10; David Philips, “Borrowing Educational Policy,” in *Something Borrowed? Something Learned? The Transatlantic Market in Education and Training Reform*, ed. D. Finegold, L. McFarland, and W. Richardson (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1993), pp. 13–19. See David B. Robertson and Jerold L. Waltman, “The Politics of Policy Borrowing,” in Finegold, McFarland, and Richardson, eds. For a historical analysis, see Barbara A. Yates, “Comparative Education and the Third World: The Nineteenth Century Revisited,” *Comparative Education Review* 28, no. 4 (1984): 533–49.

<sup>13</sup> Halpin and Troyna.

<sup>14</sup> Philips, p. 16.

gitimacy at home. “Externalization,” that is, referring to existing models outside the educational system and appropriating the language that goes along with these borrowed models, allows policy makers to make a case for contested reforms in their own system. Borrowing, thus, reflects issues of political legitimacy within a system. In comparative education research, Jürgen Schriewer has repeatedly pointed to this particular function of borrowing, building on Niklas Luhmann’s theory of self-referential systems. He links Luhmann’s theory to ongoing debates on educational transfer in comparative education by pointing out how references to “examples abroad” or to “lessons” learned from abroad are used as effective means to externalize and justify the need for action and reform at home.<sup>15</sup> According to Luhmann, a German sociologist of knowledge, education is predisposed to be socially contested, and, therefore, is under constant pressure to continuously reestablish credibility and legitimization by referring to “authorities” inside and outside the educational system. In most instances, the educational system refers to practices and beliefs that already exist in the system, and, thus, reproduces itself. Self-referencing works well because the knowledge of what constitutes (good) education is a central part of the educational system. It is important to bear in mind that, in German comparative education research, there is a relatively long-standing tradition of scrutinizing “the comparative advantage” or “das internationale Argument,” that is, to making references to models abroad.<sup>16</sup>

### The Case

Achimota was established initially in 1924 as the Prince of Wales College and more fully in 1927 as Achimota College (presently Achimota

<sup>15</sup> For a description of the theory of externalization, see Jürgen Schriewer, “The Method of Comparison and the Need for Externalization: Methodological Criteria and Sociological Concepts,” in *Theories and Methods in Comparative Education*, ed. Jürgen Schriewer in cooperation with Brian Holmes (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1990), pp. 25–83; Jürgen Schriewer, Jürgen Henze, Jürgen Wichmann, Peter Knost, Susanna Barucha, and Jörn Taubert, “Konstruktion von Internationalität: Referenzhorizonte pädagogischen Wissens im Wandel gesellschaftlicher Systeme (Spanien, Sowjetunion/Russland, China),” in *Gesellschaft im Vergleich*, ed. H. Kaelble and J. Schriewer (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1988), pp. 151–258. For a description of the theory of self-referential systems, see Niklas Luhmann, *Essays on Self-Reference* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); Niklas Luhmann and Klaus E. Schorr, *Reflexionsprobleme im Erziehungssystem* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1979); Karl Eberhard Schorr, “Das Verstehensdefizit der Erziehung und die Pädagogik,” in *Zwischen Intransparenz und Verstehen: Fragen an die Pädagogik*, ed. N. Luhmann and K. E. Schorr (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1986), pp. 11–39.

<sup>16</sup> In 1975, e.g., Bern Zymek analyzed how German journals of education used, in the period 1871–1952, comparison to other educational systems as a means to defend and gain support for their own version of Progressive Education reform in Germany. In 1998, Philip Gonon used a similar framework for explaining why Swiss reformers of postsecondary schools have frequently referred to British reforms. See Bernhard Zymek, *Das Ausland als Argument in der pädagogischen Reformdiskussion: Schulpolitische Rechtfertigung, Auslandspropaganda, internationale Verständigung und Ansätze zu einer Vergleichenden Erziehungswissenschaft in der internationalen Berichterstattung deutscher pädagogischer Zeitschriften, 1871–1952* (Ratingen: Henn, 1975); Philip Gonon, *Das internationale Argument in der Bildungsreform: Die Rolle internationaler Bezüge in den bildungspolitischen Debatten zur schweizerischen Berufsbildung und zur englischen Reform der Sekundarstufe II* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1998).

School).<sup>17</sup> As the brainchild of Governor Frederick Gordon Guggisberg (1919–27), the most progressive of all the colonial governors of the Gold Coast (colonial Ghana), Achimota was to be established with a sum of £607,000 as part of a 10-year development plan (1920–30). This amount constituted over 85 percent of the proposed education development expenditure during the decade, and the magnitude of the public expenditure reflected the government’s policy of creating an elite institution that would, supposedly, respond to the educational and industrial needs of the Gold Coast.<sup>18</sup>

Guggisberg’s initial idea was to build on Gold Coast soil “the University which the National Congress of British West Africa hoped for.”<sup>19</sup> However, considering that such a university would be long in coming, the immediate plan became the building of a first-class secondary school that would be both similar and different from what the missionaries had already initiated at Cape Coast in the Central Region. There were, in particular, two such missionary secondary schools for boys that were highly regarded for their academic standards: Mfantsipim School, founded by the Wesleyan Methodists in 1876, and Adisadel College, initiated by the Anglicans in 1910. Whereas Mfantsipim and Adisadel represented the exemplary elite education of the missionaries, Achimota was designed to become the colonial government’s masterpiece. For years, Mfantsipim at Cape Coast and Achimota in Accra were in competition with each other, pulling in different directions and trying to influence newly opening secondary schools to replicate their particular models of education.<sup>20</sup> Mfantsipim stood for solid academic education, whereas Achimota built a reputation for emphasizing manual labor and agricultural education.

Achimota was intended as a showcase of what education in the Gold Coast and the rest of colonial Africa should become. The influence of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, as well as the immensity of resources available to Achimota, is best explained by Mabel Carney. Upon visiting in 1926, Carney, professor of rural education at Teachers College, Columbia University, reported to her “students and friends” the following activities in the Gold Coast:

Crowning all other educational efforts both in the Gold Coast and throughout West Africa is the forthcoming noted institution of Achimota. Here the Government is spending \$2,500,000 in the development of a Native college and training center

<sup>17</sup> *Achimota* is a word from the Ga, an African ethnic and linguistic group, that means “do not speak the unspeakable.” It may also be translated as “do not utter the unpardonable oath.” According to Agbodeka (n. 7 above), p. 1, it translates literally as “speak no name.”

<sup>18</sup> Foster (n. 1 above), p. 166.

<sup>19</sup> Cited in William E. F. Ward, “The Early Days of Achimota,” *West African Journal of Education* 9, no. 3 (1965): 125–26. The National Congress of British West Africa was a protonationalist movement that was composed of the educated elite in British colonial West Africa. Its leadership included well-known Gold Coast intellectuals, such as John Mensah Sarbah and J. E. Casely-Hayford, who were also founders of Mfantsipim School at Cape Coast in the Gold Coast.

<sup>20</sup> See Agbodeka, p. 138.

somewhat similar to our own Hampton and Tuskegee . . . and here also as vice-principal is our former Columbia student, Dr. J. E. K. Aggrey, a native African and member of the Fanti tribe, who was also member of the two Educational Commissions to Africa headed by Dr. Thomas Jesse Jones of the Phelps-Stokes Fund. The great influence of these Commissions [the two Educational Commissions to Africa in 1920–21 and 1924 that were headed by Dr. Thomas Jesse Jones of the Phelps-Stokes Fund] . . . is beyond measure. Everywhere we have been, Governors, schoolmen, missionaries, and all others speak with deep appreciation of the vast service Dr. Jones has rendered Africa and remember him affectionately for his genial personality, keen insight, and abundant humor.<sup>21</sup>

Guggisberg planned for a comprehensive educational institution that would range from kindergarten to the university level and consist of a first-rate educational research center in “British Tropical Africa” (now sub-Saharan Africa). In addition, the colonial government moved the Accra Training College to Achimota, and the college became the only (non-missionary) institution where teacher education was taught in the Gold Coast. Guggisberg’s insistence that the country’s traditions and heritage be the basis of education at Achimota was also informed by the school’s metropolitan location, where residents widely believed that Europeanization had seriously shaken Africa’s heritage and, in part, destroyed their spiritual and social foundations of life.<sup>22</sup>

Once borrowed from the United States, adapted education was implemented in ways that reflected a compromise. The borrowed model was recontextualized, locally modified, and indigenized in an attempt to appease opponents of a strictly agricultural model of education. The Achimota model, thus, was made up of two very different types: on the one hand, the English “public” school model, and on the other, the Hampton-Tuskegee model from the post-Civil War Reconstruction period in the U.S. South. The former provided an elitist, academic “grammar” education for the training of the “gentleman” scholar and politician of England. This model, which was highly valued by the British and Gold Coast educated elite, was at the heart of the British educational system, accounting for the finest secondary school graduates, who won admission to Oxford and Cambridge. Achimota was expected to replicate this model, while also integrating the Hampton-Tuskegee approach, which was purportedly “adapted” to the environment of the Gold Coast. The latter, modeled after its U.S. prototypes, promoted the Africanization of the curriculum and adaptation to the rural environment, emphasizing manual labor and agriculture.

Achimota sought to integrate these two very distinct and opposing models, which created tension and contradiction at the very heart of the institu-

<sup>21</sup> Mabel Carney, “The West Coast of Africa,” in *African Letters* (New York: privately printed, 1924), in Special Collections, Columbia University, Teachers College, Milbank Memorial Library.

<sup>22</sup> See Agbodeka, pp. 32–33.

tion. The curriculum at Achimota was comprehensive, covering all levels of education. At the primary level, it included English, history, geography, civics, arithmetic, scripture, nature study, music, woodwork, art, and physical training. The secondary curriculum included Christian character-building and leadership-training, with a strong emphasis on agriculture, African history, geography, botany (which stressed the study and classification of Gold Coast plants), scripture, English, mathematics, science, music, art, physical education, and citizenship education.<sup>23</sup> And, finally, the university curriculum (intermediate degree level) was made up of history, English, the classics, and the sciences (with an emphasis on engineering). In promoting agriculture and industrial education, considered critical to the “new” adaptationist training at Achimota, students at all levels, including those in teacher education, were taught to appreciate manual labor. Raymond Buell notes: “the students [may] be given a special training, so that instead of flocking into the towns they may go back to their villages, as chiefs, teachers, housewives, farmers, medical assistants and artisans.”<sup>24</sup>

The Gold Coast educated elite strongly criticized Achimota for training generations of individuals to remain in the rural areas forever, that is, to be prepared for a life of servitude to the colonial master and for confinement to tribal life. This criticism was nourished by the many episodes of tribal practices at Achimota. Achimota’s reputation for artificially revitalizing tribal practices that had become meaningless for the community was based on only a few tribal practices that the college supposedly promoted to excess. For example, a great object of ridicule at Achimota was the “college yell” that teacher education students performed. Based on the Asante war cry, this practice had been introduced into Achimota by the relocated students of the former Accra Training College (now Achimota Teacher Training College). The revival of this ritual was promoted by two European missionaries who were both students of the exotic and enthusiasts of African art, craft, dress, custom, and tradition.<sup>25</sup> There was also word that Achimota was overdoing the teaching of African art, tribal dancing, and drumming, culminating on Saturday evenings in dramatic performances of teacher education students that “took the form chiefly of buffoonery in one or other of the local languages.”<sup>26</sup> Thus, Achimota was criticized for revitalizing meaningless tribal practices that resonated with the colonizer’s fantasies about the idyll of savage life.

The study of African music and drama attracted by far the greatest criti-

<sup>23</sup> See Foster, pp. 166–67; Agbodeka, pp. 57–62; 66–73; and Hubert O. Quist, “Secondary Education and Nation-Building: A Study of Ghana, 1951–91” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1999), pp. 89–90.

<sup>24</sup> Raymond Buell, *The Native Problem in Africa* (New York: Macmillan, 1928), 2:848; this quotation also appears in Foster, p. 166.

<sup>25</sup> Agbodeka (n. 7 above), p. 55.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 177.

cism, since it fueled the suspicion that adapted education at Achimota meant, in reality, the “backward” orientation of rural and tribal adaptation and, hence, not a “forward” oriented, cultural adaptation that would embrace national pride, urbanization, and modernization. The leading newspaper, the *Gold Coast Leader*, joined the criticism of educated Africans, pointing out that adaptationist education equaled inferior education for Africans: “We have maintained all along that there cannot be one sort of education for the European, and another sort for the African.”<sup>27</sup> The missionaries, in turn, criticized the teaching of tribal drumming and dancing because such practices undermined their attempts to eradicate native, pagan practices. Christian converts at Achimota were “getting mixed up” with pagan practices that missionaries worked very hard to get rid of.<sup>28</sup>

Despite these criticisms, the achievements of Achimota with regard to the Africanization of the curriculum were many. For example, the college managed to have the Gold Coast languages, namely, Ga, Twi, Fante, and Ewe, used as mediums of instruction at the kindergarten and lower primary levels. The administrators at Achimota also succeeded in having these local languages officially recognized for matriculation at a British university.<sup>29</sup> This meant that Cambridge, Oxford, the University of London, and other prestigious universities in Great Britain did not require West African applicants to know a language other than English. Blinded by their suspicion that Achimota was merely reproducing separate and unequal education for Africans, opponents seemed to have lost sight of the many traditional European practices and “bookish” achievements that were instituted at Achimota. For example, the college maintained successful cricket and (European) football teams that would regularly beat other prestigious secondary schools, such as Mfantsipim and Adisadel. The library accumulated an impressive 10,000 volumes by 1935 and 16,000 volumes by 1945.<sup>30</sup>

Achimota was constantly struggling for the Africanization of its staff. During its first 3 years of operation, there were only two African staff members: one African junior teacher and James Kwegyir Aggrey, officially only ranked as an assistant vice-principal but acting as vice-principal. The situation did not improve much in the next few years.<sup>31</sup>

Pressed by everyone except the colonial government in the Gold Coast and the Phelps-Stokes Fund in the United States, Achimota increasingly downplayed its adaptationist component and upgraded the “grammar” com-

<sup>27</sup> *Gold Coast Leader*, February 16, 1924.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Agbodeka, p. 60, points out that Achimota, starting in 1934, also succeeded in having agriculture count toward the foreign language requirements at British universities.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>31</sup> Agbodeka, p. 71, specifies the further development: “By December 1930, there were only nine African junior staff members (mostly in the administration) and one senior staff member out of a total staff strength of 50.”

ponent. Finally, in the late 1930s and the 40s, Achimota lost the battle against its major competitor, Mfantsipim, the missionary-run secondary school. The newly opened secondary schools in British Ghana—Accra Academy, Wesley Grammar School, Ghana National School, Fijai Secondary School, and Tamale Secondary School—preferred to adopt the academically oriented constitution of the Mfantsipim School Committee (approved in 1934) rather than the mixed grammar/adaptationist approach that Achimota was advocating. By 1951, the beginning of Ghanaian independence struggles, Achimota's curriculum was not much different from that of its competitors, Mfantsipim, Adisadel, and other secondary schools. Achimota dropped rural adaptation and replaced it with cultural adaptation, which promoted the knowledge of African languages, history, and the arts.

In assessing Achimota's curriculum, Philip Foster states: "in practice, the 'African' elements of the curriculum were far less evident as the school developed; by the end of the colonial period the curriculum of the school was virtually indistinguishable from that of its Gold Coast and English counterparts [Mfantsipim and Adisadel]." <sup>32</sup> Consequently, Foster concludes: "Achimota has remained one of the myths of Gold Coast (Ghanaian) education; it was no more a school rooted in African conditions than were Mfantsipim and the other secondary schools (that were church-mission founded); rather it was a secondary institution modeled on English lines but with vastly superior resources." <sup>33</sup> In the following section, we will explore the function of this myth and attempt to explain why the colonial government had a political interest in presenting Achimota as a completely new model in British Ghana.

#### **The Education Governor, the Scientific Voice, and the Go-Between**

In our attempt to reconstruct the borrowing process, we have come across several agents of the transfer, in which there seem to have been three key players: Guggisberg, Jones, and Aggrey. These three men—a colonial governor, an American sociologist and expert on race relations, and a Gold Coast educator trained in the United States—had taken on leading roles in facilitating the transfer of adapted education from the United States to the Gold Coast.

The Canadian-born Guggisberg, governor of the Gold Coast from 1919 to 1927, modeled Achimota after an English boarding school but provided a curriculum that also "paid scrupulous [sic] attention to African languages and crafts and in particular to music, dancing and drumming." <sup>34</sup> Of all the

<sup>32</sup> Foster (n. 1 above), p. 168.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 168.

<sup>34</sup> Cited in M. E. Sinclair, "Education, Relevance and the Community: A First Look at the History of Attempts to Introduce Productive Work into the Primary School Curriculum," in *Education and Community in Africa*, ed. Kenneth King (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, Centre of African Studies, 1976), p. 69.

schools that Guggisberg established in his short period of administration, Achimota was to remain the most prestigious monument of adapted education. However, the smaller schools that Guggisberg built, including a model school in the neglected northern territories, as well as several trade schools for boys, adopted a “relevant” education concept that would form the character of the student by emphasizing manual labor, hand-and-eye-training, and agricultural education. The trade schools for boys, for example, included a dual vocational track that required students to attend school one-third of the time, while working as agricultural apprentices the remaining two-thirds of the time. Guggisberg appeared determined to leave a legacy as the “Education Governor,” and he appointed education committees that would evaluate existing provisions and serve as advisors on the implementation of the comprehensive “education principles” that he periodically enunciated.<sup>35</sup> On February 1925, he announced his Sixteen Education Principles to the Legislative Council, which included character education, provision of secondary and university education, equal coeducational opportunities for boys and girls, and high quality teacher training that would “end miseducation in the schools and its denationalizing effects.”<sup>36</sup>

Guggisberg’s active role in education also included establishing what would today be called an “educational exchange program” with the United States. Guggisberg’s conviction that the Hampton-Tuskegee model, which was developed for African Americans in the rural and racially segregated U.S. South, was applicable to Africans under colonial conditions was further reinforced by his contact with the Phelps-Stokes Commission. In early 1921, he met with the members of the commission, among them Jones, chairman of the commission, and Aggrey, later vice-principal of Achimota, and accompanied them on the boat back to West Africa.<sup>37</sup>

When asked to chair the Phelps-Stokes Commission, Jones had completed a degree in theology and another in sociology (Ph.D., Columbia University); published several articles, as well as two volumes on black education; worked for 7 years as the research director at the Hampton Institute; and served for 3 years as a principal in a school in New York. In 1920, Jones suggested that a group of Africans from the Gold Coast be sent for a year to

<sup>35</sup> In 1921, Guggisberg established the first Educationalist Committee a year after he took office, with the mandate “to investigate educational efforts in the Gold Coast, their success and failure, with reasons therefor[e]” (see E. E. Ekuban, “Half a Century of Education in Ghana, 1920–70,” *Faculty of Education Bulletin* 4, no. 1 [1973]: 22–27; also cited in Agbodeka [n. 7 above], p. 15).

<sup>36</sup> “Guggisberg’s Annual Address, 3 February 1925,” in Minutes of the Legislative Council and Sessional Paper, Session 1925–26, Accra, 3 April 1925, Archival Documents and Manuscripts 14/1/122, Ghana National Archives, George Padmore Research Library, Accra, Ghana; this is cited in Agbodeka, p. 18.

<sup>37</sup> Only Sinclair (p. 69) refers to Guggisberg’s travels back by boat with members of the First Phelps-Stokes Commission; see Sinclair, p. 69. We have also found a reference in the *Tuskegee Messenger* (“British Colonial Governor to Study Tuskegee Method” [15 October 1927]) to Guggisberg’s visit to Tuskegee, which was scheduled for October 18–20, 1927.

the United States to observe and experience the Hampton and Tuskegee Institutes. He also offered to organize the program for British colonial administrators, among them the director of education of the Gold Coast who, in 1922, studied there and reported on the “educational adaptations” offered to African Americans and Native Americans at Hampton and Tuskegee.<sup>38</sup> His “scientific” credibility as an expert on race relations and his firm Christian beliefs allowed him to gain the support of both the Baptist Foreign Missionary Society and the Phelps-Stokes Fund, who assigned him as chair of the two Phelps-Stokes commissions that examined and reported on education in Africa. The first commission toured West Africa and Southern Africa (1920–21), and the second commission visited Eastern, Central, and Southern Africa (1924).<sup>39</sup> Prior to each study tour, the members of the commission met with representatives of the Colonial Office, British missionaries, and philanthropic societies in London. Jones and Aggrey constituted the core of both commissions. The other members of the first commission were replaced upon the formation of the second commission, which included a representative of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) and a member of the newly formed “British Advisory Committee on Education in Tropical Africa.” Thus, the agencies of transfer—American philanthropy, the British Colonial Office, and Christian missions—participated in and funded the second expedition of the Phelps-Stokes Commission.<sup>40</sup> Given the close cooperation between these three institutions, it is not surprising that the influence of these two Phelps-Stokes Commissions on British colonial education policy were, as Carney notes in her *Africa Letters*, “beyond measure.”<sup>41</sup>

The Welsh-American Jones was, for the white British and Americans, what the Gold Coast native, Aggrey, was for African Americans and Africans: a promoter of agricultural and technical education for blacks, a bridge between whites and blacks, and a moral voice. As close friends, Jones and Aggrey—one white and the other black—crossed the racial boundaries of their time and bonded over their mutual enthusiasm and determination in exporting the Hampton-Tuskegee model to Africa. When it came to negotiating with colonial officers, Jones led the way with Aggrey in the back seat. In turn, when it came to appeasing the growing number of infuriated Afri-

<sup>38</sup> Jesse Jones to Governor Gordon Guggisberg, November 2, 1920, Archives of the Conference of Missionary Societies in Great Britain and Ireland, West Africa General file, box 219, Edinburgh House, London; this is cited in Forster, p. 159, and in Agbodeka, p. 15.

<sup>39</sup> The list of countries visited during the first visit included Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon, Congo, Angola, and South Africa. The second commission visited Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Mozambique, Rhodesia, and South Africa.

<sup>40</sup> See Sinclair. For the first commission, the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society paid for travel expenses, while the Phelps-Stokes Fund covered all other incidental expenses. The expenses for the second commission were shared by the Phelps-Stokes Fund, the Church Missionary Society, and the Colonial Office; see Sinclair; Edwin W. Smith, *Aggrey of Africa: A Study in Black and White* (1929; reprint, Freeport and New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1971).

<sup>41</sup> Carney (n. 21 above), p. 3.

cans who perceived adapted education to be “a Machiavellian effort to palm off inferior education upon Africans” that white people would never have tolerated for themselves, Aggrey took the lead.<sup>42</sup> Aggrey perceived himself to be the mediator between the different races, someone who introduced “America to Africa and Africa to America.”<sup>43</sup> He felt that “to produce a melody one has to play both black and white keys of the piano so one needs Black and White cooperation to achieve proper development.”<sup>44</sup> Aggrey was, for Europeans, the exemplar of the “good African,” while for skeptical Africans, he was the model of the “black European.” As a go-between playing the tune of racial harmony, he believed that communication and cooperation between the two “races” would automatically diminish racism and discrimination, which for Aggrey, were mere products of “misunderstanding.”<sup>45</sup>

During the second expedition of the Phelps-Stokes Commission, in Eastern, Central, and Southern Africa, Aggrey reportedly gave 30 to 40 public speeches to African and European audiences, explaining and clarifying adapted education and its “misunderstandings.” The missionaries in Kenya were so profoundly taken by his accommodating words and his clarification of the “misunderstandings” that they told journalists, “it would be worthwhile for the white people to keep Dr. Aggrey permanently in Kenya to explain the white people to the natives!”<sup>46</sup> He also won the heart of the colonial governor of Kenya, who felt that Aggrey’s “constructive statesmanship in explaining Europeans to natives and natives to Europeans” was more effective than a regiment of British soldiers.<sup>47</sup> The admiration was by all means mutual. Aggrey, however, saved his highest praise for Governor Guggisberg, whom he regarded as the patron of native education.<sup>48</sup>

Occasionally, Aggrey managed to soothe the serious concerns of educated Africans who believed that the imported Hampton-Tuskegee model served the interests of the colonial economy by producing accommodating peasants and workers rather than serve the welfare of the individual African who sought a good education and a decent income.<sup>49</sup> According to Edwin

<sup>42</sup> Cited in E. Smith, p. 237.

<sup>43</sup> James E. K. Aggrey to C. G. Wooson, 13 July 1927; Wooson Papers, box 6. acc. 3579, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; cited in Kenneth King, “James E. K. Aggrey: Collaborator, Nationalist, Pan-African,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 3, no. 3 (1969): 521.

<sup>44</sup> James E. K. Aggrey, quoted in Agbodeka, p. 29.

<sup>45</sup> King, p. 521.

<sup>46</sup> *East African Standard*, 1 March 1924, Weekly edition, quoted in King, p. 521.

<sup>47</sup> Governor Robert Coryndon, quoted in Jesse Thomas Jones, “Solving the Race Problem in Africa,” B.B.C. Address of 19 July 1931; this quotation is cited in King, pp. 521–22.

<sup>48</sup> For example, Kwegyir Aggrey and his wife Abna Azalea named their fourth child, born in 1926, after the governor, Orison Rudolf Guggisberg; see E. Smith, p. 72.

<sup>49</sup> Philip Foster (n. 1 above) is to be credited for repeatedly pointing at this fundamental contradiction that the Phelps-Stokes Commissions and the Advisory Board on Native Education in the British Tropical African Dependencies consistently overlooked. What was good for the colonial economy (having a regiment of content farmers and manual laborers) was not beneficial to the individual’s social mobility and was, therefore, resisted.

Smith, Aggrey managed, for example, to win the hearts of the students of Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone, the fortress of academic education in West Africa, by starting his speech with Latin proverbs and then slowly transitioning to the importance of agricultural education. His presentation appealed to a sense of pride in what Africa had to offer the world: love for the soil and moral values. His speech had such an impact that, after his speech, students hastened to assure him that they, too, were the children of farmers.<sup>50</sup>

As the only African on the Phelps-Stokes Commissions, Aggrey became the spokesperson and public relations officer who dealt with the African critics of agricultural and technical education. Publicly, adapted education came to be seen as a segregationist and racist policy, even before Achimota officially opened the gates. For example, in 1926, *The Gold Coast Leader* published editorial notes that attacked the Phelps-Stokes Commission based on W. E. B. DuBois's assessment of the Hampton-Tuskegee model.<sup>51</sup> DuBois, a leading African American intellectual, challenged the model, explaining: "The white world wants the black world to study 'agriculture.' It is not only easier to lynch Negroes and keep them in ignorance and peonage in country districts, but it is also easier to cheat them out of a decent income."<sup>52</sup> This critique of the Hampton-Tuskegee model could not have come at a worse time: it was published 5 months prior to Achimota's official opening.

### The Puzzle

Having shed light on the actual process of transfer of the Hampton-Tuskegee model from the United States to Africa, we now turn our attention to exploring the question of why the colonial government used an "international reference," that is, borrowed a model from abroad and from the United States in particular. The answer is a key to understanding the politics of borrowing. Not only was this particular model already highly contested and internationally challenged, but there was also the option of "domestic references," since there already existed agricultural and manual education models in the Gold Coast itself. These models could have been borrowed, more efficiently and cost-effectively, from missionaries already stationed on the Gold Coast.

At this point, we need to address two important questions that Philip Foster brought to our attention: Was the colonial administration of the Gold Coast in a position to know that the Hampton-Tuskegee model was heatedly

<sup>50</sup> E. Smith (n. 40 above), pp. 150–51

<sup>51</sup> W. E. B. DuBois, *The Education of Black People: Ten Critiques, 1906–1960*, ed. Herbert Aptheker (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1973); see also August Meier, *Negro Thought in America, 1880–1915: Racial Ideologies in the Age of Booker T. Washington* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963), esp. Meier's chapter "The Paradox of W. E. B. DuBois" (pp. 190–206) that deals with DuBois's critique of Hampton and Tuskegee.

<sup>52</sup> Quoted in E. Smith, p. 255.

debated among African-American leaders in the United States (especially between Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. DuBois), and did the colonial administration really care that this particular educational model had been resisted in other colonies of the British empire? These two issues demand clarification, given the racial segregation in the United States and the relative autonomy of British colonial administrators.

First, every educational reform is contested, supported and opposed by other interest groups. Educational reforms *sui generis* are contested whether they are being transferred or not. Therefore, the question of whether the borrowed model was contested in the original context is redundant. Instead, for educational transfer research, it becomes important to understand why exactly the reform was contested in its original context and how the borrowers dealt with the criticism of the original model by presenting the borrowed model as a model that was “different” and “better” than the original. Our research interest, in this case, is to understand local legitimation strategies that justified the import of an educational reform that had been previously contested abroad.

Second, since the turn of the twentieth century, Booker T. Washington, director of the Tuskegee Institute, promoted the export of the Hampton-Tuskegee model to British Africa. The following examples document that the emphasis on agricultural and manual education did not resonate well with educated elites in other African countries, especially when it was applied to secondary education. In the previous section, we have also illustrated the close contact between the colonial government, Tuskegee, and the Phelps-Stokes Fund. It is, therefore, very likely that the colonial administration of the Gold Coast was well aware of the advantages and disadvantages of adapted education when it introduced the Hampton-Tuskegee model in colonial Ghana.

It is important to note that the British imperial trade of the adaptationist model from the United States was well on its way long before Achimota was even conceived. There had been numerous “exchange visits” between African countries and the Hampton and Tuskegee Institutes in the United States, beginning as early as 1900. Booker T. Washington actively promoted this kind of educational exchange. In 1900, he sent three Tuskegee graduates and one faculty member to a private German company in Togoland (colonial Togo) to help “increase agricultural productivity by utilizing Tuskegee’s methods.”<sup>53</sup> In 1909, he expressed excitement about the idea of founding a “Tuskegee-in-Africa,” which would be built in Liberia with the help of the Phelps-Stokes Fund.<sup>54</sup> It took the Phelps-Stokes Fund almost an-

<sup>53</sup> Louis R. Harlan, “Booker T. Washington and the White Man’s Burden,” *American Historical Review* 61 (1966): 442, reprinted in Harlan, *Booker T. Washington*, pp. 68–97.

<sup>54</sup> Booker T. Washington to Olivia Egleston Phelps-Stokes, December 3, 1909, Phelps-Stokes Fund, New York, file S-0; this is cited in Berman, “Tuskegee in Africa” (n. 1 above), p. 99. A detailed account of

other 20 years to open the Liberian “Booker T. Washington Agricultural and Industrial Institute” in 1928.

However, the opening of the Booker T. Washington Institute in Liberia, like that in Achimota in the Gold Coast and other Tuskegee clones in Africa and other parts of the British colonial empire, was accompanied by storms of protests before and after the gates officially opened. In Liberia, for example, President Barclay criticized the “American friends” who “appear to look upon Liberia as they would upon a Negro community in the southern United States.”<sup>55</sup> The conflict over the Booker T. Washington Institute became so protracted that it required the active involvement of the United States State Department and the Liberian government. In Kenya and Nigeria, the official adapted education policy was simply ignored by local groups.<sup>56</sup> In southern Nigeria, the people urged the missions to retain the traditional 8-year school attendance period and a curriculum based on academic subjects rather than manual and agricultural skills. Even more, in Lagos, the downgrading of Yaba Higher College to an adaptationist curriculum led to student protests and the formation of the political Lagos Youth Movement.<sup>57</sup>

In British Ghana, the protests levied by the educated Gold Coast elite against Achimota were intense, even though the college really only offered a soft version of adapted education that combined agricultural and manual education, the study of African languages and culture, and “grammar”-type education. Nevertheless, the protestors perceived Achimota to be a wolf in sheep’s clothing, a model that was engineered by the American Phelps-Stokes Foundation, accommodating to paternalistic and prejudiced whites and holding the African community back.<sup>58</sup> Resenting the channeling of educational expenditures to Achimota, which reduced financial support (“grants in aids”) to the academically oriented secondary schools in the Gold Coast, the educated elite defended their alma maters, particularly Mfantsipim School and Adisadel College. The skewed budget allocation, which favored Achimota College over missionary-run secondary schools, seemed a part of a larger political, although covert, colonial agenda to phase out missionary education. Moreover, the economic crisis in the Gold Coast, which began in the late 1920s, only furthered the gap between the govern-

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Washington’s diplomatic initiatives to foster ties between the United States and African countries (especially between the United States and Liberia) can be found in Elliott P. Skinner, *African Americans and U.S. Policy toward Africa, 1850–1924* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1992), pp. 291–347.

<sup>55</sup> Edwin Barclay to Anson Phelps-Stokes, July 8, 1943, Phelps-Stokes Fund, New York, file S-2 (1); this is cited in Berman, “Tuskegee-in-Africa,” p. 111.

<sup>56</sup> Bude (n. 1 above).

<sup>57</sup> David Ruddell, “Class and Race: Neglected Determinants of Colonial ‘Adapted Education’ Policies,” *Comparative Education* 18, no. 3 (1982): 293–303.

<sup>58</sup> John Wilson, *Education and Changing West African Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), p. 41.

ment funding for Achimota and the meager amount of funds allocated to the others.

More striking than the fact that Achimota imported a contested model is the timing of the borrowing. Achimota, as well as other schools that adopted the Hampton-Tuskegee model throughout the British empire, replicated the Hampton and Tuskegee model at a time when the two originals were visibly fading. Two decades before Achimota was built, W. E. B. DuBois, a leading African-American intellectual, and Marcus Garvey, a leader of the Pan-African Movement, vehemently attacked the accommodationist philosophy of General Armstrong (director of the Hampton Institute) and Booker T. Washington (director of the Tuskegee Institute) for depriving African Americans of new generations of leaders and thinkers. In the 1920s, the period in which adapted education was disseminated throughout the British colonial empire, protests in the United States against the Hampton-Tuskegee model were the loudest ever. When the model was implemented first at Hampton, and then at Tuskegee, only a few Americans publicly criticized the model. In fact, as DuBois noted, “in 1906 the United States was obsessed with what may be called the Hampton-Tuskegee idea of Negro education.”<sup>59</sup> However, by the 1920s, the situation changed so dramatically that by the mid-1930s, the two institutes hastened to eliminate any trace of their past emphasis on industrial and manual labor. DuBois explains: “It was not until 1936 that I was invited back to Hampton. The Hampton folk of 1906 were outraged at my words. . . . When I went back to Hampton in 1936, behold, Hampton had become a college and was wondering what to do with her industrial equipment!”<sup>60</sup> DuBois’s attack on adapted education, published in the *Gold Coast Leader* in August 1926 (as mentioned earlier in this article), was not a singular incident. In fact, since 1906, when DuBois turned his back on General Armstrong and Booker T. Washington’s doctrine of industrial education for blacks, Africans returning to Africa from the United States, as well as other educated Africans, were well informed about the turmoil surrounding the Hampton-Tuskegee model.

The question as to why Guggisberg, Jones, and Aggrey lent their full support to a model that was already widely contested—in the United States, Africa, and throughout the British colonial empire—is even more remarkable upon acknowledging that similar models of agricultural and technical education, as well as cultural adaptation, existed in the governor’s own backyard. Evidence suggests that Achimota’s adapted education was, in fact, old wine repackaged in new bottles. There were, in particular, two missionary-run schools with adaptationist curriculum components. In 1827–28, the activities of the Basel mission in the Akropong-Akwapim territory (present-day

<sup>59</sup> DuBois, p. 5.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

Eastern Region of Ghana) included industrial and agricultural education at the elementary and teacher education levels. Mfantsipim School, located in Cape Coast (present-day Central Region), also actively promoted an adapted curriculum that offered studies of Gold Coast history, languages, and arts, without neglecting “grammar”-type instruction.

Indeed, there are numerous accounts of early attempts by different missionary groups in the Gold Coast and throughout Africa to provide a “relevant” education suited to the African environment that would spotlight industrial, agricultural, and manual training.<sup>61</sup> Edward Berman attributes such efforts to missionary conceptions of the African as “lazy,” adding that “manual labor was the panacea for this malaise; a consensus strongly informed by the pseudo-scientific racism evident in Europe in the mid-nineteenth century.”<sup>62</sup> In 1865, T. J. Bowen, a pioneering Baptist missionary in Nigeria, asserted: “Manual labor schools or none is my motto,”<sup>63</sup> while Henry Venn, the long-time secretary of the parent Committee of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in London, contended that a separation of manual from literary education in Africa was absurd.<sup>64</sup>

The Basel Mission’s focus on industrial and agricultural education was the result of a truly astounding mixture of two opposing strands of educational philosophy. The first supported stereotypical beliefs of the limited intelligence of pagan peoples, whereas the other was based on a sophisticated educational philosophy, associated with the Swiss educator Heinrich A. Pestalozzi, which aimed for a holistic and experiential education by including the training of the senses and the hands.<sup>65</sup> The first 3 years of instruction in the Mission’s elementary schools included an intensive program of agricultural and manual instruction in the production of coffee and sisal hemp, with scholastic work conducted in the local vernacular. The Mission’s educational program evoked curiosity throughout West Africa, attracting missionaries, governmental officials, and educators, who visited the facilities to examine what Foster describes as, “one of the most remarkable attempts to develop a system of industrial and agricultural training in any colonial territory.”<sup>66</sup> In 1900, a representative of the Mission pointed at the Basel Mission’s accomplishments in the nineteenth century and commented that “the

<sup>61</sup> See, e.g., Marcia Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika, 1891–1941: Lutherans and Moravians in Southern Highlands* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), where the Moravian philosophy of evangelization and the role of the African *Weltanschauung* within the body of Christian doctrine are discussed; see also Foster (n. 1 above); Sinclair (n. 34 above); Berman, “Christian Missions in Africa” (n. 4 above); Henry O. A. McWilliam and Michael A. Kwamena-Poh, *The Development of Education in Ghana*, 2d ed. (London: Longmans, 1975); C. K. Graham, *The History of Education in Ghana* (Tema, Ghana: Ghana Publishing, 1976).

<sup>62</sup> Berman, “Christian Missions in Africa,” p. 10.

<sup>63</sup> J. F. Ade Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1841–1891: The Making of a New Elite* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1965), p. 144; also cited in Berman, “Christian Missions in Africa,” p. 10.

<sup>64</sup> Ajayi, p. 144; also cited in Berman, “Christian Missions in Africa,” p. 10.

<sup>65</sup> See Graham; Foster; McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh.

<sup>66</sup> Foster, p. 88.

Basel Mission . . . exercised an every-day influence on the people, making the spade and other instruments go hand-in-hand with the Bible.”<sup>67</sup> M. E. Sinclair also points out that “the last two decades of the nineteenth century saw practically every school boasting a small plantation where pupils grew such crops as coffee and sisal hemp.”<sup>68</sup>

By the time Guggisberg was appointed Governor of the Gold Coast, the Basel Mission had lost its sphere of influence in colonial Ghana. Hypothetically, if Guggisberg had used a “domestic reference” and had referred to the schools of the Basel Mission as exemplars of successful adapted education, he would have needed to reactivate a model that was gradually disappearing at the time. In addition, he would have needed to justify why a model that had been used for elementary education was now being adopted for secondary education, that is, for the preparation of students that intended to pursue further studies at university level, preferably in the United Kingdom.

Besides the disappearing Basel Mission schools, the other missionary-run educational institution in the Gold Coast that incorporated adaptationist elements in the curriculum was the Mfantsipim School (founded in 1876). As a secondary school, adapted education meant something entirely different for Mfantsipim than the agricultural and industrial form of adapted education implemented at the elementary level. Instead, it would offer a “grammar”-type education that was adapted to and emphasized Gold Coast and African culture, history and tradition, such as drumming and dancing, and to some extent, woodwork, carpentry, and agriculture.<sup>69</sup> However, despite adaptationist curricular elements, Mfantsipim placed great emphasis on academic scholarship in a relatively standard English curriculum.

Hence, for the educated African elite of the Gold Coast who were mainly graduates of Mfantsipim, adapted education was understood to be an English education that was blended with Gold Coast culture, and not, as in Achimota’s case, an education that was adapted to its surrounding rural and tribal environments. Adapted education at Mfantsipim provided both a sense of national pride and knowledge about Gold Coast and African histories, languages, and cultures, as well as access to the best universities in Great Britain. Although the educated Gold Coast elite showed support for the Basel Mission’s version of adapted education, their support was conditioned by the fact that it was confined only to the elementary and teacher education

<sup>67</sup> W. J. Rottmann, *The Educational Work of the Basel Mission on the Gold Coast*, vol. 13, pt. 2, Special Reports on Educational Subjects (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1905), app. A.1, p. 301; this is also cited in Foster, p. 107.

<sup>68</sup> Sinclair, p. 53.

<sup>69</sup> Stephen Tenkorang, “The Founding of Mfantsipim 1905–1908” (*Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 15, no. 2 [1974]: 165–75), argues that the cultural adaptationist movement was referred to as the “Gone Fantee Movement,” meaning the combination of what is culturally Ghanaian and African with what is good in foreign culture and civilization; see also Quist (n. 23 above), pp. 64–65, and Albert A. Boahen, *Mfantsipim and the Making of Ghana: A Centenary History, 1876–1976* (Accra: Sankofa Educational Publishers, 1996).

levels. In contrast, Achimota perpetuated the stereotype of the rural, tribal, and backward “natives” of Africa and the Gold Coast. Moreover, in its failure to stress academic knowledge, Achimota seriously limited the access of African students to the privileges of Europe and Western progress.

#### **Fermenting the Myth of Novelty and Scientific Rationality**

As discussed above, from a strict policy-oriented perspective, there was no real need to borrow the concept of adapted education from abroad. It would simply have been easier to add the missionaries’ adaptionist component to a traditional, elitist British “grammar”-type boarding school that integrated, as in Mfantsipim, African histories, cultures, and languages. However, borrowing an educational perspective from the missionaries—Presbyterian, Methodist, or other—was politically inconceivable and therefore completely out of the range of reasonable policy options. First, the colonial government and the missionary organizations did not share the same educational objectives. The missionaries’ main objective was to convert. In contrast, the British colonial government maintained two central objectives: training the labor force in its colonial dependencies in ways that would enhance the imperial economy and, at the same time, moving toward the concept of “trusteeship” and, eventually, self-governance. The British Parliament’s heralding of a new policy of trusteeship charged colonial governors of “Tropical Africa” with the “dual mandate” of both protecting and serving the interests of both colonial powers and native populations.<sup>70</sup> Since the “civilized” nations could no longer survive without raw materials and food from tropical Africa, they claimed a moral right to economically exploit the African continent’s resources, provided that they did not monopolize access to these resources. Pursuing this dual strategy of economic growth and trusteeship would have allowed the British empire to, on the one hand, invest less in military and administrative control while, on the other hand, gain larger economic returns from its dependencies. Second, beside the differences in objectives, different factions and disagreements between missions and their associated schools made favoring one mission’s educational model over another’s a political liability. Each mission occupied its own territory and maintained the loyalty and support of its African followers and the Colonial Office.

Moreover, the transfer of models from other colonial empires was politically inconceivable. For example, the British and French maintained opposing colonial ideologies: while assimilationist philosophy was central to France’s *la plus grande France*, central to British colonial ideology was the new concept of trusteeship, in which the British empire was a “world-wide entity

<sup>70</sup> Rudolf von Albertini, *Decolonization: The Administration and Future of the Colonies, 1919–1960* (1966; reprint, New York: Africana Publishing Company, Holmes & Meier, 1982), p. 80.

whose individual parts were subject to British rule and for whom Britain acted as a ‘trustee’.”<sup>71</sup> Of the other colonial governments, the Portuguese were perceived to be hypocritical, corrupt, and cruel,<sup>72</sup> the Belgians in the Congo in cahoots with the missionaries,<sup>73</sup> and the former German colonial power in Tanganyika undecided regarding the adoption of a unified versus a segregationist education policy.<sup>74</sup> Thus, the transfer of models from other colonies with similar experiences was not an option.

As we have suggested, the borrowing of domestic models, or to use Schriewer’s terminology, using “externalized references” that point to domestic adaptationist concepts, had also to be ruled out because they were either too closely associated with missionary education or with elementary education.<sup>75</sup> Instead, there was a need for *das internationale Argument*, that is, a reference to a model abroad. According to Luhmann’s theory of self-referential systems and Schriewer’s theory of externalization, it is at the precise moment when a current practice becomes contested or the need for reform becomes publicly questioned that educational systems turn to externalized references to help justify the continuation of current practices or to legitimize the need for a reform. At all other moments, educational systems are self-referential, that is, they reproduce themselves by using built-in, internal references that support current practices and structures.

In concordance with Schriewer’s theory, we frame borrowing as a process that is based on the use of “externalized references,” which ultimately tells us something about local realities. These references are called “externalized” because they point to external “authorities” that are situated outside the educational system. Luhmann and Schorr mention three external “authorities,” or externalized benchmarks, that are most commonly used to justify contested educational practices or reforms: (1) references to general

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>72</sup> Regarding the reputation of the Portuguese, see von Albertini’s comments (pp. 514–23) that the Portuguese policy of “multi-racial community” was seen as hypocritical since Portugal, self-proclaimed “the land of the four Empires . . . with provinces in the four parts of the world” (“o país dos quatro Imperios . . . com provincias em quatro partes do mundo”) enforced an even more rigid assimilation policy than the French colonial empire, and in their colonial educational policy under Salazar’s administration strictly distinguished between whites, mulattos, “assimilados,” and “não assimilados.”

<sup>73</sup> For evidence of the close link between British colonial government and missionaries, see Yates, *Comparative Education and the Third World* (n. 12 above), and Barbara A. Yates, “Church, State and Education in Belgian Africa: Implications for Contemporary Third World Women,” in *Women’s Education in the Third World: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Gail P. Kelly and Carolyn M. Elliott (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1982), pp. 127–53.

<sup>74</sup> The two opposing German colonial policies toward the protectorates were heatedly debated at the German Colonial Congress of 1905; see Charles Pike, “History and Imagination: Swahili Literature and Resistance to German Language Imperialism in Tanzania, 1885–1910,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 19, no. 2 (1986): 201–33; Wolfgang Mehnert, “The Language Question in the Colonial Policy of German Imperialism,” in *African Studies, Afrika-Studien*, ed. T. Büttner, G. Brehme, R. Salt, and C. Salt (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1973), pp. 383–97.

<sup>75</sup> Schriewer (n. 15 above); Schriewer et al. (n. 15 above). See also Luhmann (n. 15 above); Luhmann and Schorr (n. 15 above).

principles of scientific rationality, (2) references to values or “tradition,” and (3) references to organization.<sup>76</sup>

In our case study, we have found traces of all three types of externalized references. This means that proponents were adamant in their assertions that adapted education (1) epitomized the “scientific” method in education; (2) was, more than any other elite educational institution, adapted to local values and traditions; and, finally, also (3) best mirrored the new policy of trusteeship, which aimed at a reduction of administration and finance in the British dependent territories and colonies. At first sight, it appears to be an oxymoron that a British colonial governor would vouch for a de-Europeanization of the curriculum, actively promote the preservation of “native” or indigenous knowledge, and, at the same time, act as the greatest facilitator and importer of the American educational concept of industrial education. To add to the absurdity of the situation, the Hampton-Tuskegee model, at that time at the edge of becoming the global model of British colonial education, resembled earlier domestic models, especially the missionary models of agricultural and manual education in the Gold Coast and in other West African countries. Nevertheless, there was a need to borrow from the United States, in particular from “black America.” Why?

In contrast to the British empire and other colonial empires, the United States did not have an immediate past as a colonial power in Africa. More notably, the United States could offer what no other country in the world could: a model of education that was promoted by Americans of African descent and that accommodated a racially segregated society without upsetting the colonial order. The masterminds of industrial education in the United States, who were black as well as white, offered abundant rationalizations in explaining the benefits of adapted education, not only for the imperial economy but also for the individual African. Proponents framed rural and tribal adaptationist policies within the discourse of “Africanization,” evoking associations with the movement that countered the progression of the “Europeanization” of African cultures. The educated elites of the Gold Coast, however, resented the imperial version of Africanization that essentialized blackness, ignored cultural differences between blacks—that is, between Ghanaians and African Americans—and neglected class stratification within the Gold Coast society.<sup>77</sup> For the local elites, indigenous knowledge

<sup>76</sup> Luhmann and Schorr.

<sup>77</sup> In the past decade, several scholars in history, anthropology, literature, cultural studies, and post-colonial studies have examined imperial constructions of race, class, and sexuality in dependent territories and colonies; see, e.g., Ann Laura Stoler, “Rethinking Colonial Categories: European Communities and the Boundaries of Rule,” in *Colonialism and Culture*, ed. Nicholas B. Dirks (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), pp. 319–52; Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease, eds., *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (Durham, N.C., and London: Duke University Press, 1993); Andrea L. Smith, “Colonialism and the Poisoning of Europe: Towards an Anthropology of Colonists,” *Journal of Anthropological Research* 50 (1994): 383–93; Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault’s History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham, N.C., and London: Duke University Press, 1995); Anne McClintock,

was different from black literacy showcased in the Hampton-Tuskegee model and contained more than merely rural and tribal traditions. Suggesting that all Ghanaians still felt rooted in a rural and tribal past and assuming that all blacks, Ghanaians and African Americans alike, were facing a similar future of race segregation and a life of servitude toward whites was an insult to all those Ghanaians who returned to the Gold Coast after learning about the “negro problem” abroad and after years of studying at universities in other African countries, Europe, or the United States.

From all local legitimization strategies, the references to “scientific rationality” became most visibly an essential part of Achimota, turning a school into an internationally renowned educational research laboratory. The laboratory provided a straightforward “scientific” explanation why a contested educational model was imported, implemented, and disseminated to educational institutions in British Africa: it was the newest and best method of education. Achimota was to become the authoritative voice of good education for natives. What was needed was an apparatus or a “technology” that could ferment the myth of novelty and provide the stamp of scientific rationality.<sup>78</sup> Achimota’s educational research laboratory, its public relations office, and its close cooperation with scholars and researchers overseas served the purpose of defending or legitimizing adapted education as a “scientific method of education,” while simultaneously disseminating its model to other schools throughout British Ghana and the African continent.

The role of the educational research laboratory in spreading the myth of novelty and hoisting the flag of scientific rationality cannot be overemphasized. Achimota principal, Alexander G. Fraser, in a dispatch to the colonial secretary of the British empire, noted that “it was to be the First Educational Research Station planted by our Colonial Empire in Africa.”<sup>79</sup> The entire Achimota complex was thus intended as a correction of the prevailing Gold Coast educational system that had gone astray and that to Guggisberg was rotten to the core, ineffective, and inefficient. According to Agdobeka, there was “hardly any other institution in West Africa in the early part of this century that could boast of research facilities.”<sup>80</sup> Achimota was to be the living example of the latest ideas and theories regarding educational methods suitable to the African condition.

The prestigious educational research unit managed to transform the en-

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*Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995); Kevin K. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

<sup>78</sup> “Technology” is used here in the Foucauldian sense, in which there is a mechanism in place that ensures that knowledge and power are intertwined; see Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Random House, Pantheon Books, 1977).

<sup>79</sup> Alexander G. Fraser to Colonial Secretary, 20 August 1931, Victoriaborg, National Archives of Ghana, Colonial Secretary’s Office, no. 1140/31, George Padmore Research Library, Accra, Ghana; this is cited in Quist (n. 23 above), pp. 84–85.

<sup>80</sup> Agbodeka (n. 7 above), p. 83.

tire institution into an “educational laboratory.” Besides well-equipped educational research facilities, Achimota hosted the biggest research facilities in West Africa for the study of agriculture, as well as for the study of African languages and cultures. In one study, for example, educational researchers at Achimota provided empirical evidence for increased learning outcomes of students in classrooms where teachers were using films, pictures, maps, or charts. The bulk of the educational research, however, aimed to provide a scientific foundation for adapted education. Educational researchers in the laboratory sought to prove that adapted education would neither lower the intellectual abilities of Africans nor put them at an academic disadvantage to Europeans in the pursuit of a purely academic training. The principal of Achimota reportedly noted that, after considerable work in the research laboratory, researchers found “that some facts were more important to the people of one country than to another and that adaptation could take place without actually lowering standards.”<sup>81</sup>

Achimota’s primary educational research agenda was to establish adapted education as a new concept that required testing and other scientific examination. Scholars from elite universities in Great Britain and the United States readily supported endeavors to prove the “scientific rationality” of transferring and implementing adapted education. As early as 1901, Sir Michael Sadler, a scholar and a colonial education advisor well known among comparativists for his international study of educational systems, visited Tuskegee in the United States. In a letter to Booker T. Washington, Sadler made the recommendation to transfer Tuskegee’s model of industrial education to Africa for the education of Africans.<sup>82</sup> Ironically, this recommendation was made by no less a scholar than Sadler, who, to this very day, is well respected for his early warning against the selective borrowing and transfer of educational models and systems from one continent to another.<sup>83</sup> There is no doubt that Sadler, who was later appointed to serve on the Advisory Board on Native Education in the British Tropical African Dependencies, continued to provide “scientific” credibility for the transfer of the Hampton-Tuskegee model to Africa.

By the time Achimota opened its gates, “scientific education” was closely associated with the Progressive Education movement in the United States and Europe. This close association is not surprising given that Aggrey, before becoming vice-principal of Achimota, studied at Teachers College, Columbia

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>82</sup> Michael E. Sadler to Booker T. Washington, September 23, 1901, Washington Papers, box 209, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; this is cited in Berman, “Tuskegee-in-Africa” (n. 1 above), p. 99.

<sup>83</sup> Sadler explained that selective borrowing was predisposed to fail because “the things outside the schools matter even more than the things inside the schools, and govern and interpret the things inside the schools;” cited in George Z. F. Bereday, “Sir Michael Sadler’s ‘Study of Foreign Systems of Education’: Reprint of the Notes of an Address Given at the Guildford Educational Conference, on Saturday, October 20, 1900, by M. E. Sadler, Christ Church, Oxford,” *Comparative Education Review* 7, no. 3 (February 1964): 310.

University, the academic center for Progressive Education. In 1922, he completed his master of arts and continued with his Ph.D. studies at Teachers College. He was impressed with the academic work and international involvement of Paul Monroe, professor of history and comparative education and director of the International Institute. Monroe, in turn, was taken by Aggrey's experiences with the "primitive methods of education" in the Gold Coast and encouraged him to write on this topic.<sup>84</sup> In addition to Monroe, there were other faculty members, such as Mabel Carney, who promoted adapted or "scientific education." As professor of rural education, Carney was devoted to the improvement of rural education for the "Negro" and "native" and was convinced of the usefulness of adopting the Hampton-Tuskegee model to the rural settings of Africa.<sup>85</sup>

Achimota drew the attention of numerous educators from the Gold Coast, West Africa, and throughout the world. The college was able to achieve the following accomplishments: hold regular conferences and training workshops for educators, assist in the formation of teachers' associations, host visiting classes from other schools, and invite educators from around the world. In addition, it developed an extensive infrastructure that was able to accommodate visitors, conduct outreach activities, and function as a public relations mechanism that countered public criticism. The more adapted education was publicly criticized, the more Achimota had to rely on its own public relations efforts. While the colonial government elevated Achimota to the avant-garde of "scientific method[s] of education," the Gold Coast's educated elite critiqued the concept of rural and tribal adaptation as hopelessly outdated. Ironically, by the mid-1930s, the survival of the imported adaptationist curriculum component depended on the number of other schools in the Gold Coast that had borrowed Achimota's curriculum model. Of the secondary schools that opened in the 1930s and 1940s, none did borrow the model. Instead, they all adopted the academically oriented model of Achimota's competitor, the Mfantsipim School.<sup>86</sup> In the end, Achimota, the prophet of adapted education, did not succeed in finding any followers.

<sup>84</sup> See, e.g., how Aggrey describes his encounter with Paul Monroe: "Prof. Monroe had me to talk to the class on Primitive Methods of Education—emphasizing [sic] my native country. He will tell you about it himself. I may add that it was so discussed that another teacher had me to talk to his class in Macy Building the following week on the same subject. . . . Prof. Monroe asked me in his office to put my knowledge along those lines in book form. He made me feel real humble in the compliment he paid me before the whole class and its reiteration with emphasis in his office. He was even so kind as to say that if I would write it he would see that it was published." See letter of James E. K. Aggrey to Jesse T. Jones, August 18, 1919, supplied by Jones and given to Smith, reprinted in E. Smith (n. 40 above), pp. 108–9.

<sup>85</sup> Brahm David Flesich, "The Teachers College Club: American Educational Discourse and the Origins of Bantu Education in South Africa, 1914–1951" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1995), describes in detail how the adaptationist concept later, in 1954, became the foundation for educational apartheid, the Bantu Education Act; see also Richard Glotzer, "The Career of Mabel Carney: The Study of Race and Rural Development in the United States and South Africa," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 29, no. 2 (1996): 309–36; R. H. Davis, "Charles T. Loram and the American Model for African Education in South Africa," *African Studies Review* 19, no. 2 (1976): 87–100.

<sup>86</sup> Agbodeka, p. 138.

**Closing the Case of Achimota?**

In this study, we asked a new set of questions about Achimota as a case of educational borrowing. Rather than only focusing on what was borrowed across national borders, we examined why transnational borrowing occurred and how the borrowed model was implemented. In examining the Achimota case, we sought to answer the question of why the colonial government borrowed a model of adapted education from the United States at a time when the model was not only highly contested but also not even new to the Gold Coast. Alternative models of adapted education already existed in the Gold Coast. Moreover, we argued that applying a strict policy perspective, more often than not, reduces educational borrowing to an act of learning-from-others that will not enhance our understanding of the puzzle.

Thus, we suggested that attention be given to the politics of educational transfer. This particular perspective called for a focus on local political tensions that, in our case study, have accounted for the need to borrow from overseas and, in particular, from “black America.” When we focused on the local political tensions of the colonial government, it became apparent that borrowing a model from African Americans was more convenient than borrowing from missionaries in the Gold Coast.

As discussed earlier, Achimota turned academic in the mid-1930s, and it took another 20 years or so, under President Kwame Nkrumah (1957–66) in postcolonial independent Ghana, for “Africanization” to once again become a central component of educational reform. The actors and the political context had changed, but the curricular impact, that is, the implementation of African languages, history, and geography, was the same as in the colonial period under Governor Guggisberg. However, different from the colonial period, Africanization or cultural adaptation under Nkrumah was part of a modernization plan and was strongly associated with independence and progress, whereas the colonial version under Guggisberg suffered from its reputation of being a romanticized version of tribalism that celebrated rural adaptation and of being devoid of any prospects for political independence and economic growth.<sup>87</sup>

Our particular focus on local contexts as a method for understanding the politics of educational transfer is not restricted to the borrower. For the lender, too, there exist political reasons at the local level for exporting and disseminating its reforms to other institutions. It is interesting that the preservation of Achimota, and the survival of Hampton and Tuskegee for that matter, depended on being borrowed by others. In the 1930s and 1940s, the newly opened Gold Coast schools refused to borrow Achimota’s adaptationist component, and Achimota, the showcase of adapted education, had to turn

<sup>87</sup> See, in particular, Quist’s chapter (pp. 147–93) on the Ghana Educational Trust and “National” Schools.

“bookish” itself. Lending was Achimota’s ultimate survival strategy; yet, in the end, no other school borrowed the Achimota model. The new generation of secondary schools in the Gold Coast preferred Mfantsipim’s cultural adaptation to Achimota’s rural adaptation.

This classic case of educational transfer in Achimota should not yet be put aside. Reopening the case of Achimota has enabled us to examine the politics of borrowing. In addition, there is a need to analyze the politics of lending. A closer examination of the benefits of borrowing for lender systems would further our understanding of educational transfer. How much, and why exactly, did the survival of Achimota’s adapted education depend on being borrowed by other secondary schools in Ghana? What did, for example, the Tuskegee Institute gain from lending its model internationally? These and other related questions need to be addressed in future research. Therefore, we propose that the case of Achimota remain open for further research on educational transfer until additional lines of inquiry, such as lending, are examined in greater detail.