Colonial Systems of Control

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SECTION IV

RESISTANCE

In addressing issues of colonialism and the continued implementation of colonial institutions in “former” European colonies in Africa, it is important to recognize that Africans have resisted these oppressions and continue to resist them. This section presents two main types of resistance: the first is political, and the second is academic.

Colonialism functioned on both these levels. During their occupation of African territories Europeans utilized a sociopolitical level of oppression. Entire social structures, government policies, and racist policies were imported into Africa from Europe in exchange for the export of African economic and material resources. Fela Kuti was a Nigerian political musician who recognized the absurdity of such an “exchange” and challenged the illusions of European superiority that colonialism proposed. Fela’s resistance was a political one implemented through social and educational activism.

As colonialists invaded African territories, they relied on academic institutions to provide scientific and legitimate propaganda to justify and facilitate such crimes. Although the process through which such “knowledge” was produced was socially legitimate and politically empowered through allegiances to academic institutions it was not accurate. In contemporary academic institutions, the scientism that empowered colonialists lingers in the social sciences. Within the specific context of penal
colonialism the study of academic legal pluralisms provides an avenue through which the process of producing faulty knowledge about Africa can be reviewed; in addition, the proposed use of non-essentialism presents an opportunity to implement academic resistance. This type of resistance provides an opportunity to dissociate from a form of knowledge production that not only facilitated atrocities in the past, but also continues to facilitate and justify contemporary oppressions.