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Repositioning of Africa in Knowledge Production

Shaking Off Historical Stigmas

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Repositioning of Africa in knowledge production: shaking off historical stigmas — introduction

Juliet Thondhlana and Evelyn Chiyevu Garwe

Abstract: Africa is recognised as the cradle of humankind with a proven record of creativity and innovation as evidenced by its great empires and kingdoms. It is thus an enigma that currently Africa contributes only 2% to global knowledge production, a situation that is widely believed to account for its underdevelopment. Even though scholarly disagreement cuts very deep here, it is mostly due to the reasons of the status quo rather than to disputing the poor showing of Africa in global knowledge production. The high quality of articles presented in this supplementary issue showcases our conviction that Africa can indeed shake off historical stigmas and reposition itself as a giant in knowledge production. This editorial introduces the contributions in the issue which interrogates the status quo and explores ways in which knowledge production can be enhanced. Three key thematic approaches are presented: a decolonial approach to legitimising African knowledge based on its needs, culture, and heritage; development of robust knowledge production and quality assurance institutions; and inclusive education and knowledge production.

Keywords: Africa, knowledge production, inclusivity, decolonisation, sustainable development.

Setting the scene

Although our interest in upscaling knowledge production in Africa started some time back (Organisational and Research Culture in African Universities multi-country project), it was not until the British Academy (BA) funded a three-day writing workshop that our cause was heightened. The workshop was organised by the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE) in partnership with the University of Nottingham, and hosted by the University of Zimbabwe on 24–26 September 2019. Together with the forty workshop participants from six African countries (Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, and Zimbabwe) and the seven journal editors representing the Global South and the Global North (South Africa, UK, Canada, USA), we committed ourselves to collaborate and further explore ways and interventions to overcome the barriers to African scholarly productivity and contribution to global knowledge conversations. Leveraging on this rich network, again with the support of the BA, our proposal to organise and run a ‘thematic stream’ at the African Studies Association UK (ASAUK) conference to further the debate on strengthening African research writing for publication was accepted. Although this conference was cancelled due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the *Journal of the British Academy* dedicated this supplementary issue to afford us the necessary publication space.

The quest for the survival of humankind makes knowledge production ubiquitous, such that wherever there is life, knowledge is produced and shared or transferred (Harari 2014). Societies the world-over have different cultures, environments, experiences, and ways of addressing problems according to their contextual realities (Matike 2008). Knowledge is thus local, partial, and fragmented (Kolawele 2012), and its generation and its utilisation are powerful engines of socio-economic growth and development (Gurak 2004). Using this assertion, some scholars have argued that Africa’s underdevelopment is attributable to its meagre contribution (1–2%) to global knowledge production (Makinda 2007, Fonn *et al.* 2018). Furthermore, Africa lacks indigenous theories, forcing it to uncritically adopt and apply scholarly resources of Western origin largely inapplicable to the real-life challenges in the African context (Kaya & Seleti 2013). Yangni-Angate (2015: 45) articulates the continent’s genius by its history as the ‘Cradle of Humanity; Mother of civilization, Cradle of Sciences; and the Birthplace of Religions’. Africa consists of fifty-four sovereign nations, is centrally positioned for world trade, and has an abundance of human and natural resources (Ochola *et al.* 2010) ‘estimated to be greater than that of almost any other continent in the world’ (Nkrumah 1963: 216, Ndulu *et al.* 2007).

In this supplementary issue, we join other scholars (e.g., Gutto 2006) in critically engaging with the question, ‘how could this happen to the same Africa, recognised as the cradle of humankind (Beyin 2015), featuring great empires and kingdoms of

artistic, technological, scientific, cultural, and material sophistication?' We postulate that Africa's renaissance and its industrialisation and modernisation lie in its ability to upscale its intellectual capital and reposition its knowledge systems to provide home-grown solutions guided by the pan-Africanism philosophy. To this end we acknowledge the growing number of scholars, thought leaders (past and present), and citizenry who have committed themselves to this cause by 'steadily incorporating anti-colonial, postcolonial or decolonial perspectives into their critical pedagogical praxis of researching, writing, teaching and mobilising' (Steinberg & Down 2020: 186). Their voices, recommendations, policies, activities, thoughts, and reflections are key in pushing forward Africa's sustainable development. Cognisant that all knowledge systems are anchored in the local, and acknowledging the skewed power matrix attributed to colonialism and imperialism (see Ngugi wa Thiong'o 1986, Smith 2002), we discuss possible ways out of Africa's knowledge production conundrum. Empirical evidence in support of our position revealed potential in Africa's renaissance, citing, for example, the six countries that have registered economic growth figures in excess of 6% per year for the past six years (*Economist* 2011).

The major challenge faced by Africa is how to redeem itself from its present predicament, when the continent and its people remain 'trapped by the enduring colonial domination in their ways of knowing, seeing and imagining' (Ndlovu 2018: 95). According to Ndlovu,

this question is quite challenging, not only because colonial domination in the sphere of knowledge production has played a role of emptying the minds of African subjects of their knowledges and memories, but has also played a part in implanting foreign ways of knowing and remembering. (95)

The commitment to reposition Africa in the global knowledge economy can be traced back to the historic formation of the Organisation of African Unity (now the African Union), created in May 1963 towards embracing Pan-Africanism (unification/oneness/integration/fraternity of Africa), to achieve the 'African Renaissance' and adopting 'African solutions to African challenges' (Molla & Cuthbert 2018: 252). The blueprint to put Africa on the move (Ndizera & Muzee 2018) is enshrined in the Agenda 2063 document (African Union Commission 2015). As Xercavins (2008) advises, the quality of the desired/preferred future is a function of the sum (total) of the present well-considered responses. This long-range reflection, anticipation, planning, and forecasting prepares nations and institutions for the future and is referred to as 'foresight' (Hammoud & Nash 2014: 41). In this regard, Agenda 2063 is a 'foresight' blueprint and policy direction for Africa that is alive to the cause of promoting African scholarship as a means to achieving sustainable development. Thus, what is presently required for and by Africa is an articulation of the dynamics surrounding the

desirability and preparedness of member countries to strategically create, share, and utilise knowledge (and the trajectories thereof) to generate goods and services necessary for sustainable development. This presents a challenge of developing and expanding knowledge institutions and scholars, especially in the backdrop of a multiplicity of other challenges relating to colonial baggage, policies, resources, as well as geopolitical inequalities of knowledge production.

We will begin by clarifying key and perhaps controversial concepts/terminology focusing on coloniality and its counter struggles, in the context of knowledge production from the issue editors and authors' standpoints, to enable a shared understanding with our audience.

1. *Colonialism*: The state wherein a people or nation loses political and economic sovereignty to another nation to the extent that they are controlled by that nation in every aspect of their lives and affairs. Colonialism in this way, draws equivalence with the concept of imperialism.
2. *Coloniality*: The continued imposition of epistemic, geographic, and psychological domination of power that transcend colonialism. To Maldonado-Torres (2007: 243) 'coloniality is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience. In a way, as modern subjects we breathe coloniality all the time and every day.'
3. *Decoloniality*: The identification, unmasking, and dismantling of the forces that perpetuate an asymmetrical world to help build an inclusive future.
4. *Postcoloniality*: The discourse concerned with disrupting the biased global power relations arising from coloniality and give way to ethnic/racial/cultural hybridity, representation, respect, and interdependence. In this respect, the decolonial project is well embedded in the postcolonial agenda. The point of departure of the two concepts, according to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2016), is that decoloniality unravels historical precolonial and colonial issues in its contextualisation of present power imbalances.
5. *Academic imperialism*: Explicit and subtle domination of people or nations by another in their way of knowing, thinking, and knowledge.
6. *Globalectics*: A holistic way of thinking that encompasses inclusivity, interconnectedness, and equality of all humanity and nations of the world.

Seminal scholars on increasing knowledge production in Africa for sustainable development

At this juncture we pay tribute to African scholars who have provided thought leadership to enable Africa to break out from what Mkandawire (1997) describes as ‘closed’ discursive and practical spaces. In his piece, he explains that ‘closed’ means that African scholars are victims of exclusion and marginalisation from ‘global’ epistemic canons, and economic and political arenas. By engaging in such brave scholarly acts of empowerment, these authors struggle to liberate Africa from the usurpation of its knowledge, political, and economic autonomy against resistance from both local and external forces. As alluded to by Arowosegbe (2019: x), showcasing such luminary figures contributes to ‘understanding the problematic underpinnings of Africa’s contradictory trajectory, and also for transcending its historic intellectual lag in the area of knowledge production’. The list of these thought leaders consists amongst others of the following: Ali Mazrui, Amina Mama, Claude Ake, Frantz Fanon, Joseph Ki-Zerbo, Mahmood Mamdani, Ngugi wa Thiong’o, and Thandika Mkandawire (Gumede 2014). In this issue, Crawford *et al.* (2021) outline the reflections and analysis of a number of postcolonial and decolonial scholars, who have contributed to the attempts to liberate Africa from the shackles of coloniality and epistemic injustices that continue to influence knowledge production on Africa and elsewhere in the Global South. In this editorial, we briefly discuss the contributions from three key African academics, Claude Ake, Joseph Ki-Zerbo, and Ngugi wa Thiong’o.

Claude Ake, a renowned political scientist and philosopher, was born on 18 February 1939 in Omoku, Nigeria. He died in a plane crash on 7 November 1996. Ake’s major contribution was in advocating for Africa’s development to be driven from within, leveraging on indigenous knowledge, thus challenging Africans to find local solutions to Africa’s problems. Ake was a critic of Eurocentricism and the practice of dividing the world into North and South, opting for a situation characterised by non-hierarchical, cross-cultural intercourse in knowledge production. His notable works are: *A Theory of Political Integration* (1967), *Revolutionary Pressures in Africa* (1978), *Social Science as Imperialism: The Theory of Political Development* (1979), *A Political Economy of Africa* (1981), ‘The Future of the State in Africa’ (1985), *Democracy and Development in Africa* (1996), and *The Feasibility of Democracy in Africa* (2000).

Joseph Ki-Zerbo (1922–2006), was an educationist and historian born in Burkina Faso. Irked by the fact that ‘85% of research on Africa is conducted outside Africa’ (Ki-Zerbo 1992), Ki-Zerbo sought to inspire Africans towards freedom, identity, creativity, imagination, and a home-grown or self-made approach to education and development. Joseph Ki-Zerbo is credited (along with Claude Ake, and Ngugi wa

Thiong'o) with propounding the theory of 'endogenous development' anchored on principles of pan-Africanism. Some of Ki-Zerbo's key literary pieces include: *History of Black Africa* (1978), *Educate or Perish: Africa's Impasse and Prospects* (1990), and *Other People's Mats* (1992).

Ngugi wa Thiong'o, an African writer and scholar of note, was born on 5 January 1938 in Limuru, Kenya. He exercises his influence through his essays, novels, journalism, plays, and social activism to showcase how language can enable Africans to think reflectively and produce knowledge. To Ngugi, the exclusion of vernacular languages from most African education systems, apart from being oppressive, also aids in colonisation of the mind (Ngugi wa Thiong'o 1986, 1993). He also proposes how colonial languages can be used in Africa's decolonial project (Ngugi wa Thiong'o 2016)

The articles in this supplementary issue explore the impediments to improved scholarship, discuss emerging and innovative methods/models, and recommend evidence-based solutions as part of Africa's decolonial knowledge production project. Cognisant of the wisdom of Ki-Zerbo (2003) that no one approach or discipline can endeavour to address the complex and intricate reality of the African context, we embrace a multi-pronged and multidisciplinary analytical framework. The issue comprises twelve contributions exhibiting plurality in thematic foci, conceptualisation, and contextual, methodological, gendered, and disciplinary approaches. The philosophical, theoretical, discursive, descriptive, critical, evaluative, comparative, and empirical articles reflect on the history, context, and status quo, and recommend a three-way forward thematic approach to the project of repositioning Africa's knowledge production.

Although some of the articles have overlapping concepts, ideas, and solutions, this editorial group introduces them under the three approaches to the way forward. The first approach suggests a decolonial approach to legitimising African knowledge based on its needs, culture, heritage, and contribution to the global knowledge system to address the continent's historical and colonial dogmas. The second approach focuses on the development of robust knowledge production and quality assurance institutions that engender strong research cultures and good researcher integrity. The third and final approach seeks to promote inclusive education and knowledge production.

Decolonising Africa's research, innovation and development

The negative influence of colonialism on Africa's knowledge production is well acknowledged (Mazrui 2000). Colonialism privileged the Western world-view, institutions, knowledges, languages, and value systems at the expense of African

epistemologies (Olukoshi 2007). It is now long after African nations gained independence, and yet the Western colonial legacies continue to cast their shadows on the African knowledge production arena, anticipating, shaping, informing, and dictating the pace. Due to the 'colonial global' knowledge production matrix, Africa is dependent on international publishing infrastructures and requires the West to legitimise its knowledge production. Referring to the publication statistics (based on largely Western highly ranked journals) used to measure Africa's knowledge production, Keim (2008: 32) explains, 'African scholarly production is oriented neither towards the local peers nor to one's own society, but towards the overseas public.' It is widely acknowledged that the major players in academic publishing are the United Kingdom and the United States, both accounting for more than half of the world's indexed journals (Graham *et al.* 2011). In addition, in those leading journals, the majority of contributions relating to African issues are written by non-African writers, a phenomenon that Mama (2007) finds deplorable.

The three articles that speak to the decolonial approaches to knowledge production contribute individually and collectively to scholarly efforts (e.g. Ngugi wa Thiong'o 1986) aimed at addressing the Western hegemony inherent in African knowledge and education systems by propelling the African epistemic legitimacy to the world.

The first contribution under this theme, 'Decolonising Knowledge Production on Africa: Why It's Still Necessary and What Can Be Done' by Crawford *et al.* (2021), extensively reviews the canon of literature on the marginalisation of African scholarship due to asymmetrical power relations between researchers in the Global North and South. It then proposes practical ways to challenge/counter the status quo. The article rises to another level by further reflecting on the practical solutions and rendering them desirable but insufficient, thereby calling for more profound solutions. The suggested point of departure involves (re)discovering alternative ways of understanding the world through incorporating the marginalised voices. This involves reorienting the methodological, ontological, and epistemological frameworks by, for example, 'rethinking thinking' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018), creating 'ecologies of knowledge' and 'epistemologies of the South' (Santos 2007). The article concludes by advocating a decolonial methodology that favours participatory/inclusive approaches to mainstream knowledge production.

The second article, entitled 'Revisiting (Inclusive) Education in the Postcolony' by Abdulrahman *et al.* (2021), uses a dialogic relational reflexive methodology (Hibbert *et al.* 2014) to argue for inclusive education and knowledge production. The use of a metalogue as a methodological approach allows the contributors to jointly ponder the issues from different perspectives and positionalities, and in a way that honours their individual voices. The four contributors to the metalogue proffer diverse perspectives and positionalities which are rich in possible solutions applicable to

postcolonial contexts. By critically questioning and analysing issues from different standpoints, all contributors agree that historical and contextual aspects should inform inclusive education for it to be fit for purpose. The prevailing situation wherein African education largely fails to address societal challenges (with some scholars attributing it to the presence of universities in Africa instead of African universities) should pave the way for the ‘time for Africa’. The term ‘universities in Africa’ refers to a situation whereby the curriculum they follow ‘imitates with a high degree of exactitude Western universities’ academic curricula objectives, content, assessment approaches and learning materials’ (Fredua-Kwarteng 2019). The desired position is to have ‘African universities’ which address solutions to African problems and share best practices with the whole world. Confidence and concerted efforts towards creating and incorporating indigenous African knowledge are critical, whilst contesting the colonial stereotyping, prejudices, and mental ascriptions of inferiority to western knowledge (Wright *et al.* 2007). The contributions to this metalogue point to the intractability of some of the educational challenges of the continent, including patterns of exclusion that defy simplistic definition and resolution. In the absence of neat answers or trite recommendations, we argue for ongoing difficult and critical conversations, across contexts and across disciplines.

The third contribution, ‘Internationalisation of Higher Education for Pluriversity: A Decolonial Reflection’ by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2021), advances the need for a decolonial approach to the internationalisation of higher education (IHE). The article argues that the current IHE agendas are largely Euro-centric and are motivated by academic capitalism, university imperialism, and market fundamentalisms. The article advances the centrality of diverse loci of enunciation of knowledge and education to enable a richer world-sensing and to enhance people’s self-understanding in relationship to other selves in the universe. Such an internationalisation of higher education is predicated on recognition of diverse ways of human knowing through which different people interpret and make sense of the world. The university thus assumes a new name—pluriversity—effectively removing the notion of it being universal(ly Western) into being inclusive and plural as informed by practices of globalectics and coexistence of particularities. Globalectics implies a plural uniform world without a single pivot: any point is equally a centre, thereby embracing wholeness, interconnectedness, and equality (Santos & Meneses 2020).

Puplampu (2021) posits that Africa can learn valuable lessons from Western colonisers who used knowledge (for example, in psychology, culture, religion, trade, and the military) strategically and systematically to completely colonise Africa. He argues that, in the first instance, Africans must be inward-looking, focused, and coordinated in their decolonial project and development agendas. However, he sees the ultimate and desired goal being achieved when there is a global demand for

African knowledge. In supporting this assertion, Garwe *et al.* (2021) add that through the recent interface with the COVID-19 pandemic, it became clear that the challenge of coming up with a cure is not limited to any specific nation or region but is a global task. Thus the world is ready for inclusive global knowledge solutions which Ndlovu-Gatscheni (2021) refers to as ‘pluriversity’. If Africa can distinguish itself through such scientific contributions, then it will have reached its goal of repositioning itself as a reputable source of knowledge with global impact.

Develop robust internationalised higher education and quality assurance institutions

The first contribution in this section of the issue, on ‘What Can the African Diaspora Contribute to Innovation and Knowledge Creation?’ by Thondhlana *et al.* (2021), echoes calls for engaging diasporas in sustainable development of economies in the developing world through the production of knowledge and knowledge economies (Leung 2015). It recognises the more recent emergence of transnationalism as a new form of migration which has evidenced capacity to turn a brain drain pattern of subtractive migration into brain circulation for the mutual benefit of both countries of origin and host countries, in a context of the global war of talent where host Global North countries have been strategically positioned to benefit from the ‘best and brightest’ of the Global South. Given the phenomenal growth of the collective African diaspora in recent times, the causes, courses, consequences, and implications of this growth in Africa and on African knowledge production are a subject begging systematic and intensive exploration (Zezeza 2005). Using the example of Zimbabwe and drawing from five case examples of diaspora transnationals with evidenced contribution to knowledge production, innovation and development activity in Zimbabwe, the article explores their lived experiences to understand emerging patterns. To this end, the article presents emerging models of diaspora participation in knowledge production. In doing so, the article also explores the role played by colonial and postcolonial projects in constructing and shaping knowledge production, and demonstrates how the models are challenging historical stigmas.

The second contribution, on ‘Evaluation of a Quality Assurance Framework for Promoting Quality Research, Innovation and Development in Higher Education Institutions’ by Garwe *et al.* (2021), recognises the centrality of national quality assurance frameworks in promoting quality research and innovation. The authors use the quality assurance methodology of self-evaluation and peer review to suggest how national quality assurance bodies can improve the quantity and quality of research and development in higher education institutions. The key areas of intervention

include (a) relevant national policies, standards, and guidelines; (b) doctoral training; (c) research capacity strengthening; (d) institutional research support units; (e) robust performance management featuring performance measures and targets; (f) establishment of effective structures manned with professional staff to support, manage, and promote research; (g) collaborations, partnerships to promote a firm international grounding; and (h) investment in research resources.

The third contribution, on ‘Doctoral Training in African Universities: Recent Trends, Developments and Issues’ by Jowi (2021), further buttresses Garwe *et al.*’s (2021) point that the major challenge facing African universities relates not only to their cultures and researcher behaviour (Puplampu 2021), but also to their limited research capacities. The article attributes this situation in part to the low numbers of academics with doctorates, which also compounds the problem as this leads to low doctoral graduate outputs. The article analyses Africa’s position (challenges and progress) regarding doctoral training and the implications thereof. The article draws from empirical data from a collaborative project featuring African and European partners and covering six African countries. The increase in doctoral programmes and enrolments predicts an optimistic future for doctoral training and research in Africa. Again the article highlights importance of national research quality assurance frameworks in steering the behaviour of universities, industry, and government (Garwe *et al.* 2021).

In the fourth article, on ‘Tackling the Behavioural Aspects of Knowledge Production: Research Culture, Behavioural Intentionality and Proactive Agenda Setting by Scholars in Africa’, Puplampu (2021) advocates critical examination of the actions, behaviours, and institutionalised agendas antecedent to and concomitant to producing credible knowledge in line with their own agendas, and thus being able to ‘tell their own story’. The article rejects the continued misrepresentation of the continent as Africa which gives an impression of an undifferentiated mass. It draws parallel to the well-recognised usage of the term ‘*the Americas*’ (Burchfield 2004), and suggests adoption of the term ‘*the Africas*’ in reference to the African continent, to emphasise the cultural, human, political, and geographical diversity of the continent and its islands. The article argues that the contested, challenged, and colonised knowledge space requires that scholars have to break down walls and commit to collaborative and joint knowledge production through co-creating, co-sharing, and co-validating. The knowledge actors need to wake up to the reality that, as long as the market and economic dimension of knowledge is not harnessed, much income is being lost. There are intellectual, utilitarian, pecuniary, and instrumental reasons why the resurgence of Africa in the knowledge process is a matter of economic survival.

Inclusive education and knowledge production

As intimated by Ribbins (2006), exclusive knowledge foundations have shaped that which we claim to know about knowledge and how we know it. The contributions to this thematic approach, although not exhaustive in themselves, argue for a democratic and comprehensive approach to improving knowledge production in Africa. Inclusivity facets of knowledge production and dissemination herein captured relate to gender, methodology, geography, and vulnerable groups.

The first contribution in this section of the issue, on ‘Gender and Knowledge Production in Institutions of Higher Learning: An African Context’ by Zvavahera *et al.* (2021), consolidates and extends the need to address the gendered nature of the knowledge economy and society (Walby 2011). The article employs a multi-country cross-sectional survey methodology and goes beyond substantiating the factors and extent of gender inequality in knowledge production, and recommends ways of narrowing the gap. The findings showed that African women had limited exposure to the knowledge economy due to issues of access to higher education and research grants. The recommendations range from policy to practical interventions to fully support female researchers in knowledge production.

The thesis of the second article, ‘Digital Historical Research and the Repositioning of Africa in Knowledge Production’ by Kusena & Zhou (2021), is that methodologies play a key role in knowledge production, particularly with regards to the history discipline. The article articulates the challenges brought about by the current over-reliance on the use of centralised state archives, and discomfort by scholars in embracing digital sources of data. The recent COVID-19 scourge has challenged the research landscape, pushing historians to rethink their apprehension of digital sources of data. The article calls upon history scholars to embrace digitised data sources to bypass the bureaucracy and other legal complexities of traditional methods of data collection and knowledge dissemination. The digital knowledge dissemination pathway has potential to propel the resurgence of African knowledge to economic prosperity.

The third article, on ‘Geopolitical Diversity in Occupational and Organisational Psychology: Shaking Off Historical Comforts and Confronting Real-world Challenges’ by Puplampu & Lewis (2021), reveals similar exclusionary tendencies in the occupational and organisational psychology (OOP) discipline. The authors explore the advances and highlight the major limitation of the field regarding the lack of diversity in the geopolitical and international sources of OOP theory. Although the OOP theory and tools originated from the West, it finds universal application even in regions with different historical, cultural, political, socio-economic, and philosophical traditions and contexts. This article argues that to migrate theory and research into impactful practice—globally—OOP must engage a deliberate process of fostering

alternative, autochthonous, and indigenous knowledge from geopolitical areas which are under-represented. The article proposes corrective actions and agendas which would assist OOP to become more diverse and support the growth of Africa's contribution to global knowledge production in the work and organisational sciences.

The article recommends that OOP ought to learn from its own tenet of the need for diversity and inclusivity in institutions/corporations, applying the same diversity to itself (Groggins & Ryan 2013). Cognisant, from history lessons, that taking the recommended route is a conscious option, the authors question the desirability and feasibility of OOP practitioners to 'shake off historical comforts and bend their energies to the real-world problems that confront more than 80% of the global population'.

The fourth contribution, on 'Internally Displaced Persons and COVID-19: A Wake-up Call for African Solutions to African Problems—the Case of Zimbabwe' by Madziva *et al.* (2021), puts vulnerable communities particularly internally displaced persons (IDPs) into context. In support of Facer *et al.* (2020), the article argues for inclusive COVID-19 responses rather than the current one-size-fits-all Eurocentric approach. The article advances the need for African solutions to African problems, especially considering the fact that the global COVID-19 pandemic has threatened the capacity of the developed world to support developing countries. The process of inclusion of IDPs necessitates a robust demand for knowledge production that responds to the demands of the society. However, it is those local solutions that can rock the global scene: for instance, a COVID-19 cure could easily come out of Africa.

Concluding remarks

This supplementary issue, although not exhaustive, allows for African voices to be added to the knowledge production and knowledge economies conversations. This is critical not only in reviving African theorisation in ways that makes Africa take its place in finding solutions to global challenges. Africa is argued to be rich, not only in natural resources that have contributed towards enriching the economies of other continents and nations over the years, but also in indigenous knowledges (barely tapped) about how those resources can be harnessed to tackle some of the world's enduring human struggles. The articles in this issue explore the diverse ways in which the dearth in African knowledge production can be tackled, and in the process suggest promising approaches to upscale African knowledge economies and accelerate the continent towards new horizons. It is our hope that the contributions will provoke debate around the world and encourage more African diaspora knowledge economists

and innovators to come out and participate in transnationalism for the enrichment of the continent.

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Decolonising Africa's research,
innovation and development

Decolonising knowledge production on Africa: why it's still necessary and what can be done

Gordon Crawford, Zainab Mai-Bornu and Karl Landström

Abstract: Contemporary debates on decolonising knowledge production, inclusive of research on Africa, are crucial and challenge researchers to reflect on the legacies of colonial power relations that continue to permeate the production of knowledge about the continent, its peoples, and societies. Yet these are not new debates. Sixty years ago, Ghana's first president and pan-Africanist leader, Dr Kwame Nkrumah, highlighted the importance of Africa-centred knowledge. Similarly, in the 1980s, Claude Ake advocated for endogenous knowledge production on Africa. But progress has been slow at best, indicated by the enduring predominance of non-African writers on African issues within leading scholarly journals. Thus, we examine why decolonisation of knowledge production remains so necessary and what can be done within the context of scholarly research in the humanities and social sciences. These questions are addressed at two levels, one more practical and one more reflective. At both levels, issues of power inequalities and injustice are critical. At the practical level, the asymmetrical power relations between scholars in the Global North and South are highlighted. At a deeper level, the critiques of contemporary African authors are outlined, all contesting the ongoing coloniality and epistemic injustices that affect knowledge production on Africa, and calling for a more fundamental reorientation of ontological, epistemological, and methodological approaches in order to decolonise knowledge production.

Keywords: Decolonisation, knowledge production, Nkrumah, power asymmetries, epistemic injustice.

Introduction

The decolonisation of knowledge production has become a major subject for discussion both within academia and in society at large in recent years (Smith 1999, Arowosegbe 2016, Mbembe 2016, Nyamnjoh 2017, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018, Santos 2018). While the decolonisation agenda has been part of postcolonial studies for at least twenty-five years, the contemporary focus was given a major impetus by the ‘#Rhodes must fall’ movement in South Africa in 2015. This commenced at the University of Cape Town in March 2015 with students (successfully) calling for the removal of the statue of the imperialist Cecil Rhodes, with protests then spreading throughout South Africa and worldwide, including the Oxford ‘Rhodes must fall’ movement, and demands broadening to calls for the decolonisation of higher education. Yet, these are not new debates. Sixty years ago, Ghana’s first president and pan-Africanist leader, Dr Kwame Nkrumah, highlighted the importance of Africa-centred knowledge when he established the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana. In the early 1980s, the Nigerian political scientist Claude Ake advocated for endogenous knowledge production on Africa. However, progress since the earlier independence period has been slow at best.

We focus here on the implications of the current decolonisation debates for research and knowledge production on Africa. We outline why decolonisation of knowledge production remains so necessary and explore what can be done within the context of scholarly research in the humanities and social sciences. These questions are addressed at two levels, one more practical and one more reflective. At both levels, issues of power inequalities and injustice are critical. At the more concrete level, the asymmetrical power relations between scholars in the Global North and South are stark. These include the predominance of non-African writers on African issues in academic journals, the lack of direct access to research grant funding by African scholars, and their difficulties in even accessing academic work by African colleagues in non-open-access publications. Measures to address such asymmetries, and thus to assist with decolonisation in research and publishing, are outlined. Yet these are not sufficient. The power asymmetries are symptomatic of a deeper injustice and malaise concerning the *type* of knowledge produced about Africa, and its peoples and societies, that stems from the endurance of Eurocentric epistemologies. The critiques of a number of contemporary African authors are outlined, all contesting the ongoing coloniality and epistemic injustices that affect knowledge production on Africa, and calling for a more fundamental reorientation of ontological, epistemological, and methodological approaches in order to decolonise knowledge production.

The article proceeds in five parts. Following this short introduction, the second part looks at historical precedents in decolonising knowledge production on Africa

and their relative success and failure. The third part then explores why decolonising knowledge is still necessary, examining both scholarly privilege and injustice between Africa-based academics and those in the Global North, as well as the deeper issues of coloniality and epistemic injustice. The fourth part considers what can be done to pursue a decolonisation agenda, including how to counter scholarly power asymmetries as well as how to make progress towards greater epistemic justice. Finally, a brief summary conclusion is provided.

Historical precedents on decolonising knowledge production

Current calls to decolonise knowledge production on Africa are related to colonial practices of power and domination, and indicate that sixty years of independence has not radically altered those relations of power between higher education institutions and individuals in the Global South and North. Legacies still exist and the enduring predominance of non-African writers on African issues within leading scholarly journals remains striking. As Jeremiah Arowosegbe (2016: 324) remarks, this dominance suggests that ‘the production of knowledge on Africa in the humanities and social sciences takes place within historically determined as well as ongoing asymmetrical relations of power’. Or, as Amina Mama (2007: 4, cited in Briggs & Weathers 2016: 487) put it more bluntly, ‘Most of that which is received as knowledge about Africa is produced in the West.’ Yet, while contemporary calls for the decolonisation of knowledge production, and of higher education more generally, resound around universities with increasing vociferousness in both the Global South and North, it is useful to recall that these are not new calls.

Kwame Nkrumah and postcolonial knowledge production

Dr Kwame Nkrumah, independence leader, first president of Ghana, anti-imperialist, and pan-Africanist visionary, sought to undertake the ‘great task of promoting scholarship and research into Africa’s history, culture, thought and resources’ (Nkrumah 1973: 206). Shortly after independence in Ghana in 1957, he took two important initiatives that effectively promoted postcolonial knowledge production on Africa: the establishment of the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana in 1961; and the invitation to the African-American scholar Dr W.E.B. Du Bois to undertake the compilation of an *Encyclopaedia Africana* in Ghana (Allman 2013).

The Institute of African Studies was established with a specifically decolonial mandate. In Nkrumah’s own words at the official opening of the Institute in 1963, its purpose was to study:

the history, culture and institutions, languages and arts of Ghana and of Africa *in new African centred ways*—in entire freedom from the propositions and pre-suppositions of the colonial epoch, and from the distortions of those ... who continue to make European studies of Africa the bases of this new assessment. (speech by Dr Kwame Nkrumah, 25 October 1963, cited in Allman 2013: 183, emphasis added)

This African-centred perspective was also articulated by Nkrumah in his speech at the First International Congress of Africanists held at the University of Ghana on 12 December 1962. Criticising European and American writing on Africa for its use in justifying slavery and colonialism and for its denial of African history that was not linked to European contact (Nkrumah 1973: 208–9), he called on Africanist scholars ‘to work for a complete emancipation of the mind from all forms of domination, control and enslavement’ (1973: 212).

Nkrumah’s explicitly decolonial perspective was similarly emphasised by the Institute of African Studies’ first director, Thomas Hodgkin, stating that:

The next ten years may well be decisive for the African Revolution: hence it is precisely during this period that it is essential to develop within Africa, Centres of African Studies that are liberated ... from conventional Western presuppositions. (*Ghanaian Times*, 21 November 1964, cited in Allman 2013: 190)

The historical significance of this new approach to knowledge production on Africa was evident, as noted by Jean Allman (2013: 192):

In its [the Institute’s] vision and in its praxis, it was transcending, in bold, innovative ways, older paradigms of knowledge production. ... Nkrumah and the Institute’s faculty considered it to be in the vanguard of a pan-African movement to re-imagine, to re-invent how knowledge about Africa was produced, interpreted, and circulated.

Nkrumah’s second initiative was to invite Dr W.E.B. Du Bois, US sociologist, historian, civil rights activist, and fellow pan-Africanist, to relocate to Ghana to work on his *Encyclopaedia Africana* project. This was intended, in Nkrumah’s words, ‘to contain full and up-to-date information about Africa and the African people’ (1973: 206). It was housed within the Ghana Academy of Learning (later renamed the Ghana Academy of Sciences) (Allman 2013: 193–5), where Du Bois spent the last years of his life (1961–3). The legacy of this initiative remains today in Accra in the form of the W.E.B. Du Bois Centre for Pan African Culture.¹

These two initiatives in the early 1960s, closely associated with Nkrumah’s pan-Africanist vision, were highly significant. As expressed by Allman (2013: 193):

¹ <http://webduboiscentreaccra.ghana-net.com/index.html>

In the history of knowledge production about Africa, this constituted an extraordinary moment ...— a moment bursting with possibilities, in which engaged and rigorous debate, Africa-centered and Africa-based, was the prerequisite, no epistemic paradigm was hegemonic, and ‘African Studies’ was envisioned as the site for a full re-imagining of higher education in an African postcolonial world.

But, as is well known, Nkrumah was deposed in a military coup in February 1966, and with his overthrow this moment of decolonial knowledge production faltered, as it had been largely reliant on Nkrumah’s drive. However, as Allman (2013: 193) sums up, ‘But for a brief moment, anyway, the grounds of knowledge production about Africa had certainly shifted dramatically.’

Claude Ake and calls for the decolonisation of the social sciences in Africa

Moving forward to the late 1970s and early 1980s, in his book entitled *Social Science as Imperialism*, the Nigerian political scientist Claude Ake claimed that ‘mainstream Western social science scholarship on Africa and other developing countries amounts to imperialism’ (1982: 124).² In his words, the book is ‘a study of one of the most subtle and pernicious forms of imperialism—imperialism in the guise of scientific knowledge’ (1982: xiii). His critique is particularly directed at the political development theory that was part of the dominant modernisation paradigm, but also extended to sociology and economics (1982: ch.4). He contends that Western scholarship is ‘an important tool for controlling Third World perceptions of *their* world and *their* problems and eventually Third World behaviour’ (1982: 139, emphasis added), although he acknowledged that Western scholars are not necessarily conscious that their work serves imperialism (1982: 124). Arguing along similar lines to Edward Said (1978) in *Orientalism*, Ake notes how ‘the “problems” of Third World societies’ are explained ‘in terms of their *lack* of the characteristics of Western societies’ (1982: 148, emphasis added). In his view, the teleological thinking inherent in Western social science, coupled with its Eurocentric bias, leads to the presentation of Western societies as ‘advanced or even the ideal’, while developing societies are seen as ‘at the lower ends of the developmental continuum’ (1982: 125–7). Insofar as Africa-based social scientists accept these theories, ‘they in effect acknowledge their own inferiority and the superiority of the West’ (1982: 141). Thus, in highlighting the imperialist outcomes, Ake notes that: ‘The West is able to dominate the Third World not simply because of her military and economic power, but also because she has foisted the idea of development on the Third World’ (1982: 141).

² Ake (1982: xiii) makes an exception of the Marxist tradition, though without a full explanation.

In Arowosegbe's (2008a, 2008b) discussion of Claude Ake's contribution to social science and knowledge production in Africa, he notes the parallel drawn by Ake between the colonial/neocolonial division of labour in the economic sphere and that in the production of knowledge. In Arowosegbe's words, 'just as Africa has been reduced to raw material production and Europe specializes in the production of capital goods and finished products, there is also the ideological reduction of the continent to a source from which data are generated and exported to Europe for advancing the frontiers of knowledge' (2008b: 346, citing Ake 1982). In other words, Africa-based scholars are exploited to collect and export the raw (empirical) data to be turned into finished knowledge products by Africanist academics in universities in the North. The persistence of this 'international intellectual division of labour' in the 21st century has been noted by Paul Tiyambe Zeleza (2002: 21): 'African universities and social scientists continue to import appropriate packages of "universal" theory and, at best, export empirical data.' In his view, this 'culture of imported scientific consumerism' was established during colonialism, spread after independence, and endures to this day (2002: 21). Zeleza relates this to what Paulin Hountodji (1997) called 'theoretical extraversion', a 'persistence of the external-gazing structures and ideologies of colonialism' (2002: 21).

Decades earlier, Ake (1982) had noted the adverse implications of this colonial division of labour for knowledge production on Africa. In his view, the dominance of Western scholarship and the inappropriate use of Western theories to explain African social phenomena led to wrongly generalising from one context to another, with inadequate explanations of social realities on the continent. Other African writers made similar critiques. Valentin Y. Mudimbe (1988, 1994) further elucidated the epistemological consequences of these unequal and colonial power relations by demonstrating how Europe invented and represented Africa and how the colonisers shaped African world-views. Mahmood Mamdani (1996) noted the problematic outcomes, in studies of African phenomena, of African experiences and history being constantly compared to European and North American counterparts. In discussing African politics and democracy, Mamdani (1992: 2228) argued that this has led to solutions to African problems being drawn from contexts which have little in common with contemporary realities in Africa, rather than being drawn from the African context in which they arose.

In seeking an alternative social science, Ake advocated for endogenous knowledge production on Africa. As editor-in-chief of the first issue of the *African Journal of Political Economy*, he stated that 'unless we strive for endogenous development of science and knowledge we cannot fully emancipate ourselves' (1986: III). As noted by Arowosegbe (2008a: 27), Ake stood for 'the development of a social science scholarship ... [that is] rooted in its culture and locale'. This makes sense, of course. African

scholars are in a much better position to understand social phenomena in their own countries and localities. Kwesi Yankah made a similar point, one that supported the call for endogeneity, when he commented on the oftentimes poor and inadequate knowledge produced about Africa by Western academics, and noted in contrast that researchers based within Africa have a ‘deep privileged knowledge and analysis of ground material’ (Yankah 1995: 10, cited in Briggs & Weathers 2016: 470).

Why is decolonising knowledge production still necessary?

Despite these earlier precedents in the postcolonial period, and after more than six decades of political independence in most of sub-Saharan Africa, knowledge production on Africa remains characterised by stark asymmetries of power. As Arowosegbe (2016: 324) noted, these are both ‘historically determined’, with their origins in colonial relations, and remain ‘ongoing’ to this day. Some of such asymmetries of power are visible and direct; others are more hidden and indirect. Therefore, the decolonisation of knowledge remains necessary from a justice perspective. Enduring injustice takes different forms, and we explore two here. First, there is the injustice in terms of unequal access to resources and opportunities between scholars from the Global North and South. Second, there is the key issue of epistemic injustice and the question of ‘whose knowledge counts’, with many voices and perspectives remaining unheard and unrecognised, especially those from less powerful institutions and marginalised communities. We examine these two aspects of enduring injustice in turn.

Scholarly privilege and injustice

The respective privilege and disadvantage accorded to scholars of African Studies in the Global North and South, respectively, remains very evident. One manifestation of such power relations was highlighted by Ryan Briggs and Scott Weathers (2016). They analysed all research articles in *African Affairs* and *Journal of Modern African Studies*, top-ranked Africanist journals in the English-speaking world, over a period of twenty-one years (1993 to 2013). Their findings were that Africa-based authors were publishing not only a small proportion of articles, but a declining share in both journals. Despite year-on-year fluctuations, the percentage of articles by Africa-based authors had declined overall from around 25% in the early 1990s to 15% by 2013 (Briggs & Weathers 2016: 474–5). Since 2005, there had been no year in which Africa-based authors contributed more than 20% of articles in either journal. In terms of gender, the findings were even more blunt. Most articles written by Africa-based

academics were by men, with Africa-based women publishing only twenty-one single-authored articles out of 935 articles in the database (2016: 474). In seeking to explain this, Briggs and Weathers noted that submission rates from Africa-based authors had actually increased, but acceptance rates were low and declining. They suggested two possible explanations for this, while noting that they had no means to empirically evaluate such propositions and that future research is needed. The first explanation is editorial gatekeeping and reviewer bias, with the assumption that the majority of reviewers are from Global North institutions and could display implicit bias (2016: 477). The second possible explanation for declining acceptance rates is low quality of submissions. Briggs and Weathers stated that this was the most common explanation proffered in informal conversations during the research. If there is any truth to this, then they suggest that it relates to the increased pressure on academics in African universities with rising student numbers coupled with declining levels of state support for tertiary education in many countries. As they state, the ‘financial situation of African universities is likely to be part of the story’ (Briggs & Weathers 2016: 478), with less time and opportunities for academics to undertake research and writing.

Peace Medie & Alice Kang (2018) undertook research to ascertain the representation of Global-South-based scholars in journals in the area of women, gender, and politics, a literature that has grown hugely in the last three decades, including research on Global South countries. The results were quite alarming. Of the 947 articles published in four leading European and North American journals between 2008 and 2017, less than 3% were by scholars from Global South institutions. Of the four journals, the highest proportion was in the *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, yet even here less than 5% of articles were authored by a researcher at a Southern institution. In seeking to explain why Global South scholars are marginalised in this way, one factor particular to Africa pertains to the adoption of structural adjustment policies by African governments in the 1980s and the consequent ‘hollowing out of many African universities, leading to reduced funding for research and training, poorly stocked libraries, low salaries, and heavy teaching loads’ (Medie & Kang 2018: 44, citing Mama, 2002; Zeleza, 2003). However, this does not provide a full explanation. Medie & Kang (2018: 38) noted that previous feminist critiques in the 1980s and 1990s had highlighted unequal global power relations, ones that stemmed from colonialism:

Critical feminists, including postcolonial feminists, African feminists and South Asian feminists, writing in the 1980s and 1990s argued that approaches to the study of women and gender in the Global South adopted by white Western feminists were steeped in and reinforced unequal global power relations

And they conclude that the ongoing under-representation of scholars in the Global South continues to ‘demonstrate the hegemony of Western gender politics scholarship

and reinforces the power disparity in knowledge production between the North and South' (Medie & Kang 2018: 38).

Another significant aspect of the asymmetrical power relations between scholars in the Global North and South has been access to research funds. The sources of such funds are mainly Western governments and corporate foundations, and eligibility to apply is often restricted, especially to national government research council funds. Of course, research on countries in Africa has been a key focus of many funders, and this has required African 'partners'. While there may be good intent on the part of the Global North researchers to implement equal working relationships with their 'Southern partners', there are still enduring dimensions of power and privilege. Chisomo Kalinga (2019) provides insight into the complexity, and issues of navigating global research partnerships in the Global South as an indigenous scholar. She highlights a wide range of troubling expectations and practices from her own experiences that tend to reinforce the power of those with the funding. African staff are often pressured to keep projects running despite the challenges of working with 'research fatigued' communities who never seem to benefit directly from the research. Research frameworks and timelines clash with trust-building processes and, due to the constraints of contracts and deadlines, many external research partners are often too impatient to understand the social codes that govern the relationship between the indigenous researchers, research participants, and communities. Indigenous staff have to withstand the worst of the discontent and the aggression, stemming from a history of exploitation, power inequality, racism, and unjust income distribution. In Kalinga's view, there is a lot of potential in multi-country collaboration, but one has to take seriously the negative effects that the unequal power dynamics between the Global North and Global South systematically have on African scholars. Kalinga (2019: 272) suggests that 'these grants should ideally have forums where African researchers and academics are given platforms to be authoritative sources of and experts on their cultures and communities'. She calls for equity in collaboration where the cultural concerns and constraints of Global South partners are not suppressed by their Global North counterparts.

Coloniality and epistemic injustice

The asymmetries highlighted here, such as the predominance of non-African writers on African issues and the division of labour and unequal terms of trade between African and Global North researchers, are but symptoms of a deeper injustice and malaise that stems from what Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) describes as the 'myths of decolonization' and the continued impact of the 'colonial matrix of power'. In his view, the end of direct colonial rule did not lead to an independent African

postcolonial world, but instead to a 'postcolonial neocolonized world'. Influenced by the critical coloniality perspective of radical Latin American authors, such as Ramón Grosfuegel (2007) and Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2007), Ndlovu-Gatsheni defines the concept of 'coloniality' as different from colonialism. Coloniality refers to 'the longstanding patterns of power that emerged from colonialism and continue to define culture, labour, intersubjective relations and knowledge production, long after the end of direct colonialism. It is that continuing dominating phenomenon that survived colonialism' (2013: 16). He further states that 'Africans have breathed and lived coloniality since their colonial encounters and it continues to shape their everyday life today' (2013: 16). In terms of knowledge production, Ndlovu-Gatsheni notes that coloniality takes different forms and is inclusive of the coloniality of knowledge which 'addresses the epistemological questions of how colonial modernity interfered with African modes of knowing, social meaning-making, imagining, seeing and knowledge production, and their replacement with Eurocentric epistemologies' (2013: 8, citing Escobar 2007). In effect, 'Euro-American hegemonic knowledge [has] banished alternative epistemologies from Africa and other parts of the Global South' (2013: 4).

In recent work, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2020) situates unequal power relations in knowledge production within broader global structures driven by dominant neoliberalism. He argues that knowledge was corporatised and commercialised through neoliberal structural changes and the adoption of neoliberal philosophies in the wake of the Washington Consensus, a transformation that has led other scholars such as Mamdani (2007, 2011) to note that the university has become a marketplace. Similarly, Francis Nyamnjoh (2004) has argued that education in Africa is the victim of a Western epistemological export that has taken the form of science as ideological hegemony. Education in Africa has been modelled after educational institutions in the West with the aim of being competitive internationally with little regard for domestic needs and interests. This has led to the devaluation of African epistemology, agency, and value systems and to an internalised sense of inadequacy (Nyamnjoh 2012). Nyamnjoh (2004) argued that, if Africa wants to be part of global conversations on scholarship and the role of universities, then it would only be appropriate to do so on its own terms and with the interests of ordinary Africans as a guiding principle. In a later paper, he further argued that African universities in their attempts to decolonise university education have managed to significantly Africanise their personnel but not their curricula, epistemologies, or pedagogical structures in a systematic or productive manner (Nyamnjoh 2019). The Western traditions of knowledge production and the epistemologies that inform it have hardly been addressed in any meaningful or transformative manner (Nyamnjoh 2019). He proposes that any serious attempts at creating inclusive African universities that embrace African traditions of knowing and knowledge production would require looking outside of the academy in its current

configuration. This would include taking the cosmologies, ontologies, and lived experiences of Africans seriously and to embrace these in the interest of a more relevant scholarship (Nyamnjoh 2012, 2019).

This notion of epistemic hegemony is closely related to discussions of 'epistemic injustice'. The philosopher Miranda Fricker (2007) is largely credited with the introduction of this concept which pertains to a distinctively epistemic kind of injustice that fundamentally consists of a wrong done to someone specifically in their capacity as a knower (Fricker 2007:1). It was later defined as 'those forms of unfair treatment that relate to issues of knowledge, understanding, and participation in communicative practices' (Kidd *et al.* 2017: 1). As a concept, epistemic injustice has been widely applied in different spheres, including to issues of decolonising knowledge production.

Writing from the Indian context, Rajeev Bhargava (2013) made the direct link between the epistemic dimension of colonial oppression and the notion of epistemic injustice. He distinguishes epistemic injustice from other ongoing forms of injustice perpetrated by the colonising states, such as political and economic injustices. Bhargava (2013) adopts a slightly different conception of epistemic injustice than the Frickerian conception. He argues that epistemic injustice occurs when the concepts and categories through which a people understand themselves and their world are either replaced or negatively affected by the categories and concepts of the colonisers. These concepts and categories constitute epistemic frameworks, historically generated and collectively sustained systems of meaning by which members of a group make sense and evaluate their individual and collective life. Bhargava (2013) suggests that there are many ways in which these injustices operate and provides two examples. The first occurs when dominant epistemic frameworks prevent one from having a secure knowledge of the historical and cultural traditions of one's own community: that is, the local epistemic framework of the group is either unavailable or may be present but unrecognisable as it has been scattered and diffused by the dominant framework. A second form is when the frameworks of the colonised group are still intact and exist as an option, but are rejected as worthless. In interfering with other cultures in such ways, colonialism distorted epistemic frameworks in accordance with the values of the colonisers. This distortion is diverse and develops differently in different contexts. Bhargava (2013) argues, similar to Nyamnjoh (2019) and Mamdani (2018) in the African context, that the academy plays a significant role in this new phase of (post) colonialism or what is called 'coloniality' above. In Bhargava's (2013) view, the modern Indian university has inherited and borrowed an array of practices and discourses from the colonisers, including a reliance on Western academic practice and theory, and have become ongoing transmitters of colonial power.

Turning to Africa, André Keet (2014) offers an insightful account, yet ultimately a rather pessimistic one, of epistemic injustice and why the decolonisation of

knowledge is both complex and difficult. He concurs with Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) that ‘the worst form of colonization ... on the continent is the epistemological one (colonisation of imagination and the mind)’ (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013, cited in Keet 2014: 24), and indicates the complicity of academic disciplines and the higher education sector in Africa more generally. In analysing processes of knowledge and power, he examines how colonial knowledge became so dominant through ‘epistemic othering’, which denies or misrecognises epistemic identities of indigenous and colonised peoples. Thus Fricker’s concept of epistemic injustice is inscribed into disciplinary formations of knowledge in the academy, which are constantly affirmed and reaffirmed through everyday acts of ‘micro-othering’ in research, teaching, and learning. Thus, such epistemic injustice is legitimised by the very mode of disciplining knowledge and largely rendered ‘invisible to the academy itself’ (Keet 2014: 24). Keet draws on Foucault’s distinction between *savoir* and *connaissance*, where *connaissance* refers to disciplinary bodies of knowledge in scientific fields, while *savoir* is that underlying general knowledge which enables (‘creates the conditions for’) an object of knowledge to be taken up by a discipline, for example, in Foucault’s own work, ‘madness’ as an object for study in psychiatry (2014: 24). Yet, for indigenous knowledge in Africa, these conditions created by *savoir* were insufficient for disciplinary formation due to colonial displacement. In other words, there was an absence of the necessary *savoir*. In turn, this has meant that African Studies, due to the ‘brutal dislocation of *savoir* across the continent’, has been tied to a Western base. In Keet’s (2014: 24) words, ‘it [African Studies] draws knowledge of Africa by African scholars on a Western canvass’. This absence of *savoir*, necessary for knowledge reformulations, largely accounts for the ‘inertia and sterility of decolonization efforts over the past few decades’ (2014: 31). But to continue the metaphor, Keet paints a rather bleak picture of structured determinism where colonial knowledge formations are so all-embracing that, in his words, ‘the decolonization of knowledge [is] a near impossible task’ (2014: 25). However, Keet does argue for a new definitional framework for the decolonisation of knowledge with the possibility for innovative knowledge practices centred around epistemic justice and disrupting the disciplines, and calls for the academic resources and political courage to make this possible (2014: 35).

Pascah Mungwini (2017) also draws on the notion of epistemic injustice to conceptualise wrongdoing in knowledge production in Africa today, and adds historical and philosophical dimensions to the debates. He critiques the historic myth of emptiness and its consequences on Africa. He states ‘African Know thyself’ (Mungwini, 2017: 5), an urgent call to Africans to rise up and grasp the distinctive particularity of their history as a people of equal epistemic and ontological standing with the rest of humanity. For Mungwini, Africans must unwaveringly identify and pronounce their locus of enunciation— who they are and from where they speak. Mungwini (2017: 11)

argues that the ground for justifying the denial of the epistemic capabilities of the indigenous peoples of Africa had been laid before the colonial encounter. Through the work of influential scholars such as Hume, Kant, and Hegel, who denied the rationality of the African, a type of epistemic injustice is perpetuated as the African is denied their status and capacity as a bearer of knowledge. As colonialism instituted and sustains relations of dominance and subservience through most aspects of life, it also did so in the realm of knowledge production. Denying the epistemic status of the African, African traditions, and African forms of knowing are components of this colonial domination. Mungwini (2017: 12) captures the consequences of this domination:

Only rational beings can interpret the world around them, and since Africans were denied that ability, concepts had to be developed and donated to them in order to assist them to make sense of their reality. It is this injustice that today renders conceptual decolonisation an indispensable aspect of philosophical practice in Africa.

Mungwini demonstrates the unjust reasoning behind the rejection of the African knower, African traditions and African forms of knowing that led to their sustained marginalisation.

The focus here is on the historicity of the African existence, which maintains that the African experience should be the foundation from which one should seek to understand and interpret its politics, history, and philosophy (Ramose 2000). In his book titled *Of Africa*, Wole Soyinka (2012: 27) rightly challenges the colonial paradigm of 'discovery' and argued that Africa has always been there and is not a colonial creation. As Ndlovu-Gatsheni also states, Africans were always present (2018: 2). Wale Adebani (2016: 350) informs us that the question at the heart of intellectual thought and knowledge production in Africa is not so much about its 'independence' as it is about its 'originality'. According to Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999: 28), this speaks to the attempt to rewrite and re-right Africa's position in history and in the process unsettle the paradigm within which epistemic injustice continues to thrive. A major consequence of the Eurocentric dominance has given rise to calls for epistemic freedom born out of epistemic injustice. Some even refer to this as 'dehumanisation' (Nabudere 2011), 'epistemicide' (Santos 2014), and 'epistemic violence' (Makgoba 1998, Heleta 2016).

The academic sector has witnessed increasing calls to champion the decolonisation of knowledge production within African universities (see Kamola, 2011, Táíwò, 2012, Mbembe, 2016, Molefe 2016, Shay 2016, Ndofirepi & Gwaravanda, 2019). In his 2016 work that discusses colonial legacies within the African higher education system, Achille Joseph Mbembe (2016: 32) points to the centrality of the Eurocentric epistemic canon and the fact that syllabuses designed to meet the needs of colonialism and

apartheid are continuing well into the liberation era, and this cannot be the accepted norm. Mbembe (2016: 33) calls for decolonisation as the Western has become hegemonic. The Western notion of academic knowledge production brings with it particular discursive scientific practices and interpretive frameworks, and it is difficult to think outside of these frames due to its hegemonic status. However, Mbembe's (2016: 33) argument goes even further as he argues that the Western hegemonic tradition also actively represses that which is articulated and thought of outside of the hegemonic framework. Mbembe (2016: 33) suggests that these are the reasons why a process of decolonisation, both of knowledge and of the university as an institution, is necessary. He cites the examples of present-day universities as large systems of authoritative control, standardisation, gradation, accountancy, classification, credits, and penalties. Mbembe (2016: 30) uses this to show the need to decolonise:

the systems of access and management that have turned higher education into a marketable product, rated, bought and sold by standard units, measured, counted and reduced to staple equivalence by impersonal, mechanical tests and therefore readily subject to statistical consistency, with numerical standards and units.

This form of decolonisation, he further explains, is necessitated due to its influence in discouraging both students and teachers from a free pursuit of knowledge while substituting the purpose of free pursuit of knowledge for another, the pursuit of credits.

What can be done?

Calls for the decolonisation of knowledge production in academia have intensified in recent years (see, for instance, the work of Mbembe 2016, Heleta 2016, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018, Nyamnjoh 2019, Arowosegbe 2016), including in the humanities and social sciences. While the need for decolonising knowledge production is well established, there has been insufficient attention on how to achieve this in practice. In line with the above discussion about why decolonisation of knowledge production is necessary, here we outline possible measures to contribute to that process at two different levels. The first involves practical measures to increase the representation of Africa-based scholars in scholarly knowledge production, thus countering asymmetries and current injustices. The second set of measures entails a more fundamental reorientation of how knowledge is produced and the nature of knowledge on Africa, seeking to address current epistemic injustice.

Countering asymmetries

A number of Northern-based journals and academic associations have attempted to address the under-representation of Africa-based researchers, and by extension those in the Global South more generally. Measures include writing workshops that provide practical support mostly to Africa-based early career researchers on academic writing and publishing. For example, the African Studies Association of the UK's writing workshop programme, in existence since 2009, offers academic mentorship to (mostly early career) scholars based in African institutions, and is organised in collaboration with African universities. The British Academy also provides funding for writing workshops some of which have been held in the Global South, including Ghana, Algeria, and Mexico that built capacities on academic writing focusing on high-impact international journals. Similarly, the journal *African Studies Review*, published by the African Studies Association (USA), holds Pipeline for Emerging African Studies Scholars (PEASS) Workshops to provide mentorship and develop high-quality journal submissions, although this is not limited to Africa-based scholars. Medie & Kang (2018) made a range of recommendations for improving the representation of scholars from the Global South in high-ranking journals. They proposed to journal editors that journal submission rates be tracked by location, along with the encouragement of scholars from the Global South to submit manuscripts; to adopt and implement an editorial vision that promotes inclusion; and to extend invitations to scholars in the Global South to serve on editorial boards and as editors. They also asked professional organisations to sponsor research in the Global South; to sponsor writing workshops for such scholars; and to extend invitations for conference participation and workshops. Individual researchers were also encouraged to undertake cross-regional research collaborations (Medie & Kang 2018: 45), although this also raises the question of equity and balance in these collaborations, ensuring that the Global South scholars are not reduced to mainly data collectors and excluded in major publications. Aimed at addressing the particularly low representation of African women within academia, the Merian Institute for Advanced Studies in Africa (MIASA) at the University of Ghana, has held a series of 'Female Academic Career' workshops in Dakar since 2018, including sessions on publishing and applying for research grants.³

While building the capacity of Africa-based scholars to publish internationally is clearly important, another approach is to encourage scholars in both the Global South and North to contribute to journals published by African universities, and hence enhance their status. Claude Ake was aware of the significance of Africa-based journals with the establishment of the *African Journal of Political Economy* in 1986,

³ <https://www.ug.edu.gh/mias-africa/content/female-academic-career-workshop>

and their role in the publication of endogenous research. Diana Jeater (2018: 25) comments that African scholars must make a choice ‘whether to accept and cultivate the dominant research culture of the North in order to get “thinking from the South” published in international journals; or whether to attempt to challenge that hegemony and establish parallel African journals and publishing houses outside the international high-IF [impact factor] rankings’. Arowosegbe (2016: 325) notes that a limited number of journals published by Nigerian universities, for example, are indexed in the Web of Science database, and that to increase this number would also require a commitment to publish therein of established African scholars in the diaspora. The *Contemporary Journal of African Studies*, based at the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana, is one journal that is increasingly recognised internationally for its strong contribution to African-centred scholarship.

Opportunities for academic conference attendance is another area of inequality, not least because major African Studies-related conferences are held in Europe and North America. To increase access for Africa-based researchers, some professional bodies such as the African Studies Association, the Association for African Studies in Germany (VAD), the European Conference on African Studies (ECAS), and the Development Studies Association (UK) are supporting conference attendance through full sponsorship. The European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI) also provides conference fee waivers to African and Asian scholars. While welcome, a major constraint for Africa-based scholars is getting visas to attend conferences, especially in the United Kingdom and the United States. The visa issue is something to be dealt with politically and legally as it remains as a major hindrance for equal participation and engagement at the international level for Global South scholars. Similar to the above discussion about journal publications, it is hardly radical to propose that African Studies conferences would be more appropriately located in Africa. The establishment in 2013 of the African Association of African Studies (ASAA) by various Centres and Institutes for African Studies at African universities, and the holding of its biannual conference, are important steps in promoting the advancement of research and knowledge production on African peoples and cultures on the continent itself. Recent developments with the COVID-19 global pandemic have led to a dramatic shift to virtual conference attendance via online platforms such as Zoom. Although this shift has provided more opportunities for scholars to participate without physical attendance, many scholars in the Global South remain constrained by inadequate electrical power supply and unstable internet connectivity. Therefore, going forward into an online future, it is evident that challenges remain to engagement on an equal footing between scholars based in the Global South and Global North.

Towards epistemic justice?

Important as such measures and developments are in countering asymmetries in access to and production of knowledge on Africa, as well as in questioning the power dynamics between researchers and institutions in the Global North and South, they do not necessarily amount to a decolonisation of knowledge, as such. To address current epistemic injustices and their links to coloniality, a more radical questioning of epistemological approaches is required.

To create a properly informed setting for decolonising knowledge entails the need to take a step back and critically re-examine strategies that would disrupt the norms in terms of how knowledge is produced within our view of the world and the space we occupy within it. To unsettle the paradigm, we have to 'rethink thinking' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018: 23) which Lewis Gordon (2006) declared as 'shifting the geography of reason' and entails a number of decolonial moves. Rethinking thinking acknowledges the cultural asphyxiation of those numerous 'others', the generally accepted norm, and strives to bring other categories of self definition, of dreaming, of acting, of loving, of living into the commons as matter of universal concern (Hoppers & Richards, 2012: 8). The emphasis here is on the experiences and actions of the relatively powerless, which favours scrutinising power from the bottom up and the identification of the ways through which knowledge production could be used to contribute to reflection on power relationships. As a decolonial move, rethinking thinking is informed by a clear-cut principle that all human beings are not only born into a knowledge system, but are legitimate knowers and producers of knowledge (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018). Tlostanova and Mignolo (2012: 12) argue for a system of 'learning to un-learn in order to re-learn' which includes opening to other knowledges and thinkers beyond the dominance of those from Europe and North America. Radical departures from the existing norms can be quite challenging and are never easy, but they open up novel avenues for questioning what was once unquestioned and unquestionable (Msimang 2015). This opens us to a process of 'learning to unlearn' through 'forgetting what we have been taught, to break free from the thinking programs imposed on us by education, culture, and social environment, always marked by the Western imperial reason' (Tlostanova and Mignolo 2012: 7).

The situated nature of knowledge, the wish to create non-hierarchical knowledge, and an orientation towards emancipatory action (Enria 2016) form part of these concerns. The reinvention of social emancipation within knowledge production is premised upon replacing what Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2003, 2004) calls the 'monoculture of scientific knowledge' by an 'ecology of knowledges'. This 'ecology of knowledges' is open to the promotion of non-relativistic dialogues among knowledges, granting 'equality of opportunities' to the different kinds of knowledge engaged

in even broader epistemological disputes aimed both at maximising their respective contributions to decolonising knowledge and power and building a more democratic and just society (Santos 2007, Smith 2012). In more recent work, Santos (2014, 2016, 2018) introduced the term ‘Epistemologies of the South’ and dramatically juxtaposed these to ‘Epistemologies of the North’. While the latter epitomise the classical positivist approach to knowledge that portrays itself as scientific, neutral, an objective representation of reality, and the only source of valid knowledge, for Santos ‘Epistemologies of the North’ are the supposedly ‘scientific knowledge’ that along with economic and military power enabled imperial domination, with some echoes here of Ake (1982). In strong terms, Santos states that ‘Epistemologies of the North’ entail the hegemonic knowledge that legitimates oppression and reproduces capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy. Santos makes the point that Epistemologies of the North can also flourish in the geographical South. In contrast, ‘Epistemologies of the South’ respond to the coloniality of knowledge and therefore the need to retrieve silenced and marginalised knowledges. Thus, Epistemologies of the South enable oppressed social groups to represent the world in their own terms, as part of struggles of resistance against oppression and the knowledge that legitimates it. It entails opening up to new forms of knowledge and understanding in which the voices and perceptions of marginalised people and communities are central.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018: 1) calls for complete epistemic freedom, away from the long-term consequences of modernity, enslavement, and colonialism, which subjugated Africans as agents in a Eurocentric history. Epistemic freedom underscores the right to think, theorise, interpret the world, develop one’s own methodologies and write from where one is located, unencumbered by Eurocentrism (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018: 3). This requires the genuine acknowledgement and acceptance of the contribution of the indigenous people of Africa to knowledge generation, and involves the significant presence of their knowledge paradigms in the formal education curriculum, presently dominated by Western knowledge paradigms (Masaka 2019: 298; see also Fricker 2007). However, Dennis Masaka (2019) defends a more demanding view than just ensuring coexistence of diverse knowledge paradigms in formal education. Rather, epistemic justice, for Masaka, entails a more substantive decolonisation and transformation of the curriculum that ought to focus on empowering learners to take the lead in tackling the challenges that African countries face today. Thus, he is suggesting that the recognition and acceptance of indigenous knowledge paradigms are necessary steps toward epistemic justice, but not the end goal in itself.

Mbembe explains that African universities must undertake decolonisation both of knowledge and of the university as an institution (Mbembe, 2016: 33). He argues that more needs to be done in order to achieve this. He puts forward a two-sided approach that, first, fights the ‘epistemic coloniality’ in terms of critiquing the dominant

Eurocentric model; and, second, to start imagining what the alternative model would look like (2016: 36). Mbembe relates this to what Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986; cited as 1981 in Mbembe 2016: 34) termed a new struggle over the educational content to be taught to the African child and the terms under which African children should be taught (2016: 35). Such a move would bring an end to the university system as we know it and give rise to what Mbembe (2016: 36) calls 'pluriversity' (also see Santos 2018), a knowledge production process that is receptive to epistemic diversity via a horizontal strategy of openness to dialogue among different epistemic traditions. One question Mbembe posed was the issue of timing and whether the university is reformable (2016: 37)? Can universities shift away from the Eurocentric 'epistemic canon' model (Mbembe, 2016: 32)?

Similarly, Amasa Philip Ndofirepi and Ephraim Taurai Gwaravanda (2019: 325) have called for dialogue among the diverse forms of knowledge, but this could be problematic in a situation where the dominant force is not favourably disposed to engaging in dialogue. Dialogue helps to extend the horizon of possibilities and signifies a key component of constant renovation of knowledge more in terms of cognitive justice and the recognition of diverse ways of knowing by which human beings across the globe make sense of their existence. Thus, dialogue helps to broaden the landscape of research possibilities (Ordorika 1999) and signifies a key component of constant renovation of knowledge.

To reform, African universities must open up 'to different bodies and traditions of knowledge and knowledge-making in new and exploratory ways' (Heleta 2016: 2), in other words, the universities have to embark on a process of rethinking, reframing, and reconstructing. Keet *et al.* (2017) directly discuss the means to turn decolonial rhetoric into practice. Starting by bringing African decolonial thinking into conversation with the Latin American decoloniality network and Asian post-colonial scholars, they suggest greater linkages with other critical theories, notably feminist theory, queer theory, critical race theory, and so on. In his view, this could create a colloquy of critical theories and practices to explore and critique the power mechanics of institutions with a commitment to create a more socially just academia (Keet *et al.* 2017).

Since decolonisation entails 'deconstruction and reconstruction' (see Smith 1999, Chilisa 2012: 17), we argue for a decolonial methodological framework in research which is more than a political goal: it is a goal of social justice expressed through and across a wide range of psychological, social, cultural, and economic terrains (Smith, 1999, 2008). Research should be a platform that enables those who have suffered long histories of oppression and marginalisation to be provided with a space to communicate their world-views and experiences (Chilisa 2012). The emphasis is the way in which knowledge is acquired or discovered and as a way in which we can 'know' what

is real (Smith, 1999, 2008). Participatory approaches/methodologies have long been advocated as means to generate knowledge that addresses power inequalities, passing power from researcher(s) to research participants (Chambers 1997) and endorsing diverse perspectives of social realities as endogenous knowledge. While critiques were rightly made of the shortcomings of participatory discourse (Cooke & Kothari 2001), we assert that participatory approaches retain transformatory potential (Hickey & Mohan 2004). In many instances, advocates for the decolonisation of knowledge production and for participatory methodologies share a common critique of conventional/mainstream knowledge and an intent to validate a variety of forms of knowledge.

Participatory research as decolonising knowledge can lead to qualitative changes in power relations both in the research process and in generating endogenous knowledge that highlights marginalised perspectives and challenges structures of injustice. This might include expanding possibilities for intercultural dialogue and enabling more equitable research collaborations to occur. Ways of producing knowledge on the Global South require a critical review of research methods and theories that enable non-hegemonic viewpoints, approaches, and voices to enter the conversation. The use of participatory methods entails certain advantages related with the process of collectively undertaking and generating research findings. Vulnerable communities can understand the research process, why research is needed, and ultimately how it can be produced together, thereby dismantling the traditional hierarchy between researcher and participant-as-researcher and transformed into a space where all knowledge is valued and heard (Martin *et al.* 2019). However, various challenges arise in participatory research which need to be addressed. For example, tensions between those directly involved in the area of research and others less directly involved and their relative power in the actual process arise when working on issues revolving around dismantling binaries, such as Global North and South, gender, race, sexuality, and other forms of identity. Power inequalities silence some, while amplifying the voices of others. Therefore, a careful balancing of competing priorities and negotiating common positions through participatory methodologies is required in order to serve as important aspects of knowledge production in social science research (Yeates & Amaya 2014). Therefore, focus should be on methodologies and tools that will develop a more power-conscious practice and explore pedagogies that focus on the transformation of power relations.

Conclusion

This article has examined the issue of decolonising knowledge production in the humanities and social sciences, with a particular focus on Africa. This issue is currently highly visible and controversial in higher education institutions globally. Calls to decolonise education processes arose in the wake of the challenge to universities that emerged with the ‘Rhodes must fall’ movement and associated student protests in South Africa in 2015, including the subsequent waves of protest around the world, including in the UK.

Our starting point was to note that this contemporary debate is not new, unsurprisingly given that political independence in most of sub-Saharan Africa occurred over sixty years ago. We highlighted how Nkrumah, as first president of Ghana and pan-Africanist, established the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana with a decolonial mandate to generate Africa-centred knowledge that distinguished itself from ‘European studies of Africa’. We noted how prominent African social scientists, such as Claude Ake in the 1980s, resisted the dominance of Western theories and paradigms in explaining African phenomena. Yet, despite these important precedents, the failure to fully decolonise knowledge production remains as a critical impediment that limits understanding of African societies and cultures. Thus, we have explored why it remains necessary and what can be done to pursue such decolonisation within the context of scholarly research.

Our proposition is that these questions can be addressed at different levels, and we have highlighted a more practical level and a more reflexive level concerning the nature of knowledge production. At both levels, issues of power inequalities and injustice are key. At the more concrete and practical level, we highlighted the asymmetrical power relations between scholars in the Global North and South in research activities and the marginalisation of African scholarship in leading journals. We outlined potential ways in which such asymmetries could be challenged and countered: for instance, through greater equity in research collaboration and greater inclusion of Africa-based scholars as editors/editorial board members of leading journals on Africa. However, although desirable, such measures are insufficient. There remains the deeper level of the type of knowledge produced by Western-centric epistemologies. We have outlined the reflections and analysis of a number of contemporary African and other authors, all striving to contest the ongoing coloniality and epistemic injustices that continue to influence knowledge production on Africa and elsewhere in the Global South. Thus, decolonisation is complex and difficult and calls for a more fundamental reorientation of ontological, epistemological, and methodological approaches. It requires such profound measures as ‘rethinking thinking’ (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018) in order to unsettle dominant Eurocentric paradigms, and a shift to developing ‘ecologies of

knowledge' and 'Epistemologies of the South' (Santos 2007, 2014) to (re)discover alternative ways of understanding the world, notably through listening to excluded and marginalised voices. Finally, in terms of an appropriate decolonising methodology, we suggest that advocates for the decolonisation of knowledge production and for participatory approaches share a common critique of mainstream knowledge and an intent to generate endogenous knowledge that highlights marginalised perspectives and challenges structures of injustice. This is an area for further research in the crucial struggles to decolonise knowledge production on Africa and elsewhere.

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Revisiting (inclusive) education in the postcolony

*Hadiza Kere Abdulrahman, Foluke Adebisi,
Zibah Nwako and Elizabeth Walton*

Abstract: This article uses a dialogic approach to explore the complex state of education in the postcolony. It revisits the subject of educational inclusion (and exclusion) and interrogates different epistemological and systemic framings of what constitutes education and knowledge, and the effects that these have on the postcolonial educational landscape. The authors ask troubling questions of the ways that the largely Eurocentric conceptualisations of these issues, and the baggage of colonial(ism/ity) can and do affect the design and delivery of education in these settings. The use of a metalogue as a methodological approach allows the contributors to jointly ponder the issues from different perspectives and positionalities, and in a way that honours their individual voices.

Keywords: Education, inclusive education, exclusion, knowledge, postcolony, colonial(ism/ity).

Introduction

Education in postcolonial societies is complex and entangled with the past and present exercise of global power. Multiple, often competing, demands and influences shape education systems. One of the demands is for universal access to education, variously framed by the ‘Education for All’ and inclusive education initiatives. These are, in turn, imbricated with global discourses of ‘development’ and ‘aid’, and tend to offer an imaginary of access to Western-style classrooms and knowledge. The authors of this paper are concerned through dialogue to interrogate ways in which ‘education’ and ‘inclusion’ are often conceptualised within a Eurocentric framework. Mignolo (2002) states that it is no longer possible, or at least unproblematic to ‘think’ only from the canon of Western philosophy as to do this means to reproduce the blind epistemic ethnocentrism that makes difficult, if not impossible any political philosophy of inclusion. This contributes to what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013a) refers to as the rise of the decolonial epistemic perspective as a counter-hegemonic intellectual thought, questioning and challenging Euro-American epistemology’s claims of being the only mode of knowing that is neutral, objective, disembodied, and universal. Within this framing, as authors we therefore acknowledge the continual need to revisit the meanings and purposes of education and their scope; especially in situations where people are working with thinking, and in contexts otherwise.

Use of metalogue as an approach

The idea of a metalogue, a ‘dialogic’ approach, and in this case a four-way conversation between the authors, came about from an acknowledgement of the conceptual and methodological complexities of this work and the value of diverse perspectives. It was originally intended as a panel discussion, and we are experimenting with a way to translate the immediacy of discussion and interaction of a panel (Allen 2017) into a written form in a way that doesn’t collapse individual authorial contribution. The four authors come from different backgrounds and each uses a different lens to highlight (and instantiate) the forms that educational exclusion takes in various contexts. The contributions are intended as provocations, rather than quests for neat, definitive answers. We explore different framings that acknowledge layers, complexities, and legacies; and seek ways to construct new and transformational understandings of both education and inclusion.

The metalogue as an approach describes ‘written conversations among parties that preserve individual voices while revealing contested areas—offering a method of inquiry for exploring the creation of scholarship’ (Staller 2007: 137). This process embodies our different positionalities and expertise while also navigating differences.

Metalogues allow co-authors to retain their personal and idiosyncratic voices rather than to sweep differences under the carpet of the fictional third person perspective (Tobin & Roth 2002: 269). We expect this approach to reveal our doubts, thoughts, and convictions, but also the contentions and negotiations that may come along with exploring a topic such as this from different disciplines and positions.

All four contributors are African scholars but not necessarily ‘scholars in Africa’, and could be considered as what Nyamnjoh (2004) terms ‘diasporic intellectuals’. We are aware that this constitutes an emerging space of global imagining, of belonging and of identification, and we seek to interrogate different epistemological perspectives and valorise alternative ways of being. Three of the contributors are originally from Nigeria, and one is from South Africa, finding value in ‘critical conversations’ (Walton 2015) across contexts that are linked by common experiences of (post)colonialism but are also very different.

The article starts off with Foluke Adebisi exploring the concept of education and knowledge. Foluke’s scholarship focuses on decolonial thought in legal education. Her section explores how educational structures can depart from the true pursuit of knowledge as an egalitarian quest, dependent on what purposes those structures devote themselves to.

Elizabeth Walton follows, asking what it means to be working and thinking within multilayered contexts and framings of what constitutes inclusion and education. Her contribution draws on research in South Africa where the legacy of apartheid and colonisation complexifies the quest for more inclusive education.

Zibah Nwako’s submission seeks clarification for what happens when the very concept of education is exclusionary, when it does not always take into cognisance marginal groups, alternative knowledge(s), and other forms of both schooling and education in the context of South-East Nigeria in West Africa. Zibah investigates the impact of informal learning on the aspirations and experiences of girls and women in rural Igboland. She approaches this topic through a postcolonial lens to enable a critical analysis of the current education system(s).

Hadiza Kere Abdulrahman ends with a scrutiny of what happens when the education system inherited through the colonial project is contrary to what some people want. She does this by looking at the case of the Almajiranci system of Qur’anic education in northern Nigeria. She considers the ways that the history and the current manifestation of ‘Western education’ encourage a form of educational exclusion, whereby the practitioners resist being included into this dominant and preferred form of schooling.

Following on from each author’s contribution, the others engage with what has been written either in the form of observations and/or questions (in italics), in order to seek clarity, or to shed light from a different perspective.

Foluke on education and knowledge

To determine what it means to be educated, especially from the perspective of legal education and the law in general, I suggest here that we must consider what knowledge has been used for and how that use arises from and impacts upon the relationship between person, education, and knowledge. It is also important to note how these uses are complicit in creating a hierarchy of humanity and the material consequences of the hierarchisation. The key questions that arise for me in this exploration include not just the purposes of education, but also the content of education—the purposes of education often dictate its content. Overlapping these two questions is the matter of inclusivity: that is, who/what is enclosed within the purposes and content of education? Whose meanings of reality are ultimately regarded as ‘good knowledge’? How the preceding things interact with each is often affected by the historical and contemporary context within which education is happening—what state structures the educational system is embedded in, what trauma lives on in the earth, how the state sees itself, how the state is seen from outside, and what divisions exist within the state. How a state decides what education is, arises from an indeterminate mix of the foregoing.

It is generally accepted that education is meant to transmit knowledge and form part of the process of knowledge extraction and production. Therefore, knowledge is often considered to be a public good protected by the state and law—knowledge curation done right benefits the entire society; thus the state has a responsibility to provide. Alternatively, education could be considered a mere personalised by-product of knowledge curation. In this sense, education is primarily an individual or even consumer good; its purpose—self-betterment—not only a means of personal development but also career and therefore financial advancement. The law’s role in this second meaning is not to prevent access to those able to afford it.

What role then does inclusion play in this? Inclusive education helps to bring in a variety of perspectives to enable us to unveil and confront pre-existing biases (Ansley 1991). However, without questioning why our education structures exclude, there is always the danger that people could be included into unchanged spaces that are not safe for them, spaces historically and repeatedly designed to harm and exclude them. To think more critically about inclusive education, we need to examine how the purposes and content of education interact with the purposes and processes of inclusion as well as how structures operate to exclude in multifaceted ways. For example, writing of South African society after apartheid, Morrow (2015) explored the ways in which disadvantage continued to be preserved in educational structures. He cited the ways in which historical permanence of structures of privilege within education, including the true beneficiaries of university funding models, result in institutional inability to respond to a broad range of social needs; institutions remain

solely responsive to dictates of power (Morrow 2015). One wonders how education can serve the needs of the many, if it is inherently programmed to respond to power. Do educational structures still serve the purposes of education if they are inherently directed to preserve historical hierarchisations? Who is being educated and for what purposes?

On knowing, being known, and education

How a person is educated within a system is often predicated upon how knowledge has (mis)placed them within the system. Freire, hooks, and Fricker all explore the idea of knowledge, education, and being known, though from different perspectives. hooks' pedagogical philosophy is heavily influenced by her own experiences of school segregation and existing in educational spaces as a Black woman in the USA (hooks 2014). She suggests 'education as the practice of freedom' requires care in listening—to enable a validating exchange of experiences and knowledges (8).

Freire argued that education often functioned as a system of knowledge 'banking'—passive collection and regurgitation (Freire 2000: 72). He said that 'liberating education consists in acts of cognition, not transferrals of information' (79). Because Freire believed that knowledge was a constantly evolving product of persistent human inquiry, he asserted that knowledge should change the world by transforming and empowering the participants in education: that is, they should not play pre-scripted roles in the process (Freire 2000).

What the educator does in teaching is to make it possible for the students to become themselves. And in doing that, he or she lives the experience of relating democratically as authority with the freedom of the students. (Horton *et al.* 1990: 181)

Freire (2000) argued that education had revolutionary capacities and could be used to bring about meaningful societal change. Fricker (2007) explains how injustice occurs because a particular group is unable to convey their experiential testimony to another (usually dominant) group. This inability is caused by the cognitive inability of the hearer-group to engage with the truth of the knower-group's social experience. Consequently, epistemic/hermeneutical injustice and marginalisation result because the knower-group's social condition is obscured from collective understanding (*ibid.*). This is conceptually important to the process of inclusive education. Who decides how inclusion happens and whose voices get heard in the process? Fricker (2007) describes how social identity power can be used to silence, sometimes benevolently, sometimes passively, but mostly unjustly. She argues that the mere existence of social constructions of power serve to silence the subordinate group. The structure of society results in self-policing silencing activity. The classroom is revealed as an exclusionary

site of power and knowledge exclusions. The role of the state/law and its perspective on education cannot be discounted in this process.

How then do we ensure that our pedagogy liberates through open dialogue, as Friere, Fricker, and hooks suggest, when this is impeded by the inability of the silenced to comprehend the nature of their silencing and oppression—hermeneutical injustice? (Fricker 2007). It is important to understand education as a societal good and not a consumer good. This is because a narrow and individualised understanding of the purposes of education has the potential to set education adrift from knowledge. Without entrenched understanding of knowledge as a constantly evolving product of persistent human inquiry, education reproduces exclusion. To reiterate, the role of the state/law cannot be discounted in a deliberate positioning of education as a public good.

Hadiza: *The reference to the need to consider the historical and contemporary contexts within which education happens, especially asking us to consider the structures embedded in it and the trauma that lives on are what I find resonant. In my submission I allude to the effects of these as possible reasons why practitioners of the Almajiranci system of education find the dominant education unsuitable and choose to self-exclude. In Nigeria today, the education system is a key tool for the construction of social difference and reinforces a hierarchisation of human value and worth based on its acquisition. When the framing of an education system is based on ‘epistemic disrespect’, with alternative forms of knowing (and being) repeatedly subjugated, invalidated, and pushed to the fringes; attempts to include into it, only result in other forms of exclusion. To paraphrase you, the whole education system then becomes ‘an exclusionary site of power and knowledge exclusion’.*

Elizabeth: *Foluke, each of the questions you pose is a necessary provocation, and you challenge simplistic notions of education as a panacea for the social, economic, and political challenges of postcolonial societies. I would like to amplify the point made about the potential for ‘inclusive’ education spaces to be harmful, because they are fundamentally designed to be exclusionary in various ways. It makes me think about the violence that is enacted on non-normative bodies, ideas, and ways of being, all in pursuit of ‘including’, as if inclusion into mainstream education is always and necessarily the greatest good for everyone. Perhaps we should listen more to those who, as Hadiza notes, choose to absent themselves from ‘inclusive’ schools.*

Zibah: *The references to Freire, hooks, and Fricker are a representation of my argument in promoting education as it should be, not as it currently is. hooks’ idea of practising freedom extends to one’s values of what constitutes knowledge from one’s own experiences.*

Freire suggests that knowledge should both transform and empower rather than be prescriptive, denoting a preference for 'learning' and not 'schooling'. I go on to address these issues below. I would also apply Fricker's notion of injustice in my research context, given the inability of rural students to 'perform' as well as those in urban areas (the dominant group) and therefore are even more marginalised by an education system that places more attention (funding and expectations) on the latter—the dominant group—thereby ignoring the benefits and potential of the former.

Foluke: It is a kind of double-bind, especially concerning the role of the state. The state needs to listen to those who exclude themselves from these educational spaces, but also needs to provide education. One observation that has been made by many writers from the Latin American Decolonial School is that we need to think beyond the state as the primary organiser of political and juridical life. This raises all sorts of interesting logistic questions, but also questions of justice and freedom.

Elizabeth on 'working with multilayered framings'

International conventions and goals towards increased access and success in education validate ongoing concerns about the extent and impact of educational exclusion. They offer a vision of equity and inclusion that is expected to be shared across the world. The business of inclusive education is booming, with international attention to the cause that its advocates of decades ago could only have dreamed of. From the inspiration of the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO 1994) some twenty-five years ago, we now have the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), signed, if not ratified, by the majority of countries in the world (UN 2006). Article 24 of the CRPD concerns education and General Comment 4 on this article (UNESCO 2016) set out unequivocally what is meant and intended by inclusive education for children and young people with disabilities. The General Comment is said to be 'the most comprehensive and authoritative international instrument explaining the human right to inclusive education' (Davis *et al.* 2020: 90). The Sustainable Development Goals (UN 2015) explicitly mention inclusive education in Goal 4 (although inclusive is often omitted when the goal is summarised as 'quality education for all') and, most recently, the Global Education Monitoring Report (GEMR) (UNESCO 2020) has focused on inclusion in education.

It has been said that inclusive education is contextually determined and will look different in different countries. This is valid, insofar as histories and geographies of exclusion will shape priorities and possibilities (Kamenopoulou 2020). But contextually determined inclusion potentially sanctions partial or conditional inclusion. As the

GEMR (UNESCO 2020) shows, some versions of inclusive education replicate or reinvent exclusion, and policy does not always translate into the lived experience of vulnerable population cohorts. I think that there is value in critically evaluating different versions of inclusive education, recognising where limited or conditional iterations of inclusion fall short of its intended reach and impact. With this in mind, my contribution to the metalogue takes up a point I have made elsewhere: ‘The pressure to adopt inclusive education comes with scant recognition of ways in which the history of colonialism and underdevelopment in countries of the Global South compound the problems of educational exclusion’ (Walton 2018: 34). My focus is on South Africa, where up to half a million disabled children and young people are not in school, despite a policy commitment to inclusive education (Human Rights Watch 2015).

Realising the global policy ideals of inclusive education in local schools and classrooms has proved to be difficult. General Comment 4 offers several reasons for the non-implementation of inclusive education. These include the prevalence of a medical rather than social and human rights model of disability; discrimination; lack of knowledge about inclusive education; a lack of ‘political will, technical knowledge, and capacity, including inadequate teacher education’ (UNESCO 2016); and inadequate funding. Reasons found for the non-implementation of inclusive education in South Africa mirror those given in General Comment 4. Concerns have also been raised about the incompatibility between inclusive teaching practices and a fast-paced, content-heavy, and lock-stepped national curriculum (Andrews *et al.* 2019). This curriculum is seen as a mechanism by which learning outcomes (measured by national and international standardised tests) can be improved. Exclusion of those who do not meet the standards becomes a way to boost performance scores. There has also been resistance to Western formulations of inclusive education, perceived as an imposition from the Global North (Walton 2018). Accounting for non-implementation promises a direction for remediation, but education systems are not mechanical, functioning through direct lines of cause and effect.

Education systems are complex systems in themselves, constituted by a number of subsystems in dynamic and reciprocal relationships with each other. In turn, education and other domains (like the economy, civil society, etc) relate to each other in ‘multi-causal and multi-directional’ ways (Tikly 2020: 58). This is well illustrated in the GEMR concept note (UNESCO 2018: 5), which acknowledges six elements that constitute inclusive education: ‘Laws and policies, governance and finance, school curricula, personnel, and infrastructure, and community norms, beliefs, and expectations’. While each of these elements warrant individual consideration for their contribution to inclusion (and exclusion) at local and systems level, it is clear that they are mutually constitutive and reciprocal. This means that educational exclusion

in any context has to be recognised as a ‘wicked problem’ (Walton, 2017) that defies simplistic definition and resolution.

Colonial legacies are under-recognised as factors that complexify the challenge of bringing about more inclusive education in postcolonial contexts. In South Africa, the inequalities of the past persist, despite legislation and massive investment in personnel and infrastructure by the post-1994 government. At the broadest level, Fleisch (2007) characterises South Africa’s education system as ‘bimodal’, comprising two ‘systems’. The first is generally well functioning, made up mainly of former white and Indian schools, and independent schools, which together produce most of the country’s university entrants. This is insulated from the second system, mostly serving poor learners from deprived communities, and which offers a ‘restricted set of knowledge and skills’ (2) compared with what is offered in the first system. The ongoing realities and results of these two systems perpetuate the inequities of the apartheid state.

Learners in richer, advantaged schools perform significantly better in reading and mathematics than their counterparts in poorer, non-advantaged schools. Resources in the advantaged schools promote learning and an environment conducive to learning. As a result of the apartheid prioritisation of white education, these schools have infrastructural resources like sports fields, libraries, media centres, toilet blocks, and electrification. As a result of their continued ability to charge fees (Taylor *et al.* 2013) and attract middle-class parents, these schools now have computer laboratories, WIFI, additional teachers to reduce class sizes, and the capacity to offer wider subject choices and extramural opportunities. By contrast, non-advantaged schools, as a result of the apartheid legacy of inadequate funding of black schools, often have inadequate and degraded facilities, and may lack basic amenities like toilets, electricity, and desks. There may be larger classes, which makes it difficult for teachers to attend to individual learners (Dieltiens *et al.* 2012). Van der Berg *et al.* (2011) report that there are significant differences in reading performance between the richest and poorest 20% of Grade Six learners. In terms of mathematics, Spaull (2015: 36) finds that, ‘By grade 3, children in the poorest 60% of schools are already three years’ worth of learning behind their wealthier peers and that this gap grows as they progress through school to the extent that, by grade 9, they are five years’ worth of learning behind their wealthier peers.’ The poor quality of education available in non-advantaged schools results in exclusion from life chances, including access to further or higher education and employment.

It is against this background that South Africa’s policy on inclusive education is expected to be implemented. Outlined in White Paper Six (Department of Education 2001), an inclusive education system is envisaged to ‘contribute to establishing a caring and humane society, how it must change to accommodate the full range of learning needs and the mechanisms that should be put in place’ (11). The years since

its promulgation have seen mixed responses, with pockets of good practice identified in individual schools (e.g. Walton 2011, Engelbrecht & Muthukrishna 2019), but also evidence of large numbers of disabled children out-of-school (Human Rights Watch 2015). But mapping inclusive education onto a system fundamentally shaped by colonial and apartheid education is bound to have limited traction. The path dependencies of colonial and apartheid education persist (Tikly 2020). Inequitable outcomes linked to race, socio-economic status, and disability seem to be accepted as the inevitable consequence of a competitive system where only a few are advantaged. However, as I have argued previously (Walton 2018), inclusive education has the potential to disrupt colonial/apartheid hierarchies of value, given its demand for a radical transformation of education systems to offer equitable access, participation, and success to all. This requires that instead of inclusive education being wrangled to fit onto existing processes and structures, it is allowed to shape a new architecture of schooling for a postcolonial world.

***Foluke:** I am very interested in the way in which inequalities reproduce themselves, especially in contexts designated as postcolonial: that is, when the colonising force has removed itself from the immediate site of colonisation. I think universal legal instruments as well as international monitoring, both of which you mention Elizabeth, while inherently altruistic also inadvertently serve as a means to preserve colonial logics. On the one hand, this illustrates how what exponents of Latin American decolonial thought such as Walter Mignolo and Nelson Maldonado-Torres call ‘coloniality’, relies on a certain level of automation or systemisation. On the other hand, this enables us to understand that, in thinking of inclusivity in education and knowledge production/transmission, change will require creative thinking. From a legal perspective, an example of creative thinking can be found in the jurisprudence of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights which has formulated and enforced the right to a ‘project of life’. A right to harbour a ‘project of life’ has been described as a canopy approach that incorporates component rights (that is, combining both economic, social and cultural rights like the right to education, with civil and political rights like the right to life) based on the core idea of human dignity. The Inter-American court’s jurisprudence reflects this in its ‘Panchito López’ v Paraguay, judgement where it held that violating the right to education destroyed ‘life plans/projects’, thus violating the right to life. I suggest that is one way of thinking beyond rigid boundaries. But this also reminds me of Lewis Gordon’s (2017) admonition on our ideas of justice, when he asks, ‘What should we do if it is not only our conception of justice, but also the very notion of it, as the fundamental expectation with which to organize society, is also colonized? What if we are living in a world of “unjust justice” or “just injustice”?’ I ask then, how do we make education more*

inclusive in our search for a better world, when we cannot imagine together what true inclusion looks like or how this better world would be organised?

Hadiza: *The outline of the GEMR concept note with six elements that constitute inclusive education above with an emphasis on ‘laws and policies’ reminds me of the Nigerian context with Almajiranci, where successive governments have called for its ban and passed laws to that effect. I have argued elsewhere drawing from the Circuit of Culture (du Gay et al. 1997) that even the way that Almajiranci is regulated is affected by what we conceive of knowledge to be—which is heavily informed by coloniality. If we believe Almajiranci is not worthy and is incompatible with modernity, then a ban would be a quick-fix solution rather than investing in reform in line with community norms, belief, and expectations. The required curriculum change needed for a more inclusive education system would also be limited by these same constraints. The six elements more than being mutually constitutive and reciprocal, appear mutually opposing and incongruent, where one appears to be working against the others?*

Zibah: *Like you Elizabeth, I am concerned about the idea that inclusive education is context-based and relative to each country. In the case of Nigeria, for example, the only two parts of the National Policy for Education that address inclusion cover the areas of nomadic and special needs education (NERDC 2014). Within these two areas, the policy targets the ‘first six years of Basic Education’ for children of pastoralists, migrant fisher folk, and migrant farmers (22); as well as people with physical or learning disabilities. This leads me to question whether the national policy does not by itself exclude other groups of people (some of whom we have highlighted in this paper) from the formal, colonial education system, particularly if there is no other provision for their learning. Inevitably, this serves not only to perpetuate colonial legacies of power imbalances, but also leads to further disadvantage, marginalisation, and inequity in and through education systems.*

Hadiza: *Yes, the Nigerian education landscape is truly a site of several exclusions. It is still a long way off from comfortably including people with special educational needs and disability. Even where it has been addressed by policy, it remains a rhetoric and non-existent in practice.*

Elizabeth: *In response to your comments, I am reminded of Slee’s (2011) first and second order questions in pursuing inclusive education. First, he says, we have to confront ‘the power relations articulated through the structures, processes and culture of schooling’ (157). Doing so prevents us from approaching inclusion as a compensatory*

measure for ‘outsiders’ or ‘burdensome’ children who remain tenants on the margins of unchanged institutions. Where inclusive education is shoehorned to fit ‘nicely’ into existing structures and practices, its insurrectionary potential is lost.

Zibah on learning systems in precolonial contexts

I start by problematising the purposes and terms of ‘education’ and ‘inclusion’ in relation to my study on the impact of informal learning on the aspirations and experiences of girls and women in rural Igboland, Nigeria. Using a postcolonial lens, I explore other forms of education, such as informal and non-formal learning, community and precolonial education, and indigenous knowledges within the research context. Drawing from Foluke’s section, education is understood to be both a public good that benefits whole societies and for individual development and advancement. My first provocation therefore is: is the current education system fit-for-purpose, whether for societies or for individuals? Who benefits from it? Secondly, I intend to disrupt the dominant narrative of the high number of out-of-school children in the Global South especially Nigeria (UNICEF 2014), and the seemingly meaningful calls to increase access for women and girls to schooling and mainstream educational facilities (Aikman & Unterhalter 2007, Fennell & Arnot 2008, Iverson & Nyamakanga 2012, Rao & Sweetman 2014, UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2014). How about we reframe ‘education’ as ‘learning’ or ‘knowledge(s)’? What do these terms mean or imply particularly for individuals and societies in the Global South?

Education for all and for life

With the ongoing debate about education as a human right and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s (UNESCO 1990) international directives on Education For All (EFA), it is insightful that proponents of other forms of learning have long submitted that formal education is no longer fit-for-purpose. According to Rogers (2004: 48–9),

The UNESCO Faure Report of 1972 provides a summary of many [of the] arguments. First, the formal system of education is not a natural, universal and inevitable model. It is something which grew up in a specific place (western Europe mainly) at a specific time (relatively late, in fact, during the second half of the nineteenth century) to meet a specific need (to discipline the populace for participation in an industrial society). Such schooling set out to train young persons for a lifetime of controlled work rather than self-determining activities.

This argument raised several questions regarding the current provision of formal education in the Global South. In Nigeria, for instance, the system of teaching is by rote and, as indicated by Freire above, it is conducted as a transferral of information from teacher to student, rather than through critical thinking, experience, and senses. There are also pressures on pupils and students to ‘pass’ the termly and annual promotion examinations, and with oversubscribed places in higher education institutions, these all indicate that the formal education sector appears to lack holistic opportunities for an individual’s own personal development.

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD 2013: 11), ‘education is for life, not for the classroom. Indeed, some of the most important skills for life and learning may be acquired before, after and outside school.’ If the purpose of education is to acquire skills for life, and that these skills can be achieved outside the confines of schooling, is it not therefore important to pay attention to other different forms of learning (other than within schools)? Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2002) also consider derivations of the term ‘education’ from the Latin words *educare* (to bring up, rear, guide, direct) and *educere* (to draw out, lead out, raise up, bring up, rear a child). How, therefore, are these processes conceptualised and carried out within education typologies and systems?

Types of education

Coombs *et al.* (1973: 10–11) give seminal definitions of three forms of education: On the one hand, *formal education* refers to ‘the hierarchical structured, chronologically graded ‘educational system’, running from primary school through to university and including, in addition to general academic studies, a variety of specialised programmes and institutions for full-time technical and professional training’. *Non-formal education* includes ‘any organised educational activity outside the established formal system—whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broader activity—that is intended to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives’ *Informal education* is, on the other hand, ‘the truly lifelong process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience and the educative influences and resources in his or her environment—from family and neighbours, from work and play, from the market place, the library and the mass media’. From a wide range of literature and theories from both Western and non-Western countries about the merits of non-formal and informal forms of learning, they have been known to add value to mainstream education and are used as an alternative to formal education in some contexts: for example, home-schooling (Guterson 1992, Thomas 2002, Houston & Toma 2003, Romi & Schmida 2009, Murphy 2014). However, gaps remain in the literature between formal or mainstream education and

non-formal or informal learning within the African continent. Further, the current conceptualisation of education and formal schooling in Nigeria is largely considered to be Eurocentric and Westernised as it emerged from British colonial rule from 1900 to 1960 (Ocheni & Nwankwo 2012).

Who is excluded?

Before addressing the importance of alternative learning and knowledge(s), I will consider the issue of marginal groups. In doing so, a pertinent question must be asked: Who does formal education/schooling include and who does it exclude? Some of the answers are pupils and students who are not seen as ‘academic’, do not perform well or attain their set targets. There are those who, as Foluke stated, are excluded because the available education spaces are unsafe or harmful to them. There are children and young people who are not in education, training, or employment, and those unable to access learning due to family pressures, poverty, etc. The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF 2014) reports that at 8.8 million, Nigeria has the highest number of children in the world who are out-of-school. In many (poorer) countries, education is still not free and as such is unaffordable for many families. Since Eurocentric/Western education seems to be upheld as the modern ideal, it begs the question of whether other forms of learning—for example non-formal, informal, and traditional—are not deemed important because they do not lead to qualifications? Which knowledge(s) is/are therefore seen as important? As Crossley & Watson (2003) also queried—is formal education the best way to reach the millions of people who currently have few or no opportunities to access it? I argue that for some of these young people, formal education presents a barrier to discovering their creativity and non-academic skills that are essential to their growth and progress in life. Several scholars have also acknowledged that the formal Western and Eurocentric education systems that were imposed on Nigerian citizens during colonial rule are considered to be strict, ineffectual, and unsuitable for learners, compared to precolonial forms of learning (Quaynor 2013, Pastor 2015, Olarewaju 2018); hence the call for a disruption to schooling as the norm.

Alternative knowledge(s) and other forms of learning

A large part of the decolonisation debate argues for the recognition of alternative knowledges and less of the ‘othering’ that applies as a dominant narrative in Western forms of education, including indigenous and Islamic education systems. This section focuses on precolonial, non-formal, and informal forms of learning within indigenous contexts.

The educational situation in pre-colonial Nigeria was tribally controlled and could be described as continuous as adolescents were constantly being engaged in learning and adults were engaged in teaching and setting an example. ... The education systems in Nigeria before colonialism were not formal schools in line with European models but it was still powerful and influential in allowing societies to function and flourish and maintaining values to be respected and honoured. (Olareswaju 2018: 11–12)

Before the colonial era, value was placed on indigenous (otherwise known as community) knowledges passed through families and generations. These took the form of music, dance, and other arts, storytelling, trade, agriculture, religious instruction, production of goods and services, cultural values and norms, health practices, etc (ibid). Mkpka (2015) described that, depending on the area of expertise, the local young men were taught how to farm or make iron and traditional medicines; whereas for the young women, it was lighter farm duties such as weeding, hair weaving, and decoration, becoming a home-maker and cooking. Intellectual, social, and behavioural skills were taught to both men and women. Adults taught children how to respect others in society and used observational situations and practical activities to prepare them for life (Olareswaju 2018). These ways of learning align with the above-mentioned definition of informal education as ‘attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience and the educative influences and resources in [someone’s] environment—from family and neighbours, from work and play, from the market place ...’ (Coombes 1973: 11).

As previously mentioned, my study was in a small rural town in the South-East Nigeria (Nwako 2015). The participants were female secondary school students who are part of the most disadvantaged and marginalised groups within the research context:

In Nigeria, the average poor rural female is just above the two-year threshold for extreme education deprivation, with less than 40% the national average for years of school and around one-quarter the average for rich urban males. ... The Nigerian case powerfully illustrates the mutually reinforcing effects of poverty, rural location and cultural factors in creating extreme disadvantage. (EFA Global Monitoring Report [UNESCO 2010: 142, 143])

I also interacted with women who provided narratives of their childhood learning experiences in rural towns. The main research question explored the ways in which young female students learn informally: that is, outside the confines of modern/(post) colonial mainstream education and formal schooling. The participants benefitted from traditional and community activities, such as festivals, traditional stories, songs, and family histories. They developed hobbies and interests in singing and dancing; learnt behaviours and attitudes including respect, responsibility, morals, hard work, self-confidence, and critical thinking; and acquired vocational skills ranging from

traditional bead making, cooking and baking, sewing, hair plaiting, and making toiletry products.

These outputs highlight the similarities between informal traditional forms of learning and the valuable precolonial community and indigenous knowledges, and the importance of both in the argument for inclusive education. As a result, I present a final provocation: Is a readjustment of education structures necessary to acknowledge alternative ways of learning that are as, if not more, important as formal schooling in the Global South? Should we consider more democratic, autonomous, and Freirean forms of knowledge acquisition that are relevant to our societies and structures? Where, when, and to whom do these discourses apply?

Elizabeth: This section draws my attention to how porous the boundaries between formal, informal and non-formal education can be, or should be. Educational responses to the COVID-19 pandemic suggest that in many contexts we have witnessed a great deal of boundary crossing, as formal education has entered the private (informal) educational space of the home through remote teaching, and online and distance learning. The strong classification (cf. Bernstein 2000: 104) between the family context and the school context has been weakened, raising new questions about how school and everyday knowledge relate to each other (Young 2009). There has also been a disruption to assumed hierarchies of different types of education, knowledge, and learning. I am not proposing a new hierarchy of importance, but think that Boaventura De Sousa Santos's (2014) idea of an ecology of knowledges can be helpful. I like the metaphor of an ecology, because it talks of symbiosis, of different parts valued for their contribution because they are necessary, but not necessarily sufficient on their own.

Zibah: Your example of boundary crossing using the COVID-19 situation is aptly put. Home-schooling has become part of life for many families and it would be interesting to see if this makes any difference to future numbers of children registered in formal schooling environments. I will read De Sousa Santos's piece on the ecology of knowledges as it sounds like it could be considered as one of the ways forward for educational systems in the postcolony. I would also acknowledge here that the claim for alternative forms of learning, teaching, or education, including the suggestion of a hybrid of indigenous knowledges and Western education, is not exclusive to Nigeria. It has been highlighted in other Southern educational or political contexts in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and the Freirean-based forms of popular education in Latin America (Mazzer Barroso 2002, Banda 2008, Rao & Hossain 2012).

Foluke: There are two questions that occur to me from reading this. The first is about the current nature of precolonial informal education. In other words, how has what used to

be precolonial education evolved and what is it now? The second question is more logistic and political—how exactly do we readjust the current formalised education structures to acknowledge alternative knowledge production structures? I think with the first question I am concerned that our focus on the precolonial as a discrete timeframe means that we accede to the temporal colonial trick of misidentifying people inhabiting colonial territories as belonging to a time prior to the one that the coloniser existed in. The spirit of that misidentification lives on in the development narrative and education's place in that. Nevertheless, the informal knowledge production systems that you mention—soap and bead-making, for example—continued through colonial times and still exist, though greatly deprived of their prior importance to society. It is only by placing them outside of time, as it were, that we are able to make the developmental narrative fit. Secondly, the logistic question. This is related to the place that informal education used to hold in society. I fear that the nature of postcolonial states and their status in a global capitalist world provides little incentive to policymakers to readjust the education systems to primarily benefit the citizens in this manner. Thus, the developmental narrative masquerades as escape when it is a prison.

Zibah: I would offer a partial answer to your first question, Foluke, regarding what precolonial education is now—as may also categorise it as a form of ‘vocational’ education (in keeping with the examples of soap and bead making activities). However, vocational education does not adequately describe the richness and depth of learning that is offered and can be gained from African indigenous systems of knowledge.

Hadiza: *Disrupting the framing of education and challenging the narrative of ‘out-of-school’ children are approaches that I employ in my encounter with an alternative knowledge system. Your work with rural young women in Nigeria highlights the relevance of having a learning system that is a reflection of the society it is situated in, one that addresses their needs and concerns rather than attempting to shoehorn conceptions and delivery of education into a borrowed model. As a possible answer to your final provocation, I think that the adjustment of what is considered as formal schooling in the postcolony is a necessary step in addressing its lingering education problems. The inability to define education on our own terms and to our own needs has long complicated the process of its delivery and efficacy.*

Zibah: Yes, it is important that policymakers and decision-makers in Nigerian national, state, and local governments understand that the hegemonic, one-size-fits-all forms of education is detrimental to the end-users and beneficiaries of such systems. It is therefore essential that attention be given to reassessing, and even disrupting,

current systems in order to improve them in terms of both quality (of content and opportunity) and quantity (reaching ‘out-of-school’ populations).

Hadiza on reasons for ‘self-exclusion’

The concept of inclusion (and exclusion) into education, and the several ways that these (can) occur trouble me. In this paper I argue that in order to recognise the nature of educational ex/inclusion, we need to revisit the understanding and forms of education and school(ing) in different contexts. What exactly are people excluding themselves from, and what are they are being included into? The phrase ‘inclusion into what’, borrowed from Allan (2007) cited in Walton (2018), forces the recognition of the practices and cultures of schools that result in marginalisation and exclusion. This phrase, Walton states, challenges renditions of inclusive education that are merely concerned with access to existing schooling without addressing the ‘architecture of inequality and exclusion’ on which education is built (Slee 2011). In the context of Northern Nigeria, *Almajiranci*, a classical form of Qur’anic education that sees young boys sent to study the Qur’an under the tutelage of a *malam* (teacher), is often regarded as problematic and retrograde and no longer suitable for the creation of the ‘modern’ Nigerian citizenry. It accounts for an estimated 7–10 million boys considered as out-of-school (Taiwo 2013, Antoninis 2014).

My previous research (Abdulrahman 2018), focuses on former *almajirai* (male students of the system), men who have been through the *Almajiranci* system specifically; situating the contentious mainstream representational discourses of *Almajiranci* education and knowledge that exist in Nigeria today as a meaning-making issue, one that has been influenced by a number of factors including modernity and coloniality. Coloniality here refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged from colonialism, and it is therefore quite different from colonialism. Coloniality of knowledge especially addresses epistemological questions of how colonial modernity has interfered with other ways of knowing, social meaning-making, imagining, and seeing (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013b), especially in the case of formerly colonised people. It therefore makes sense that understandings of what education means and is to different people, would be affected by this.

Here, I explore two reasons why ‘Western education’ in Nigeria might not be the suitable choice for many. The first is that in Nigeria today, what is known as ‘Western education’ has been inherited through the colonial project with Nigeria being a former British colony (between 1900 and 1960). In this context it is therefore secular and based on an Anglo-European epistemology and conceptions of knowledge. It is also considered ‘modern’ and progressive and remains the dominant and favoured

form of schooling, especially regarded as superior by many Western-educated Nigerians—who make up the ruling elite. Western education was first encountered in the North through the proselytising mission schools and it is against this backdrop that the Almajiranci system of education exists and is compared, often unfavourably. Highly politicised, Almajiranci evokes much passion from many Nigerians, and the boys and men who are educated through it are repeatedly subject to various negative (mis)representations and often regarded as a problem (Aghedo & Eke 2013), mainly because of its most prominent feature of sending young boys away from home to live with a teacher. When they are not learning the Qur'an, the young *almajirai* can often be found begging on the streets or labouring for sustenance, which again causes a huge social concern especially for the welfare and rights of the boys.

Understanding exclusion through revisiting the history of education in Northern Nigeria

Education in Northern Nigeria is peculiar historically in many ways compared to the rest of Nigeria. Hansen and Musa (2013) state that, when the colonial wave reached the North in the late 19th century, it was met by long-established Islamic societies far better equipped culturally to resist the foreign influences. Western ways, including education they add, made more headway among the Southerners than in the North. This resistance continues until today through the Almajiranci system, and these Qur'anic schools have often operated as separate entities at cross-purposes with the Nigerian state in the provision of education for the millions of Muslim children who are described as 'out-of-school' (Baba 2014: 4).

Prior to colonialism also, Almajiranci primarily fed the system of administration of Northern Nigeria, with *ajami* (local languages written using modified Arabic alphabets) serving as a regional vehicle of communication for literature, poetry, commentary, and personal communication (Hansen & Musa 2013). It is important to understand that Islam came into Northern Nigeria in the early 14th century and became an established way of life with the Almajiranci system originating around the 16th century (Bano 2009), encouraged and supported in urban centres in order to spread literacy. The British occupation of the territory divested Muslim scholars of nearly all their roles and influence (Khalid 2012). Many of the existing structures were abolished and new measures introduced that invalidated the otherwise thriving system. This overview of the system's encounter with colonialism is necessary as it situates it within a deeper social context—the *longue durée* if you will.

The parents of *almajirai* are largely rural Northern Nigerian masses, not 'Western-educated' and sometimes harbouring a deep suspicion of Western education; especially given its history and the nature of its advent in the region. The fear for these religious

and traditional parents is that their children will be converted to Christianity or adopt alienating ways. Many of the fathers (being former *almajirai* themselves) value the Almajiranci form of education, seeing it as the best that they can offer their children given their material circumstances. Sule-Kano (2008) talks about the ‘glory days’ of Almajiranci which offered the ‘peasant’ or ‘*talaka*’ one of the few routes for achieving upward mobility. Sadly, though, this is no longer the case: to be an *almajiri* in Nigeria today is to be disenfranchised especially from the perquisites of power. What this means is that for many of these rural poor for whom Almajiranci is still the option, it presents a form of exclusion from the Nigerian dream; and where they have been co-opted into Western education—through various so-called integrative initiatives, it has been problematic and riddled with other forms of exclusion—which is the second reason why the ‘modern’ form of education might not be desirable to many.

From ‘out-of-school’ to ‘in-school’—including into what exactly?

Almajirai are categorised as ‘out-of-school’ children and they make up the highest percentage of this category, 17% of the global ‘out-of-school’ population are believed to be living in Nigeria (Antoninis 2014). Since they exist out of the purview of the state, the clamour is to integrate the Almajiri schools, or to get the boys into Western-style public schools; especially as it is considered that any form of education would be better than Almajiranci. The public schools, however, have become a last resort for those without alternatives, with their poor quality often acting as a disincentive to school attendance. They are riddled with poor infrastructure, poor teacher quality and supply, poor learning outcome, and poor delivery (USAID 2003). So, while the Nigerian elite searches for alternatives in fee-paying private schools, the marginalised urban and rural poor either have no other choice or rely on the traditional Qur’anic schools instead. So much so that by the late 1990s, these Qur’anic schools commanded more pupil enrolment than the formal/public primary schools in many Northern Nigerian States (USAID 2003).

The quality of education available to many ordinary Nigerians frames the question of ‘including into what exactly’. As Brenner (2001) points out, the promise of quality ‘education for all’ in postcolonial African societies has never really been fulfilled. In reality, many African countries grapple with social inequalities partly created through a form of schooling that has lacked quality and failed to reach ‘all’. The very skills that ‘Western-style schools’ transmit, Brenner argues, have become symbols of political and social difference. In Nigeria today, the alternative to Almajiranci is a failing public schooling system (Baba 2011), a national educational system fraught with problems, including overcrowded classrooms, ill-trained staff, dilapidated facilities, inadequate resources, inconvenient hours of operation, unaffordable expenses

(Antoninis 2014), alienating rules and regulations (Baba 2014), and an overloaded curriculum that holds little relevance, meaning, or purpose. Hoechner (2018) observes that, in a context where access to prestigious knowledge is stratified, many *almajirai* have also struggled to access ‘modern’ education that is affordable and of acceptable quality. The current education system has produced many graduates all waiting for promised government jobs that do not exist. It is also an educational system that produces graduates sometimes ill adapted to the African condition and market (Nyamnjoh 2004). Many postcolonial nation-states of Africa, after years of post-colonial history, have not shown a substantial improvement in the lives of young people (Abbink 2005). This demonstrates that the current form of education has had arguable, often contested, effects on the lives of many of the continent’s young people in terms of what it promises to deliver, aligning with what Adebisi (2016) calls educational incompatibility—the inability of education to equip its citizens to fit in with and benefit the society they live in. Nigeria’s middle and upper classes knowing the state of Nigerian public schools have opted out of it, paying for private education for their children instead, often seeking international pathways to qualifications that the masses cannot afford. Thus, the current educational landscape further stratifies and entrenches systemic inequalities. Education in Nigeria today hardly guarantees alternative routes for more than just a select few in a closed system of social reproduction, never mind it being a viable option for inclusion.

The above is the ‘non-choice’ for many of the practitioners of *Almajiranci*—Western secular schooling, which they can ill afford and do not really want, with its minimal returns, opportunity costs, and alienating culture; or *Almajiranci*, which aligns deeply with their values and ways of life but which has fallen out of favour amongst many Nigerians for whom it is no longer seen either as valid or valuable. Either choice presents with its own form of exclusion in the postcolonial Nigerian society.

Foluke: Reading your section, I recall the words of Martin Luther King Jr, when he says, ‘I fear I am integrating my people into a burning house.’ I think this is reflected in the false distinction between the socio-economic and the political. Education as a human right, for example, is often considered an economic, social, or cultural right rather than a civil and political one. But I think your discussion of Almajiranci highlights that all socio-economic questions have civil and political implications and vice versa. What are we asking people to be included into when we advocate colonially imposed education as the path to personal development? What are nations being included into when they abandon historical and contemporaneous forms of non-formal and informal education? What nations are we trying to build? As bell hooks suggests, education should be the practice of freedom. I fear that there is no freedom to be found for either nation or

citizenry, when the template aspired to, is imported. I think the paradoxes which Elizabeth mentions earlier and below are also relevant here. How do we give the people what they want, when to do so will deprive them of other things that they are entitled to?

Hadiza: Exactly, especially when the current state of Almajiranci poses serious children's rights concerns and is also not fit-for-purpose for various other reasons; when its continued existence in its current state, presents a real danger to some of its vulnerable practitioners, and perpetuates their marginalisation and exclusion.

Elizabeth: *Hadiza, your provocation challenges the idea that there is a universally ideal model of schooling and/or education, that somehow is able to transcend all our differences and offer inclusion to all. You make a clear argument for why parents would choose Almajiranci in the Nigerian context. It also made me think of parents of disabled children who 'choose' special schools or home education, unwilling to expose their children to the conditions of mainstream schooling. There's another inclusion paradox here: Without the presence of the disabled/religious/racial 'Other', there is no need or impetus for schools or other education institutions to change, hegemonic norms continue unchallenged, and the status quo is increasingly normalised. But, what risk, what 'burning' (Foluke), what silencing must the 'Other' endure in these untransformed educational spaces?*

Hadiza: Coming into inclusive education, this has been another realisation too: the increasing awareness that there really is no, and might never be, a 'universally ideal model of schooling' that is able to transcend these differences. In complex multicultural contexts like Nigeria, aiming for this ideal is near impossible. Add into this mix the awareness that what is considered as ideal is also deeply 'corrupted' by our history of colonialism and the present global power structure.

Zibah: *I am intrigued by your conceptualisations of coloniality vs colonialism—as I understand it, by the former referring to the power structures that still dominate in societies that have been subject to the latter? Your explanation of the Almajiranci system as highly politicised and misunderstood certainly rings true in my experience. Coming from the South of Nigeria where the dominant, extremely misleading representation of almajiris is mainly negative and derogatory (for example, calling the boys and men beggars, mallams, aboki [stupid], jobless, thieves, etc), I now realise how important and relevant your study is, not only to scholarship but also to changing the understanding and mindset of the ordinary citizen in the South on the educational choices made by others like themselves. This change is particularly important as calls increase for a return to precolonial educational systems as I suggest in my final provocation. It would be*

interesting to find out how the categorisation of out-of-school children is spread across Nigeria and if the Almajiranci system is approved as an education system, how much it will affect the high numbers determined by UNICEF (2014). When a demographic (of people) chooses to exclude themselves from a formal, colonial education, preferring instead to encourage and practise their own form of learning, it behoves policymakers and scholars to investigate and reconsider the effects of this decision rather than label it as contrary to the status quo. Perhaps this will prompt international/global resistance to the hegemonic norms and ideas of Western education beyond the Global South, particularly for similar postcolonial countries.

Hadiza: Using coloniality here is deliberate, it concerns itself with the effects of colonialism (long after it is considered officially over) on knowledge, being, and power. I am particularly interested in the ways it functions on ‘our psyche’ as formerly colonised people and its limiting effects on what we can think and do. The views of *almajirai* that you shared are common across Nigeria and make up what I call the mainstream representational discourses. Recently, *almajirai* have also been seen as members of the terrorist group Boko Haram, with their Qur’anic education regarded as a radicalising influence. I have previously used Hall (2013) to argue that the way you represent people goes on to determine how you treat them. These discourses ‘other’ *almajirai* and are harmful and particularly detrimental to their treatment both by the government (in their policies) and by individuals (in the everyday) and reinforce their exclusion.

Conclusion

The arguments presented in this paper would be recognisable in many postcolonial societies struggling to make their education systems fit and work better. Foluke argues that the purpose and content of knowledge, and how these interact, are affected by the historical and contemporary context within which education takes place. Zibah’s questioning of types of schooling, especially formal schooling and its exclusionary potential, allows her to interrogate education in contexts such as Nigeria. Her question of whether it is fit-for-purpose and who it benefits is partly answered from Hadiza’s study, which shows that some people ‘choose’ not to be included for reasons both historical and contemporary. For the practitioners of Almajiranci, Western education comes with both cultural and historical baggage; and is hardly fit-for-purpose due to systemic and epistemic inadequacies. Elizabeth’s assertion is that different versions of inclusive education need to be critically evaluated with a recognition of their limitations. She highlights that the adoption of inclusive education

hardly recognises the history of colonialism and underdevelopment in countries of the Global South. What is clear from all the contributions is a need to recognise the historical and contemporary complexity of the various contexts in which inclusive education has to be implemented.

Education in Africa must respond to the particular issues and challenges of the continent. The promotion of educational rights by international bodies has been focused mainly on improving availability and accessibility of education with African indigenous knowledge(s) rarely featuring in the process (Adebisi 2016). A process of continuous and persistent critical engagement with and selective incorporation of African knowledge (precolonial or postcolonial) is needed, while simultaneously resisting the lure of the institutive ascription of inferiority to different systems of knowledge (Handel Kashope Wright 2007, cited in Adebisi 2016). The contributions to this metalogue point to the intractability of some of the educational challenges of the continent, including patterns of exclusion that defy simplistic definition and resolution. In the absence of neat answers or trite recommendations, we argue for ongoing difficult and critical conversations, across contexts and across disciplines.

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Internationalisation of higher education for pluriversity: a decolonial reflection

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Abstract: At the centre of the debates on internationalisation one can notice tensions between the agenda of completing the incomplete project of modernity, which dovetails into the current hegemonic neoliberal capitalist globalisation with its ‘global turn’ towards the creation of ‘global’ universities; and the resurgent and insurgent agenda of completing the incomplete project of decolonisation predicated on deracialisation, de-hierarchisation, decorporatisation, and depatriachisation of knowledge and education. This article contributes to the decolonisation of internationalisation of higher education at four main levels. In the first place, it underscores the primacy of knowledge in creating a reality known as ‘the international’ with Europe and North America at the centre. In the second, it makes a strong case for taking seriously the idea of the locus of enunciation of knowledge as a basis of critique of the hegemonic neoliberal globalisation’s notion of a global economy of knowledge that is decontextualised and ignores the resilient uneven division of intellectual and academic labour. In the third, it calls for intercultural translation, mosaic/convivial epistemology, and ecologies of knowledges as key to any successful decolonised internationalisation of higher education. In the fourth, it argues for the reconstruction of university into pluriversity informed by the practices of globalectics and the coexistence of particularities. These four interventions constitute essential enablers in the cultivation of transnational knowledge that is of service to a world characterised by planetary human entanglements.

Keywords: Ecologies of knowledges, decolonisation, Eurocentrism, higher education, mosaic epistemology, pluriversity.

Introduction

How did Europe universalize its particularities, particularized other people's universalities, and made itself normative to others' abnormativity?

Hamid Dabashi (2019: 52)

I believe that we live in a very exciting era in the world of knowledge, precisely because we are living in a systemic crisis that is forcing us to reopen the basic epistemological questions and look to structural reorganization of the world of knowledge.

Immanuel Wallerstein (2004: 58)

This article intervenes on the subject of the internationalisation of higher education at four levels. At the first level of analysis, it introduces a decolonial approach which challenges the colonial vertical conceptions of internationalisation of higher education where 'the international' is Europe and North America. It proposes a horizontal non-colonial internationalisation of higher education which is underpinned by ecologies of knowledges and pluriversities rather than universities. 'Pluri' captures diversity while 'uni' means one. At the second level, it brings to the fore the concept of a locus of enunciation as it underscores the importance of the 'local' in the 'international' and as it critiques the present hegemonic neoliberal capitalist-driven globalisation and the notions of a global economy of knowledge, which is assumed to be decontextualised and universal. At a third level, the article highlights the necessity of the concepts of intercultural translation of knowledge, mosaic epistemology/epistemology of conviviality, and ecologies of knowledges as key anchors for a decolonised international higher education. The last part reiterates the importance of a decolonised pluriversal higher education freed from instrumental market-informed imperatives of commercialisation, commodification of knowledge, and profit accumulation.

What is posited here is that there is no genuinely international higher education without decolonisation of knowledge and education. Decolonisation confronts epistemicides, cognitive injustices, and hierarchies in knowledge and education as its key contribution to the internationalisation of higher education and cultivation of knowledge that fully recognises planetary human entanglements. Achille Mbembe (2019: 17) provided a useful definition of decolonisation as it relates to the internationalisation of higher education: 'bringing as equitably as possible everybody, every person and every text, every archive and every memory in the sphere of care and concern. It has to do with proximity as opposed to insulation, with the invention in-common of a shared inside, a shared roof and a shared shelter.'

This forms the departure point for this article and what is distinctive about this article is that it does not embrace the neoliberal bourgeois neo-Habermasian ideas of completing the incomplete modernity as the enabler of internationalisation of higher education and attainment of universalism (the paradigm of 'the one')

(see Habermas 1997). Rather, the article pursues the agenda of completing the incomplete decolonisation so as to attain ecologies of knowledges and pluriversity. A decolonial internationalisation of higher education is posited as one predicated on a recognition of the diverse ways through which different people view and make sense of the world (the paradigm of pluralism/globallectics/pluriversity) (see Ngugi wa Thiong'o 2012, Santos 2014, Escobar 2018, Reiter 2018). The article is conceptual in its orientation. It questions a particular idea of 'the international' in its global bourgeois–neoliberal–capitalist articulation and posits a decolonisation of the internationalisation of higher education as a process which has the potential to subvert the long-standing modernist mono-culture of education, resilient Eurocentric epistemological fundamentalism (with its internal critiques which have failed to result in de-Europeanisation), and asymmetrical power dynamics so as to enable a non-colonial internationalisation of higher education.

Throughout the article 'the international', 'the global', and 'the universal' are subjected to decolonial critique and are never taken for granted, as is the case with neoliberal-inspired motivations for internationalisation of higher education. This is necessary because a colonially driven internationalisation of higher education is always underwritten by capitalist thinking without questioning the hierarchisation of knowledge and knowledge-generators which subverts the very ethos of non-hierarchical and decolonial internationalism.

In the conventional neoliberal capitalist-driven internationalisation of higher education worldwide, which is well captured by Isaac A. Kamola in *Making the World Global: U.S. Universities and the Production of the Global Imaginary* (2019) in terms of 'global networked university'; there is a general emphasis on labour needs for a globalised and liberalising economy, development of knowledge societies, leveraging on new information and communication technologies, and extracting profits from massification of higher education. The example given is that of New York University (NYU) under the presidency of John Sexton (2002–15), which has rebranded itself from being 'in and of the city' into being 'in and of the world' in its pursuit of markets and profits in such places as the Arab Emirates and China (Kamola 2019: 171). This is why even the definition of internationalisation of higher education is very instrumental and devoid of epistemic and ideological thought (see, for example, the widely cited definition from Jane Knight—the 'process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education' (Knight 2003: 2, 2005: 13)).

Market fundamentalism is the core driver and this is why Kamola (2019: 171) posited that 'The reproduction of a highly market-oriented vision of a transcendental global university—one imagined as existing outside political constraints and market demands, and for the betterment of all humanity—forecloses the spaces from which

to appreciate universities as worldly institutions.’ What is often not taken into account are such factors as ‘coloniality of knowledge’ (how Eurocentric knowledge invaded the rest of the world’s epistemic universes); exhaustion of existing modern knowledge and concomitant epistemic crisis; cognitive injustices and the need for cognitive justice; as well as possibilities of re-worlding from the Global South, for instance, and the resurgence and insurgence of ‘epistemologies of the South’ as necessary forces and factors in the drive for a decolonial internationalisation of higher education (see Chabal 2012, Comaroff & Comaroff 2012, Santos 2014, 2018, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018, Santos & Meneses 2020).

The Rhodes Must Fall movements, that began in South Africa in 2015 and quickly gained wider embracement, successfully turned universities into sites of struggles over the very idea and mission of the university in the present conjuncture. Consequently, the imperatives of internationalisation predicated on capital accumulation locked horns with demands for cognitive justice and epistemic freedom (see Santos 2014, 2017, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018). This is why it is necessary to begin by framing issues from a decolonial vantage point with its potential to critique conventional notions of internationalisation of higher education.

Framing issues from a decolonial vantage point

The outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in early 2020 and its fast spread across the world reinforced, in a rather cruel way, the realities of planetary human entanglements (the South in the North and the North in the South enabled by increased migrations) and the need for relevant transnational knowledge and education capable of helping humanity to deal with such challenges as this pandemic. At the core of these increased planetary human entanglements should have been transnational convergence of ecologies of knowledges and the emergence of pluriversities rather than universities as sites of knowledge generation, cultivation, and distribution. The reality on the ground, however, has been fast movement of capital and to some extent labour without a noticeable change in the constitution of knowledge concomitant with a planetary-entangled and globalised world. National universities as gifts of nationalisms of the 19th and 20th centuries have remained as monuments within a globalised world and are struggling to generate transnational knowledge and education free from coloniality: that is, knowledge and education from Europe and North America are being globalised while that of the Global South is being pushed to the margins.

This is why one of the key demands of decolonisation of knowledge and education is de-provincialisation, that is, de-marginalisation of the marginalised knowledges of the Global South, bringing them into the academy. The Global South is invoked here

not as a geography but as site of knowledge production informed by struggles against Eurocentrism, colonialism, capitalism, and patriarchy (see Santos 2018). At the centre of these struggles are the agendas of de-universalisation/re-provincialisation, that is, confronting the centred-ness and overrepresentation of Europe and North America in knowledge production and dissemination that dates back to the time of colonial encounters and colonial conquests. As put by Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2018), what is envisioned is an opened space for the emergence of ecologies of knowledges and pluriversities (universities that take seriously particularities and pluralities of human existence, including multiplicity of languages) (see Santos 2017, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018). As posited by Hamid Dabashi (2019), in knowledge and education there is overrepresentation of Europe:

Because of Europe we have lost the worlds we knew as our own. Because of Europe we yearn to retrieve the worlds of our own. And because of Europe we oscillate between the world Europe has enabled and the world we wish to enable after-Europe. Yes, Europe means imperialism, colonialism, militarism, conquest, and racism. Yes, Europe means science, technology, art, architecture, literature, and poetry, all concomitant with those nasty trajectories. (1)

Dabashi (2019: 3) made a profound intervention to the necessity of thinking beyond Europe which is necessary even for the current drive for internationalisation of higher education in these powerful words: 'I am also trying to think the world beyond Europe, after Europe, not against Europe, but despite Europe.' Euromodernity gave the Global South modern Westernised universities but the current reality of increased planetary human entanglements requires pluriversities. Pluriversities are accommodative of ecologies of knowledges and anchored on a mosaic epistemology/epistemology of conviviality (Santos 2007, Nyamnjoh 2017, Connell 2018). At the centre of successfully internationalised higher education has to be pluriversities and ecologies of knowledges confronting and subverting long-standing racial hierarchies, gender hierarchies, and class hierarchies for the purposes of re-membering/re-humanising people and the production of relevant knowledge and just societies (Ngugi wa Thiong'o 2009a, 2009b, Santos 2017, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018, 2020).

How the long-standing European and North American self-positioning not only as the sole teachers of the world and the relegation of the rest of the world to the status of pupils but also as the only sites of rationality and reason continue to subvert the possibilities of emergence of pluriversities has to be subjected to consistent critique if internationalisation of higher education is to be freed from accusations of cognitive, cultural, and even technological imperialism. Europe and North America's teachings were packaged into many bags: namely, progress and salvation, civilisation and enlightenment, modernity and modernisation, development and emancipation, colonialism and pacification. What made this possible was the dawn of Euromodernity

in the first instance. Euromodernity names one of the dominant frames of social and political thought underpinned by ‘two fundamental assumptions: *rupture* and *difference*’ (Bhambra 2007: 1). The ‘rupture’ enabled the colonisation of time in which Europe and later North America claimed the space of being ‘modern’ (present) while relegating the rest of the world to ‘pre-modern’ (past). The paradigm of ‘difference’ made Europe claim being human itself for themselves, pushing the rest of the human species into sub-humanity and at times non-humanity (Mignolo 2000, 2011, Bhambra 2007, Maldonado-Torres 2007, Santos 2007, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013a, 2013b, 2018, 2020, Grosfoguel 2019).

It is these developments which are constitutive of what James Blaut (1993) termed the ‘colonizer’s model of the world’ where Europe conceived of itself as the centre of the world and the rest of the world as ‘empty’ not only of people but of knowledge and education (see also Tibebe 2011). What is apparent is that Europe and North America managed to assume the position of teachers of the world after committing what Ramón Grosfoguel (2013) termed the ‘four genocides/epistemicides of the long 16th century’. The first was the military conquest of Al-Andalus and the burning of the library of Cordoba in the 15th century. The second was the genocide/epistemicide against indigenous peoples of the Americas that commenced in 1492. The third was the kidnapping and reduction of African people into slaves who were shipped across the Atlantic Ocean to work in the plantations and mines. The fourth was the ‘conquest and genocide of women in European lands who transmitted Indo-European knowledge from generation to generation’ which began with their accusation as witches resulting in being burnt alive (see Grosfoguel 2013: 85; see also Stardust 2007, Suárez-Krabbe 2016).

Therefore, one can posit that, philosophically, the construction of European superiority in the domains of rationality, reason, knowledge, and education manifested itself in the Cartesian dictum—*cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am) and was justified in the philosophy of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831) the ‘apostle of modernity’, particularly from his *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* where he posited that:

In Africa proper, man has not progressed beyond a merely sensuous existence, and has found it absolutely impossible to develop any further. Physically, he exhibits great muscular strength, which enables him to perform arduous labours; and his temperament is characterised by good-naturalness, which is coupled, however, with completely unfeeling cruelty. Asia is the land of antithesis, division and expansion, just as Africa is the land of concentration. One pole of the antithesis is that of ethical life, the universal rational essence which remains solid and substantial; the other is exact spiritual opposite, that of egotism, infinite desires, and boundless expansion of freedom. Europe is the land of spiritual unity, of retreat from boundless freedom into the particular, of control of the immediate and elevation of the particular to the universal, and of the descent of the spirit into itself (Hegel 1998: 172–3).

The result was epistemic racism that was well captured by Walter Mignolo (2010: xxxiii) in which ‘Africans have experience, Europeans have philosophy, Native Americans have wisdom, Anglo-Americans have science, the Third World has cultures, the first world has science and philosophy.’ This reasoning is constitutive of Eurocentrism as a cultural expression of Euro-North American-centric modernity (see Amin 2009). In short, the Europe that was constructed is that of a teacher of the world because Europe becomes the site of the triumph of the scientific spirit, rationality, practical efficiency, democracy, human rights, equality, and social justice (Headly 2008, Amin 2009). Jack Goody (1996) depicted these claims as amounting to the ‘theft of history’ (stealing human history itself by Europe).

Decolonisation confronts these Eurocentric ideas and rationalities which not only enabled physical colonialism but cognitive/metaphysical colonialism as well. The cognitive/metaphysical colonialism (empires of the mind) was delivered through invasion of the mental universe of its targets (see Fanon 1968, Nandy 1981, Ngugi wa Thiong’o 1986, Chinweizu 1987, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018, Santos 2018, Gildea 2019). However, as noted by Aime Cesaire (2000), colonisation of the minds was never the best method of placing different civilisations and different people into positive contact to produce genuine internationalism. Cesaire made the following observation:

I admit that it is good thing to place different civilizations in contact with each other; that it is an excellent thing to blend different worlds; that whatever its own particular genius may be, a civilization that withdraws into itself atrophies; that for civilization, exchange is oxygen [...]. But then I ask the following question: has colonization really placed civilizations in contact? Or, if you prefer, of all the ways of establishing contact, was it the best? I answer no. And I say that between colonization and civilization there is an infinite distance. (11–12)

Cesaire like many decolonial theorists is for internationalisation born out of blending of civilisations and human encounters, but what he is against is colonisation as a method of delivering internationalisation (blending of civilisation and human entanglements). It was also Cesaire (84) who offered a nuanced decolonial insight into critical thinking and deeper understanding of internationalisation:

Provincialization? Absolutely not. I am not going to confine myself to some narrow particularism. But nor do I intend to lose myself in a disembodied universalism. There are two ways to lose one-self: through walled-in segregation in the particular, or through dissolution into the ‘universal.’ My idea of the universal is that of a universal rich with all that is particular, rich with all particulars, the deepening and coexistence of all particulars.

This intervention by Cesaire informs the decolonial approach to internationalisation of higher education and knowledge. The decolonial approach is deeply aware of the other practical challenges in the drive towards internationalisation of higher education

and knowledge. These challenges were clearly distilled and articulated by Adebayo Olukoshi and Paul Tiyambe Zeleza (2004: 3) from the vantage point of African universities in these revealing terms:

How to balance autonomy and viability, expansion and excellence, equity and efficiency, access and quality, authority and accountability, representation and responsibility, diversification and differentiation, internationalization and indigenization, global presence/visibility and local anchorage, academic freedom and professional ethics, privatization and the public purpose, teaching and research, community service/social responsibility and consultancy, diversity and uniformity, the preservation of local knowledge systems and the adoption of global knowledge systems, knowledge production and knowledge dissemination, the knowledge economy and the knowledge society?

It would seem that at the centre of internationalisation of higher education there is a need to open up to a mode of balancing of imperatives cascading from diverse constituencies and different stakeholders. A pluriversity would emerge as a synthesis of diverse imperatives. It is, therefore, important to delve deeper into how epistemology frames ontology and how the present problematic ‘international’ was invented.

The primacy of knowledge, education, and creation of ‘the international’

The primacy of knowledge as a creator of reality well expressed by Walter D. Mignolo & Cathrine E. Walsh (2018: 135) when they argued that: ‘Ontology is made of epistemology. That is, ontology is an epistemic concept; it is not inscribed in the entities the grammatical nouns name.’ The importance of this argument is that it not only resolves the long-standing ‘ontology–epistemology’ conundrum which always degenerated into ‘egg–chicken’ debates but it also enables a new take on the relationship of knowledge to systems and institutions. Building on this argument it becomes clear that ‘the international’ is an epistemic creation as it is a political one (see Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018, 2020).

By the same token, such sectors of modern life as politics, society, and economy are also epistemic creations. Santos (2018: 27) also emphasised the fact that knowledge creates the world: ‘On the one hand, social scientific knowledge invented much of what it described as existing; such an invention became part of social reality as it got embedded in ways people behave and perceive social life.’ The important question which arises is that of which knowledge created the present ‘international’ to which higher education has to be panel-beaten to fit. Of course, the making of the modern ‘international’ has always been a contested terrain from within and from without, pitting the hegemonic/colonial knowledge of the European bourgeois (Eurocentrism,

liberalism, and neoliberalism) against Marxist leftist knowledge as well as feminist, black radical traditions, indigenous and endogenous, decolonial and postcolonial informed knowledges, for example (see Robinson 1983, Hountondji, 1997, 2002, Oyewumi 1997, Smith 1999, Amin 2011, Chilisa 2012, Shilliam 2015, Imlay 2018, Motta 2018, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018, 2020, Quan 2019).

What also emerges poignantly from this thinking about knowledge is that, before one jumps to techniques of how to internationalise higher education, there is a deeper question of which epistemology would anchor an internationalised higher education because, as put forward by Sandra Harding (2018: 39), there is indeed ‘one planet’ but with ‘many sciences’. Harding (2018: 54) explores the problems of a unification of sciences through the methodology of ‘add diversity and stir’ (for instance, adding intellectual and academic works produced from the Global South into an existing curriculum) as ‘insufficient to eliminate Eurocentric sciences and their philosophies’ founded on racism, patriarchy, colonialism, and capitalism. Is internationalisation of higher education a process of submitting institutions of the rest of the world to the ‘European game’ that was named by Frantz Fanon (1968)?

Leading scholars of international relations, such as Amitav Acharya & Barry Buzan (2019), have noted that the Global South has always been sidelined in modern conceptions of ‘the international’. Colonies were excluded because the term ‘international’ was a reference to legal transactions and relationships between sovereigns. Such discrimination based on race and power led such African scholars as Ibekwe Chinweizu (1975) to write about ‘the west’ and ‘the rest of us’. Perhaps the key point to be made here is that, if colonialism was fundamentally about conquest and ownership of the earth by colonial conquerors since the 15th century, then the decolonisation of the 21st century should be about claiming the earth as a home for everyone (Mbembe 2021). Perhaps, this is why decolonisation as defined by Adom Getachew (2019) has always been a re-worlding and re-making of the world so as to transcend legal, political, economic, epistemic, and economic hierarchies, and to create an egalitarian post-imperial, post-colonial, and post-racial world.

Taking into account all these issues, the key point is that internationalisation of higher education cannot be a simplistic process of integration of ‘the rest of us’ into the ‘European game’. Without the de-homogenisation of the stranglehold of Eurocentric epistemological orders, internationalisation of higher education remains problematic because it will continue the tethering of ‘the rest of us’ to an asymmetrical modern world system and its shifting global orders. What appears as a ‘post-Western/European world’ which pretends to be post-colonial and post-racial is not yet free from global coloniality, that is, the consequences of the ‘transhistoric expansion of colonial domination and the perpetuation of its effects in contemporary times’ (Morana *et al.* 2008: 2). Mbembe (2019: 20) added other elements to what he termed

‘colonization of the 21st century’: ‘It is about extraction, capture, the cult of data, the commodification of human capacity for thought, and the dismissal of critical reason in favour of programming.’ This takes us to locus of enunciation and global economy knowledges as necessary anchors of internationalised higher education.

Locus of enunciation, global economy of knowledge, and international higher education

The Eurocentric idea of a universal, disembodied, truthful, and decontextualised knowledge is today grappling with the decolonial concept of a locus of enunciation which posits that there is no knowledge and education which is free from racial, ethnic, gender, sexual, class, and other vectors of human identities and positionalities (Grosfoguel 2007). If this is the case, the question which arises is how internationalised higher education will deal with these issues. The Eurocentric idea of a universal knowledge where local and geography does not matter has given ammunition to the neoliberal notion of global economy of knowledge. Consequently, a ‘global turn’ and an idea of a ‘global university’ is being pushed forward by neoliberal globalists (see Kamola 2019). The decolonial concept of a locus of enunciation drives the insurgent and resurgent struggles of epistemological decolonisation of the 21st century led by such movements as the Rhodes Must Fall and Black Lives Matter, which are critical of notions of universities existing as unanchored institutional floating outside the orbit of the modern world (Kamola 2018, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018). Perhaps it was these debates and contestations which led Kamola (2019: 9) to argue that:

Unable to exit the earth’s orbit, colleges and universities are always and already worldly institutions, grounded in long histories and inscribed within vast economic, social, political, and cultural structures and practices. Despite being located within vast overdetermined social relationships, those students, scholars, and administrators inhabiting the world of higher education often imagine universities as extraworldly spaces from which to orbit—and gaze down upon—the world below. In claiming to reflect upon the world, seeing it as it actually is, the university often fades from the foreground, cropped out of the imaginary. In this process, colleges and universities increasingly are perceived as ivory towers located above and outside the world. In reality, however, there is no outside from which to view the world as a single thing, global or otherwise. A university is not a capsule floating outside the world’s orbit. As such, academic knowledge is never merely a snapshot of the world outside itself.

The point is that higher education is not only a site of contestation of ideas; it is part of and reflective of the material world. Thus, knowledge and education are generated, cultivated, and reproduced within a material world of people. Perhaps it was this

recognition which led Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986: 87) to define epistemological decolonisation as the 'quest for relevance' and 'the search for a liberating perspective within which to see ourselves clearly in relationship to ourselves and to other selves in the universe'. He emphasised that 'how we view ourselves' 'is very much dependent on where we stand in relationship to imperialism in its colonial and neo-colonial stages; that if we are to do anything about our individual and collective being today, then we have to coldly and consciously look at what imperialism has been doing to us and to our view of ourselves in the universe' (88). He proceeded to define locus of enunciation in these convincing words: 'How we see a thing—even with our eyes—is very much dependent on where we stand in relationship to it' (88). In decolonial thought, Europe is a major and dominant locus of enunciation of modern knowledge and education not as geography but as epistemic and linguistic formation. The best definition of West (of which Europe is a major part) comes from Mignolo (2010: xxv):

What constitutes the West more than geography is a linguistic family, a belief system and an epistemology. It is constituted by six modern European and imperial languages: Italian, Spanish and Portuguese, which were dominant during the Renaissance, and English, French and German, which have been dominant since the Enlightenment.

Major theories and models come from Europe. As such it cannot hide its locus of enunciation and pretend that its particularity is universality. The Latin American decolonial theorists also emphasised the importance of a locus of enunciation. Mignolo (1992, 1993) defined a locus of enunciation as the disciplinary, geo-cultural, and ideological space from which discourses of power and resistance are elaborated. Ramón Grosfoguel (2007:213) reinforced this argument this way: 'Nobody escapes the class, sexual, gender, spiritual, linguistic, geographical, and racial hierarchies of the modern/colonial/capitalist/patriarchal world-system'. At the centre of locus of enunciation is 'the geo-political and body-political location of the subject that speaks' (Grosfoguel 2007: 213).

However, there are critics of the idea of a locus of enunciation. These critics seem to have been enchanted by hegemonic neoliberal globalisation. In the first place, they critique the very notion of coloniality of knowledge, arguing that 'knowledge has been propagated, contested, nullified, subverted and transformed across more than three centuries stretching from the precolonial society to post-apartheid governance' (Jansen 2019: 5). The critique is well expressed by Fran Collyer *et al.* (2019: 1): 'there is a widespread idea that we live in a knowledge society, an information society, or a technological society. Yet in most fields of research, there is an idea that the disciplines we work in, and the concepts we work with, do not come from any particular place in that society. They are just in the air, so to speak.'

The second line of critique to then is to try to dismiss decolonisation of knowledge initiatives as hostage to archaic world systems and dependency theories which were relevant in the 1960s and 1970s but are no longer making sense in the present (Jansen 2019: 5). At least Collyer *et al.* (2019: 11) attributed this argument to ‘some Northern scholarship about globalization’ and admitted that ‘the facts of gross world economic inequalities, disproportionate military and state power, the transnational corporate economy, and the hierarchical practices of knowledge institutions, remain’ (see also Collyer 2014). In the third place, the critics of decolonisation even distort its logics to the extent of saying it posits an idea of an ‘all-powerful (and epistemologically homogenous) West imposing its will on vulnerable, weak and powerless colonies or former colonies’ (Jansen 2019: 5). The reality is that decolonial scholarship is opposed to all forms of fundamentalisms and has documented various forms of contestations and resistances to all impositions from Europe from as far back as the slave revolts in the diaspora. This is evident from decolonial scholarship’s advancement of ‘endogenous knowledge’, ‘theory from the South’, and ‘epistemologies of the South’ (see Hountondji 1997, Mignolo 2000, Comaroff & Comaroff 2012, Santos 2018). So there is no advancement of victimhood in decolonisation scholarship. It is a combative scholarship.

In the fourth instance, those who push for decolonisation of knowledge are heavily criticised for ‘misrepresentation of Western knowledge as unitary when, in fact, the West itself has experienced considerable epistemological turmoil over more than a century that belies the description of European science as positivist, universal, and exclusionary’ (Jansen 2019: 10). What the critics of decolonisation believe is clearly posited by Jonathan Jansen (2019: 5):

A sense of the world in which knowledge is increasingly co-produced through powerful partnerships in those two parts of the world system is a pervasive reality that defies an earlier but persistent notion that theory is developed in the West and applied in Africa and other parts of the formerly colonized world.

This thinking is deliberately oblivious of the persistent problem of uneven intellectual and academic division of labour and the concomitant intellectual and academic ‘imperialism’ and ‘extraversion’ on the one hand, and the consequent intellectual and academic dependencies on the other (see Ake 1979, Hountondji 1990, 1997, 2002, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018, 2020). What is very worrying about Jansen’s critique of decolonisation is that he does not attribute it to any work of decolonial scholars or any identifiable decolonial scholar. They seem to come from his head. What he does is to apportion his misunderstandings to decolonial scholarship in general and then quarrel with them.

One wonders if Jansen ever read any serious decolonial scholarship beyond journalistic articles because he does not cite any of this rich archive at all while pretending to be grappling with its limits. This is why he simplistically dismisses the concept of locus of enunciation as ‘narcissism of identity politics’ (Jansen 2019: 6). Worse still, the contributors to Jansen’s edited book are not saying what he is saying in the introduction. So the introduction has nothing to do with the content of the book. Serious decolonial scholarship is fully cognisant of what Immanuel Wallerstein (1997: 103) termed ‘anti-Eurocentric-Eurocentrism’ masquerading as ‘epistemological turmoil’ (a term used by Jansen) within dominant Western-centric knowledge. Of course, paradigmatic changes in Western knowledge are well documented by Thomas S. Kuhn (1962), but they do not amount to de-hierarchisation, de-Europe-anisation and decolonisation of knowledge. The work of Amy Allen (2016) goes deeper into ‘decolonizing the normative foundation of critical theory’ which is informed by such Enlightenment norms as salvation, progress, civilisation, modernity, modernisation, development, and emancipation. The point is that criticality within Eurocentric knowledge has always been there and such critical social theory as Marxism emerged within, but it did not aim to dethrone the normative foundations. One is led to argue that some critics of decolonisation of knowledge have a very static understanding of colonisation itself. Perhaps this is why Mbembe (2019: 19) emphasised that:

We need to develop a broader understanding of ‘colonization.’ Knowledge systems worldwide are still underpinned by the logic of value extraction. In fact, knowledge as such is increasingly designed as the principal means of value extraction. Colonization is going on when we throw out of the window the role of critical reason and theoretical thinking, and we reduce knowledge to the mere collection of data, its analysis and its use by governments, military bureaucracies and corporations. Colonization is going on when we are surrounded by so-called smart devices that constantly watch us and record us harvesting vast quantities of data, or when activity is captured by sensors and cameras embedded within them.

But what is also missing from most of the critiques of decolonisation of knowledge and education is an understanding that it is not about insulation, ‘ghettoisation’, and nativism. Rather decolonisation is opposed to all forms of fundamentalisms beginning with Eurocentric fundamentalism. In this context, locus of enunciation demands recognition of diverse ways of knowing for which internationalised higher education has to be anchored. Again Mbembe (2019: 15) explained it better:

I am talking about expanding the archive, not excising it. For this to happen, it must be clear to all that European archive alone can no longer account for the complexities, both of history, of the present, and of the future of our human and other-than-

human world. What we all inherit are the archives of the world at large. [...]. I am in favour of expanding the archive, reading the different archives of the world critically, each with and against the other. There can't be any other meaning to a planetary curriculum.

A decolonial international higher education has to be underpinned by consistent and systematic transcultural translation, mosaic/convivial epistemology, and ecologies of knowledges as ingredients of a planetary curriculum.

Intercultural translation, mosaic/convivial epistemology, and ecologies of knowledges

Uncertainties of knowledge as documented by Wallerstein (2004) and the exhaustion of Northern epistemologies as detailed by Santos (2014, 2018) offer an opportunity not only to reorganise the world of knowledge but also to embrace epistemologies of the South. This cannot happen unless the world takes seriously Jean Comaroff & John L. Comaroff's (2012: 1) radical suggestion: 'But what if, and here is the idea in interrogative form, we invert that order of things? What if we subvert the epistemic scaffolding on which it is erected? What if we posit that, in the present moment, it is the global south that affords privileged insight into the workings of the world at large?' Such a radical unlearning and unthinking of some forms of thinking cannot be successful without investment in and commitment to intercultural translation, mosaic/convivial epistemology, and ecologies of knowledges.

As noted by Cesaire (2000), colonialism was never the best mechanism to deliver intercultural translation mainly because it was a dismembering and dehumanising process. What colonialism created is problematic 'transcultural elites' (liminal subjects) in the colonies which it refused to fully accommodate and pushed into a 'juridical limbo' (see Mamdani 1996, Madlingozi 2018, Motta 2018). As such it was never its intention to bring diverse civilizations together and blend them together. At the core of intercultural translation is cognitive justice: that is, recognition of different ways of knowing by which diverse people across the globe view and interpret the world and provide meaning to their existence (see Santos 2014, 2018). Intercultural translation is a key enabler of non-colonial internationalisation of higher education because it accommodates and cultivates different knowledges anchored in different cultures. This is why Santos (2018: 32) provided motivation for it in these words: 'intercultural translation contributes to turning the world's epistemological and cultural diversity into a favourable, capacitating factor in furthering the articulation between struggles against capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy.' Intercultural translation is a powerful decolonial tool enabling recognition of difference not as an obstacle to human

conviviality but as a solid base to construct a pluriverse founded on ‘degrowth, commoning, conviviality, and a variety of pragmatic transition initiatives’ as well as ‘relationality’ and ‘radical interdependence’ (Escobar 2018: 4). Intercultural translation enables transcendence over epistemicides, culturecides, and linguicides as it re-members rather than dismembers (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018). Perhaps Raewyn Connell (2018: 22) was thinking of intercultural translation when she noted that: ‘The problem is not a deficit from the periphery—it is a deficit of recognition and circulation.’

The fact that all human beings were born into valid and legitimate knowledge systems is the soul of intercultural translation and it links it very well with the concepts of mosaic epistemology as articulated by Connell (2018) and epistemology of conviviality as defined by Francis Nyamnjoh (2017) as well as that of ecologies of knowledges introduced by Santos (2007). Taken together these concepts help in transcending and indeed deleting the racist ‘abyssal thinking’ (paradigm of difference along the human line) founded on what William E. B. Du Bois (1903) termed the ‘colour line’ that created what Frantz Fanon (1968) termed the ‘zone of being’ and the ‘zone of non-being’ (see Du Bois 1903, Santos 2007, Grosfoguel 2019). Modern knowledge and education were heavily shaped by this ‘abyssal thinking’ to the extent that decolonisation has led to ‘post-abyssal thinking’ amenable to ecologies of knowledges and mosaic epistemology (Santos 2018, Santos & Meneses 2020). Post-abyssal thinking confronts what Connell (2018: 30) termed ‘the pyramidal model implicit in the mainstream economy of knowledge’. It was Connell (30) who introduced the concept of ‘mosaic epistemology’. This is how she defined it:

Separate knowledge systems sit beside each other like tiles in a mosaic, each based on a specific culture or historical experience, and each having its own claims to validity. Mosaic epistemology offers a clear alternative to Northern hegemony and global inequality, replacing the priority of one knowledge system with respectful relations among many (30).

There can be no mosaic epistemology without ecologies of knowledges and vice versa. Mosaic epistemology has to be dynamic and interactive, always open to horizontal interactions and solidarities. At its core is the idea of ‘mutual learning on a world scale’ (Connell 2018: 31). This means that decolonial international higher education has to be informed by a deliberate shift from ‘a Northern-centred global economy of knowledge with a pyramidal epistemology to a Southern-centre global economy of knowledge with a solidarity-based epistemology, where theory is produced and recognised at many sites, and thus brought closer to popular struggles and everyday life’ (32).

The concept of mosaic epistemology resonates with what Nyamnjoh (2017, 2018) depicted as convivial scholarship and convivial epistemology. Nyamnjoh’s (2018: 3)

departure point is Africa where people are caught up ‘betwixt and between exclusionary and prescriptive regimes of being and belonging’. This is how Nyamnjoh introduced and defined convivial scholarship:

A truly convivial scholarship is one which does not seek a priori to define and confine Africans into particular territories or geographies, particular racial and ethnic categories, particular classes, genders, generations, religions or whatever other identity marker is ideologically en vogue. Convivial scholarship confronts and humbles the challenge of over-prescription, over-standardization, over-routinization, and over-prediction. It is critical and evidence-based; it challenges problematic labels, especially those that seek to unduly oversimplify the social realities of the people, places and spaces it seeks to understand and explain (2017: 5).

What Nyamnjoh (2018: 3) is advocating is an epistemology that ‘sees the local in the global and the global in the local’ and is underpinned by ‘informed conversations, conscious of the hierarchies and power relations at play at both the micro- and macro-level of being and becoming’. At the core of epistemology is the fact of ‘incompleteness’ as opposed to colonial and imperialist ‘delusions of grandeur’ and completeness of being, and Nyamnjoh (2017: 5) concluded that: ‘conviviality depicts diversity, tolerance, trust, equality, inclusiveness, cohabitation, coexistence, mutual accommodation, interaction, interdependence, getting along, generosity, hospitality, congeniality, festivity, civility and privileging peace over conflict, among other forms of sociality’. Thus, for a decolonial internationalisation of higher education, there must always be ‘recognition’ and ‘reconciliation’ after centuries of depredations of the paradigm of difference (Nyamnjoh 2017: 6, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018). All this is possible if framed by the ethos of pluriversity originating from decolonial struggles targeting racism, colonialism, capitalism, and patriarchy.

Conclusion: Towards a globalectics for pluriversity

There can be no international higher education without decolonisation and globalectics/pluriversity. In his *Globalectics: Theory and the Politics of Knowing* (2012: 8), Ngugi wa Thiong’o defined globalectics this way:

Globalectics is derived from the shape of the globe. On its surface, there is no centre; any point is equally a centre. As for the internal centre of the globe, all points on the surface are equidistant to it—like the spokes of a bicycle wheel that meet at the hub. Globalectics combines the global and the dialectical to describe a mutually affecting dialogue, or multi-logue, in the phenomena of nature and nurture in a global space that is rapidly transcending that of the artificially bounded, as nation and region. The global is that which human in spaceships or on the international space station

see: the dialectical is the internal dynamics that they do not see. Globalectics embraces wholeness, interconnectedness, equality of potentiality of parts, tension, and motion. It is a way of thinking and relating to the world, particularly in the era of globalism and globalization.

In the knowledge domain globalectics cannot be realised without re-founding and re-purposing the university. Re-founding is the radical action of transforming the university into a pluriversity. Re-purposing is redefining the mission of the university away from its complicity in epistemicides and cognitive injustices into a committed and indeed activist institution of higher education which confronts its problematic past while creating futures founded on social justice and cognitive justice (see Santos 2017, 2018, Santos & Meneses 2020). A decolonial internationalisation of higher education's horizon is to turn universities into pluriversities where 'polyphonic'/diverse voices cascading from ecologies of knowledges and encouraged by mosaic/convivial epistemology and consistent intercultural translation (learning across cultures without rejecting their locus of enunciation) to strive and flourish (Santos 2017: 377–9).

The current internationalisation of higher education informed by hegemonic neoliberal/capitalist/commercial globalisation taking the form of harmonisation of credits, funded staff exchanges, fee-paying student exchanges, exchange of sabbaticals, enrichment of the curriculum with the addition of foreign languages and new materials from scholars from other places, the enrolment of foreign fee-paying students, establishment of offshore campuses, occasional partnerships in research, occasional collaboration in planning and hosting international conferences, and obsession with university rankings; do not amount to globalectics and pluriversity. These actions are mere responses to academic capitalism and university imperialism and they follow the logics of academic and intellectual structural adjustments to the dictates of market fundamentalisms.

This article is not opposed to the internationalisation of higher education. It is critical of internationalisation that is not founded on epistemological decolonisation and its logics of a locus of enunciation, intercultural translation, ecologies of knowledges, and mosaic/convivial epistemology. These logics are at the core of changing the very philosophy of higher education and the very idea of the university, leading to de-nationalising and un-walling of the university so as to open it up for transnational flows of knowledge and ecologies of community knowledge and formal knowledge. It is opposed to internationalisation that is not founded on rethinking and even unthinking thinking itself about knowledge and education so as to set afoot a pluriversity (see Wallerstein 1999). In decolonial terms: 'The task of rethinking thinking is therefore precisely this: to recognize the cultural asphyxiation of those numerous "others" that has been the norm, and work to bring other categories of self-definition, of dreaming, of acting, of loving, of living into the

commons as a matter of universal concern' (Hoppers & Richards 2012: 8). In this context, internationalisation of higher education cannot be a technical and procedural process, it has to be a liberatory and rehumanising project engaging with colonialism and dislocating it.

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What can the African diaspora contribute to innovation and knowledge creation? The case study of Zimbabwean innovators

Juliet Thondhlana, Roda Madziva and Evelyn Chiyevu Garwe

Abstract: The importance of diaspora and transnational knowledge production, innovation, and development is of growing interest, particularly in the developing world. The phenomenal increase in high human capital migration from poor to rich countries has historically led to what is commonly known as brain drain, which has negatively impacted the capacity of such countries to innovate. Yet more recently the emergence of the phenomenon of transnationalism has demonstrated the potential to transform brain drain into brain circulation, for the mutual benefit of both sending and receiving contexts. This article uses the case of Zimbabwe to explore the role of diasporan professionals, scholars, and entrepreneurs in contributing to knowledge production, innovation, and development initiatives in their countries of origin. Zimbabwe is an example of many African countries that have experienced substantial attrition of highly qualified knowledge workers for various reasons. A qualitative approach, involving interviews and documentary evidence, enabled the researchers to engage with the Zimbabwean diaspora to capture their narratives regarding the challenges and opportunities, which were then used to develop successful transnational knowledge production initiatives.

Keywords: Diaspora transnationalism, Zimbabwe, brain drain and brain circulation, country of origin.

Introduction

The dearth of recognised academic knowledge production in Africa has been a subject of many scholarly conversations (Okolie 2003, Zegeye & Vambe 2006). In this article, we highlight how diaspora transnationalism can contribute to knowledge production in Africa through brain circulation, a process involving the international mobility of highly skilled migrants, whereby they move to study abroad, get employed abroad, and later return home when a good opportunity arises (Johnson & Regets 1998). This stems from the realisation that most of the literature on African diaspora transnationalism has hitherto focused on diaspora direct investment and engaged less with transnational knowledge and its potential to contribute towards innovation—understood as an ‘outcome, a process, and a mindset, where outcomes arise from an innovation process accentuated by mindset’ (Kahn 2018: 459)—and development.

Diaspora and transnationalism are fluid concepts that are often confused as well as being used to capture a broader range of international migration phenomena (IOM 2017, Thondhlana & Madziva 2018). Diaspora is a very old concept, which ‘was traditionally used to describe the Jewish population exiled from Judea in biblical times and from British Palestine before the formation of the modern nation-state, Israel’ (Tung 2008: 300, Faist 2010). However, in recent years the concept of diaspora has been expanded to capture myriad contemporary forms of international migration, including both forced and voluntary migration, and more broadly migrants who have left their places of birth and have integrated into countries of immigration, but are still maintaining strong ties with their countries of origin (Pasura 2012). Some migrants ‘shuttle between host and home countries for opportunities’ (Osaghae 2018: 13). Transnationalism, on the other hand, has been defined as ‘a process by which migrants, through their daily life activities create social fields that cross national boundaries’ (Basch *et al.* 1994: 22). Thus, as Osaghae (2018: 13) argues, ‘the concept of transnationalism was coined to give theoretical form to empirical observation that migrants through their daily activities (social, economic, and political) create activities that cut across national boundaries’. Levitt (2001: 202–3) has therefore argued that ‘diasporas form out of the transnational communities spanning sending and receiving countries and out of the real or imagined connections between migrants from a particular homeland who are scattered throughout the world’. More recently Osaghae (2018) has used the term ‘diaspora transnationalism’ to capture, explain, and understand migrants’ diverse activities, which span borders. Among these activities is the global mobility of human talent, especially from the Global South to the Global North, initially conceptualised in the language of ‘brain drain’ and more recently as ‘brain circulation’. We briefly explore these concepts below.

Brain drain and brain circulation

Historically the term ‘brain drain’ has been used to represent a one-way movement of high human capital from developing to developed countries, which has fuelled the race between countries to attract the best and the brightest brains from around the world to enhance the generation of the ideas which can be turned into innovations, goods, and services. As Robertson (2006: 1) argues, the term ‘brain drain’ derives from the view that:

brains are the basis for a competitive edge in the so-called ‘new knowledge economy’. However, it is not just any old brain. Rather, the race is on between countries to attract the best brains from around the world in order to generate the ideas that will in turn lead to innovations, patents and profits.

Thus in a globalised and knowledge-based society and economy, human talent has become increasingly more mobile with nation-states struggling to keep the people who were born and educated within their national boundaries (Tung 2008). Indeed, the literature on brain drain has shown that the departure or emigration of highly skilled migrants, particularly from developing countries to developed countries, deprives a country of its human capital (brain drain), leading to an increase in the human capital level of the receiving country (brain gain) (Robertson 2006, Chand 2019). In particular, the loss of talent from Africa to liberal democratic countries has been widely documented, and in ways that characterise the African diaspora as ‘brain drain’ (Crush 2002, Boyo 2013, Chand 2016).

Much of the concern, then, is with the movement of the talented and highly skilled from those countries that can least afford to lose them, such as many of the sub-Saharan African countries, to countries like the United Kingdom, the United States of America, France, and Germany, which seem to act like a magnet by offering better conditions for work and study. This seems particularly unfair if the sending country has invested heavily in the education and training of these students and skilled workers, only to lose them to another country.

A stark example of this was that of Zimbabwe, which in the early 2000s was characterised as a significant ‘brain exporter’ (Chetsanga & Muchenje 2003, Chikanda 2005) as it was estimated that between 70 and 90% of all Zimbabwe university graduates had left the country in search of greener pastures. As Chimanikire (2005: 15) argues, ‘the brain drain has even assumed political connotations with [the now late and then] President Robert Mugabe accusing Zimbabwe’s former colonial ruler Britain of “stealing” medical doctors, nurses and pharmacists from Zimbabwe’.

Overall, the African Union (2016) estimates that about seventy thousand highly skilled professionals emigrate from Africa every year, with a report by the

International Monetary Fund (2016) showing a growing number of African migrants in the OECD countries. As Chand (2019: 6) argues:

There are numerous reasons for the emigration of highly educated Africans. These reasons include pull factors such as better salaries, living conditions, and career opportunities overseas, as well push factors, such as poor-quality institutions, lack of infrastructure, corruption, and nepotism in the country of origin (COO).

However, on the other hand, there is increased recognition that the same migratory movements, initially conceptualised as brain drain, can be more appropriately viewed in the context of a ‘brain circulation’ or ‘triangular human talent flow’ (Tung 2008, Saxenian 2006). Here the argument is that international migration is not only about ‘draining the intellectual elite from a country but enabling the circulation of ideas and expertise (Robertson 2006: 3, Radwan & Sakr 2018). For Saxenian (2006) brain circulation is a better term to use as it helps capture the dynamics employed by diaspora communities as they take steps to engage with their COO. In this sense, brain circulation ‘does not require that the people involved permanently move back to the COO rather, it involves being constantly engaged with the COO, so that the benefits of immigration are available to both countries’ (Chand 2019: 8). Therefore, ‘brain circulation replaces the traditional concepts of brain drain versus brain gain because of the growing mobility of human talent across international boundaries’ (Tung 2008: 298). Tung further observes that Chinese diasporans ‘have been dubbed in the Chinese press as “astronauts”, i.e., people who shuttle back and forth between two distant hubs’ (299). In this way, diaspora communities are seen as an important vehicle for transferring much needed resources, including finance, technology, knowledge, and ideas, to their home countries and thereby contributing to the economic and social development of their countries of origin. The triangular flow of human talent thus leads to a win–win situation as both the recipient and sending countries concurrently benefit from the same human talent pool (299).

Indeed, the connection between migration and development has been acknowledged at the international community level as reflected in the recent global framework agendas. A stark example is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which recognises migration as a force for development by highlighting the significance of migrant contributions to inclusive growth and sustainable development in both countries of origin and countries of residence.

Writing in the context of Africa, Kajunju (2013) terms the diaspora ‘Africa’s secret weapon’, noting that many African families increasingly depend on their diaspora communities for support. However, as Siwale (2018: 64) argues, ‘much of the diaspora’s contribution to development in their COO has primarily been viewed in terms of remittances that go to support families’, yet there is growing research evidence that

remittances from immigrants substantially contribute toward the establishment and enhancement of entrepreneurial business activity in developing countries (Siwale 2018: 64). Particularly with regards to African diaspora transnationalism, there is further evidence that the African diaspora is fast becoming a key contributor to the continent's economic development as investors and entrepreneurs (see Siwale 2018; see also Boly *et al.* 2014, Chrysostome & Molz 2014,).

Overall, it has been argued that, compared to a typical foreign direct investment (FDI), diaspora investment has a special appeal, as investment decisions of diaspora communities are not entirely driven by economic gains. Among other things, diaspora communities have been noted to have emotional ties to their ancestral homeland (Tung 2008), and increasingly they feel obligated to 'give back' to their communities (Madziva & Thondhlana 2017) as well as being driven by the possibilities for return to the homeland (Riddle *et al.* 2010, McGregor 2014, Madziva *et al.* 2018).

At the same time, many governments have put in place mechanisms to tap into the diaspora capital investments—the Indian and Chinese governments are stark examples (Tung 2004, Saxenian 2006). Boly *et al.* (2014) also note the establishment of investment incentives and promotion agencies that target the diaspora community as potential investors in some African countries, including Uganda, Ghana, Ethiopia, and Nigeria.

While several studies on African diaspora transnationalism so far have focused on diaspora direct investment (DDI), less is known about diaspora investors as facilitators of transnational knowledge and how this can contribute towards the development of new innovations that benefit both the country of origin (COO) and the country of residence (COR). However, Chand (2016) has shown that Nigeria and Ghana are the two countries with the most active diasporas within Sub-Saharan Africa, a development which he attributes to be a result of the policies of these two countries' governments, which promote dialogue between the governments and their diaspora communities. He cites Nigerian diaspora organisations, which work closely with the Nigerian government to ensure workforce training in industry and academia. He also notes the Ghana Physicians and Surgeons' endeavour in working towards improving health care in Ghana.

Some concrete examples and case studies are often drawn from the Chinese and Indian contexts. For example, in her book *The New Argonauts: Regional Advantage in a Global Economy*, Saxenian (2006) draws on the examples of Chinese and Indian high-tech immigrants, who after successfully establishing their IT innovations in the USA went ahead to adapt the same innovations in their own COO, clearly evidencing the circulation of knowledge between the country of residence and country of origin.

Reflecting on the case study of India, Tung (2008) focuses on individuals and provides the example of Sabeer Bhatiya, founder of Hotmail.com, who after receiving an MSc in electrical engineering in the USA, worked for a while before launching Hotmail.com. He later on sold Hotmail.com and moved on to other ventures, including plans to develop a new city, Nanocity, in India that will hopefully ‘replicate the vibrance and eco-system of innovation found in the Silicon Valley’ (Tung 2008: 301).

Writing in the context of Africa, Chand (2019: 301) notes the need to focus on individual country case studies in order to identify ‘what policies actually lead to greater brain circulation, as opposed to brain drain’. This paper contributes to the ongoing debate on diaspora transnationalism by focusing on the case study of Zimbabwe diasporans who are facilitators of transnational knowledge production and asks the following questions: what areas of transnational knowledge and innovations are they active in? What are the drivers of their transnationalism and what challenges do they face? What mechanisms do they employ to engage with the COO and why? What transnational models are operational at national and other levels and what are their merits or limitations? We begin with a brief outline of the emergence of the Zimbabwe diaspora to provide a context for our participants’ journeys and lived experiences.

Zimbabwe and the making of a diaspora

Zimbabwe is rated as having one of the best education systems on the continent of Africa in terms of the quality of its programmes and competitiveness of its graduates on the global labour market (Tevera & Crush 2003, UNICEF 2011, Garwe & Thondhlana 2018), and Zimbabwe’s economy has long depended on its high human capital dating from colonial times and peaking in postcolonial times prior to the deepening socio-economic and political crises which set in in the late 1990s. As a former British colony, Zimbabwe has an education system, however, whose foundations lie in a discriminatory system that limited black people’s access to education by creating school and higher education progression bottlenecks for them. Studies (e.g., Thondhlana *et al.* 2016, Thondhlana 2020) have noted that such a system created the belief that a successful career (deemed white-collar jobs) could only be attained through the academic route and by white people and a few advantaged blacks. The vocational education route first established by missionaries and then used by the colonial regime to create a semi-skilled black workforce for themselves was highly stigmatised (referred to as blue-collar jobs). That way colonial education came to be highly theoretical, thereby locking its African recipients then and postcolonially in what Thondhlana *et al.* (2020: 13) term ‘an employment-seeking mind-set’.

Nevertheless, the restrictions created a stronger desire among blacks to seek higher education as the way to upward mobility and the highly sought after colonially styled elitist life which would lead to societal respect and status.

This perception was perpetuated after Zimbabwe's attainment of independence in 1980 despite efforts to make education accessible at all levels to the black majority population. The route to Advanced Level and university was highly competitive with many, otherwise variously gifted, students dropping out at Ordinary Level and below who were often relegated to small-scale farming; unpopular technical and vocational education and training; teaching; nursing; or other less academic routes. Surprisingly, some of our innovators travelled some of these routes. It is important to note here that these colonial and postcolonial perceptions partly account for some of the reported behaviours and attitudes towards potential/emerging local innovations and innovators. McGrath *et al.* (2017) report that in postcolonial Zimbabwe, an academic degree was a guarantee of a highly paying and rewarding job. However, Zimbabwe's socio-political and economic crises which drastically eroded livelihoods in the mid-1990s triggered mass migration offering migration opportunities to all and sundry to better their lives and fulfil lost dreams. Herein are the lived experiences of our innovators framed.

Generally, Mandiyanike (2014) observes that there was a love-hate relationship between Zimbabwe and its diaspora, with the discourse sometimes presenting them negatively as 'enemies of the state'. For example, on the one hand, the then President Robert Mugabe expressed a disdain for the diaspora calling them "Blair's spies" (in the case of those going to live and work in the UK between 1997 and 2007), sell-outs, anti-nationalists, traitors and members of the opposition and thus "agents of regime change" (Mandiyanike 2014: 6). Yet on the other hand, there was an obvious love for the remittances sent by the diaspora which were largely responsible for keeping the country afloat economically.

Such pronouncements, however, would have negatively impacted the ease with which diasporans might decide to actively contribute to knowledge production and development in their home country. However, as time went by, the discourse began to shift to 'these [diasporans] are Zimbabweans ... who one day will bring back vital skills that will transform this country. ... They can't stay there forever' (Mandiyanike 2014: 7). This becomes prophetic when one looks at the emerging patterns of diaspora knowledge contribution, innovation, and development.

Methodology and the study

A case study approach was chosen to explore emerging patterns of the Zimbabwe diaspora contribution to knowledge production, innovation, and sustainable development. In this regard as exploratory research, a qualitative approach involving interviews and looking at related documentation was considered appropriate for an in-depth understanding of participants' journeys, practices, and lived experiences. The data was drawn from a bigger project looking at education and employability of the Zimbabwe diaspora and a 'return of talent' initiative run by the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE) and its partners. Specific data for this paper involved in-depth interviewing five individuals, four of whom were diasporans with evidenced knowledge production activity, and one Zimbabwe-based authority with evidenced involvement in leveraging the Zimbabwe diaspora in knowledge creation. Given the complexities of our participants' journeys, the case study approach was deemed appropriate as it allows for an in-depth, yet multifaceted, exploration of the complex aspects of the lived experiences of each case. In addition, researchers considered documents (including media and official reports), relating to these specific cases.

Interviewees were accessed through the three researchers' networks, who are all Zimbabweans and two of whom are Zimbabwean migrants to the UK. As insiders, researchers were acutely aware of some of the sensitivities relating to the Zimbabwean diaspora context. These include some of the traumatic experiences of their journeys and lived experiences both in Zimbabwe (which had led to their migration) and the diaspora and the ensuing challenges of eking out a living, which may lead to mistrust of others, including members of their own communities (Hynes 2003). Establishing trust and building rapport both from shared experience and experience of doing migration research was found critical for research success. Ethics approval for both projects was obtained through both the University of Nottingham and ZIMCHE.

Participants were purposefully selected to ensure diversity in activities and approaches. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed before analysis using thematic and narrative techniques. The narrative approach fitted our theoretical framing and enabled us to tap into participants' lived experiences (McCance *et al.* 2001) and explore the complexities of their knowledge production journeys. Data analysis included the three researchers examining the data both individually and as a team, with each researcher reading interview transcripts and documents through their own predominant disciplinary lenses, including education, sociology, and migration studies. Interpretations were discussed, with each researcher taking the lead at different points in the iterative process.

The cases

Below we provide brief descriptions of the chosen cases.

C1

C1 is the story of a high school dropout (at age 15 due to poverty) whose groundbreaking innovative green power (clean energy) has been well received worldwide, taking the world by storm. His remarkable journey started in Zimbabwe where, having dropped out of school, he started experimenting with clean energy. While the country acknowledged his creativity, there was no interest in supporting him financially to make the innovations a reality. His search for support took him to other African countries, but offers came with restrictive and exploitative conditions. His break came when a rich businessman offered him funding without strings attached, which enabled him to migrate to the US where he was able to set up a company for the development of his innovations and where he is now settled. Having realised great success, he is now finding ways to bring his innovations back to Africa where he has so far registered his company in Zimbabwe and another African country. He has more recently developed innovations using his green energy to fight COVID-19, which he hopes can help Africa and the world at large and is already receiving orders from around the world.

C2

C2 is the story of an academically gifted young man who won a scholarship to study abroad including Cuba, Russia, and eventually the United Kingdom where he attempted to study towards a PhD but dropped out due to funding problems. This was followed by many years of unemployment during which time he recollected seeing a relative in his native Zimbabwe use an indigenous drink to clean kitchen utensils. He went on to develop biodegradable green cleaning products using this drink as a base that have become a favourite on the market. Following this innovation, he has gone on to investigate many other local Zimbabwe indigenous natural products for use in developing a range of innovative products, including toiletries. In doing this, he engages and partners with communities who share their indigenous solutions and remedies. In turn he pays them for their products as well as contributing to community development projects, such as drilling boreholes to provide clean water and supporting the education of disadvantaged children.

C3

C3 is the story of a health science innovator who left Zimbabwe despondent after completing Advanced Level, looking for better opportunities to study towards an accounting degree in another African country. Due to lack of funding he ended up

settling for nursing where he developed an interest in wound care. Following completion of his nursing studies he worked in this African country where his unique talent in wound care was first noticed, thereafter moving to another African country where his talent was further acknowledged, but there were no opportunities for him to further his nursing studies at degree level. In search of better study and employment opportunities he then decided to migrate to the United Kingdom where he got funding to realise his dream of earning Bachelor's and Master's degrees, culminating in an innovative PhD study in wound care at a top UK Russell Group university. His dream was to patent his innovation and practise in Zimbabwe or another African country. After trying to break into the health systems of four African countries, including Zimbabwe, and failing to navigate their complex processing systems and bureaucratic requirements, despite the critical need for affordable wound care solutions, he ended up patenting the innovation through a UK university. Here his trials have helped many afflicted people who would otherwise have lost their limbs and who have fully recovered. He has since begun to receive many enquiries from afflicted people all over the world and has won many awards for the innovation. He is still seeking opportunities to set up practice in Africa.

C4

C4 is the story of an academic who has partnered with African colleagues in higher education and significantly contributed to research, publishing, and policy formulation. C4 left a lectureship job at a Zimbabwe university to look for better livelihoods for her family in the United Kingdom following Zimbabwe's economic downturn. After a three-year period of unemployment she finally got a job at one of the UK's top universities where she got opportunities and support to conduct cutting-age research in higher education and migration. She decided to focus her research on Africa and Zimbabwe so as to benefit her home country and continent. She sought to achieve this through establishing partnerships between her UK university and Zimbabwean universities as well as research collaborations with colleagues from other African countries. To date, she has contributed to the setting up of partnerships with Zimbabwe higher education institutions, the development of a policy framework, library resourcing, and writing for publication in high-impact journals and books, which have benefitted colleagues across Africa.

C5

C5 is the story of a structured approach to establish and improve partnerships in which Zimbabwean diaspora nationals can support teaching, learning, and research in Zimbabwean higher education institutions. The initiative was in response to the void created by the unprecedented leakages of highly qualified and experienced

academics and professionals with high-end skills to foreign countries in search of 'greener pastures'. This massive brain drain threatened to negatively impact the quality of education, research, and training in universities. The higher education quality assurance agency, the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE), the Zimbabwe University Vice Chancellors Association (ZUVCA), and the Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA) joined hands to address the problem strategically and collaboratively. They resolved to institute a strategy for skills transfer through the temporary return of diaspora lecturers and professionals who would contribute within short periods ranging from four to six weeks.

Findings and discussion

In this section we present and discuss the three key themes which emerged from the analysis of data including: (1) Africa first: an experience of rejection and unintended brain drain? (2) The diaspora experience and reward of resilience—planned and incidental brain gain? (3) The pull of Africa and brain circulation. The conclusion will provide a discussion of the challenges emerging from the data and propose appropriate models (used here to mean a system or pattern that can be used as a potential example to follow) to leverage diaspora transnationalism to enhance academic knowledge production.

Africa first: an experience of rejection and unintended brain drain?

As shown by the existing literature on brain drain (e.g., Radwan & Sakr 2018, Chand 2019) there are a range of push and pull factors that have motivated Africans to leave their countries. Our participants who left Zimbabwe for various destinations around the world, were mainly driven by Zimbabwe's socio-economic and political crises, which have created a disabling environment for personal and national growth and development. This led to some of the best of Zimbabwe's high human capital to leave in search of better opportunities elsewhere so as to maintain the elitist lifestyle they had become accustomed to. As noted by one C5 higher education leader:

Lecturers lost their income, their pride and their dignity, for example, they were forced to join their students in public transport and in queues for basic commodities. They had skills, they had options so they left the country.

Also highlighted by one C5 temporary returnee:

As lecturers, we were not necessarily better paid but we had a lot of opportunities to better our teaching, research and lives. Most of us had mansions in the affluent suburbs.

The sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe and its isolation from the international community took a toll on the said opportunities as research and consultancy became a thing of the past.

Often those who left had no time to give notice at work, grabbing whatever opportunity presented itself. Because of this and other push factors, leaving the country was generally considered an act of disloyalty/unpatriotism. As such, there were many pronouncements by government and at workplaces suggesting that they would not be welcomed back. As explained by C4:

My former university was clear about not taking me back should I decide to return to Zimbabwe despite the evidenced benefits to the university of taking me back because I'm considered unpatriotic. You therefore can't help feeling a sense of rejection.

In a different situation some, like C1, have been pushed to leave because of lack of support of their innovative ideas in the home country. As noted above, C1's groundbreaking green energy generation ideas did not find takers in the context of Zimbabwe. It is interesting that in a show of identification with the continent they try other African countries before thinking of further afield but receive the same treatment. As observed by Fogtman *et al.* (2020), writing about Ghana's space science and technology innovations, innovations may not be immediately appreciated in contexts of poverty where the gains of spending on research and technology may be overshadowed by the reality of here and now bread and butter issues. However, as in the case of C1 and as C3 was to later find, other issues were apparent, including instances of potential exploitation and corruption, such as officials or prominent individuals who would only help if they were given shares in the financial gains. *'Even after winning a tender the awarding official wanted some shares in exchange'* (C1). C3 has also reported similar experiences with some politicians saying: *'I was told that we needed to sit down and talk profit.'*

For some of our cases they left because of a failure by Zimbabwe to recognise and support their talent and potential. For example, it took years before C1 decided to leave Zimbabwe after many attempts to secure support for his innovations, noting that:

Zimbabwe assessed the innovation and commended it as the first addition to Zimbabwean X technology since independence and confirmed that it worked. However the project fell away due to lack of funds.

Here we can see that the focus on and veneration of academic qualifications as a basis for career success and upward mobility cultivated in colonial times and perpetuated postcolonially, could account for why C1 did not make as much impact as there would have been in the case of a highly educated person. Instead, some of the senior

academics he interacted with about his innovative ideas told him that his innovations would not gain any currency because the ideas did not conform with scientific expectations of the West, yet time has proven that the ideas were actually unique, ingenious, and groundbreaking. Such a colonial mentality of thinking that Africans cannot innovate has been well documented in the literature (e.g., Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2015, Mbembe 2016, Thondhlana *et al.* 2020). The dominant colonial-styled academic model based on the Eurocentric epistemic canon (Mbembe 2016), which arguably fuels negative attitudes towards local knowledge production, perpetuates the colonial dynamics of power and knowledge generation otherwise couched in discourses of coloniality (typically understood to be enduring patterns of power resulting from colonialism). In this regard, Thondhlana *et al.* (2020: 5) argue that ‘Coloniality ... exists in all postcolonial societies in various shapes and forms despite repeated post-independence attempts to reverse its multiple legacies.’

As noted above, colonialism created the perception that Africans had no capacity to create enterprises and therefore focused on pursuing an education that would lead to employment. Therefore C1 contradicted such perceptions on two fronts: that is, a perceived ‘unintelligent person’ (as defined by having dropped out of school) actually turning out to be a genius and being innovative/entrepreneurial with potential to become an employer.

The impact of such attitudes is crippling. As C1 reflects:

There was a time when I was aggrieved because of the way I was treated by my Government then when I started, as well as my fellow countrymen. All I yearned for was encouragement as well as validation by my own people. Encouragement and validation by one’s own people are crucial elements whenever one dares to traverse uncharted terrain.

Thus having failed to find an enabling creative space in Zimbabwe, C1 then tried other African countries who again failed to help patent his innovations ‘*because they were thought to defy science*’. Therefore, C1 had no other option but to leave for the United States of America. However, it is important to note that, while Africa appeared to be oblivious to the loss of and was pushing away its highly skilled and talented, Western countries such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United States of America, and the United Kingdom were preoccupied with scouting and competing for the ‘best and brightest’ and designing ‘talent for citizenship’ regimes. Indeed, schemes or initiatives such as the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme of the United Kingdom and the European Union’s Scientific Visa (to attract the highly educated) and the Blue Card (targeting the highly skilled) with permanent residence and citizenship are some of the incentives to attract high human capital (Shachar 2006, Cerna & Chou 2014).

It is no wonder, then, that our talented participants have found their way to some of these nations where they have found success. The question, however, is of how easily they have found this success and this is the subject of the next section.

The diaspora experience and reward of resilience—planned and incidental brain gain?

Talking about the United States of America's acknowledgement and support of his work as well as giving him a home, C1 expressed '*disappointment that Africa did not see what the US Government saw in my ground breaking inventions*'. By this he was referring to the enabling environment including the supportive US laws and policies towards technology and innovations which embrace and support small ideas lacking in other contexts, particularly Africa.

However, while migrant host countries mostly in the developing world are often perceived and pitched as providing an enabling environment for education, career progression, and innovation, this is not without complexities and challenges, and not everyone manages to realise their potential. In this regard, studies (e.g. Erel 2010, Madziva *et al.* 2014, Thondhlana *et al.* 2016) have reported the discriminatory labour market practices that in many reported cases exclude particularly highly skilled and other migrants resulting in their delayed or even failed insertion into the labour market, non-transferability of their skills and limited upward mobility. As C4 explains:

Having left Zimbabwe with a good education to PhD level, years of experience and diverse skills I expected to thrive in the UK but the first three years were extremely traumatic for my family. Responses to my applications were curt and I felt that they just looked at my name and where I came from and didn't bother to look at my qualifications (some of which were previously gained at UK institutions), skills and experience.

Similarly C2's years looking for employment without success before he decided to innovate and go into manufacturing and entrepreneurship is another typical example of diaspora experiences:

After failing to complete my PhD due to lack of funding, my family suffered because I was jobless.

Even award-winning innovator C3 struggled to conduct his groundbreaking study due to a lack of funding support (much of the funding for his research was from his meagre salary) and permission to do trials in UK hospitals. He had to be supported by a white person to access patients as he notes:

I had problems gaining access to patients because I was a black person. I had to be supported by a white person to do my trials. It's only when they started seeing the effective results of my innovation that they started trusting me and I was on national TV and in the papers.

In another context, research (e.g., Thondhlana *et al.* 2016) has shown how insecure immigration status (for example, student visa) limited migrants in their navigation of the host labour market with many ending up in semi-skilled and non-skilled

employment, resulting in education and career aspirations being unfulfilled. Nevertheless, those who have succeeded have had to exercise resilience and not give up and some engaged in acts of ‘reinvention’ (Bauder 2006) involving retraining in a new area or making the tough decision to go into entrepreneurship and innovation. This was the case with C2 who is now a successful innovator and entrepreneur.

While the experiences are traumatic, they are eventually appreciated as necessary steps to success as expressed by C2:

But here I am now. With the support I got from my local authority and donor funding I've been able to develop my products and received huge orders which keep me busy and thriving.

Similarly C4 expresses:

I however did not give up and kept applying for jobs and doing short contract work to gain relevant experience. By God's grace my resilience eventually paid off and I couldn't believe it when I got a job at a top university. Now I look back and appreciate all that experience that made me strong even at the workplace today.

C1 sees the challenges as necessary for future success:

I value the journey that I have travelled and the life lessons I have learnt along the way. I am learning and will continue to learn to the very end.

As has been documented by Thondhlana (2020: 257), success for the Zimbabwe diaspora was mostly realised through ‘A combination of dispositions including resourcefulness, opportunistic and pragmatic orientations, traits developed over years of a challenging Zimbabwean existence ... that enable them to maximise on the opportunities the UK context presents them.’ The growing tendency of going into entrepreneurship and seeking opportunities between Zimbabwe and the host nation is one of the consequences of reinvention and in some cases serves to inspire innovative ideas and aspirations, as will be discussed in the next section.

The pull of Africa and brain circulation

Given the factors which motivate the diasporans to leave the home country and the prevailing environment in the homeland, it is at first inconceivable how they can even think of returning let alone want to contribute to development. Yet considering their traumatic experiences in the diaspora, including new forms of discriminatory and racist practices combined with a sense of never quite belonging, it is again conceivable that the mantra there is no place like home is realistic (Santiago 2019). This is a much-debated issue in the literature on transnationalism and belonging (Ehrkamp & Leitner 2006). This psychological connection with the homeland drives them to main-

tain ties to and be involved in their countries of origin (Safran 1991). What is certain is that emerging patterns suggest the possibilities that the diasporans are finding themselves constantly in transit between a native land that cannot support them and a rich country that remains alien (irrespective of their settlement status), leading to the formation of types of transnational networks (Kuznetsov 2006). In the context of the Zimbabwe diaspora in the UK, the ‘red [British] passport’ has become a tool to facilitate transnationalism. As expressed by C4:

I have a red passport but I feel much more Zimbabwean than British. The red passport enables me to travel between the UK and Zimbabwe and facilitates my activities.

However, there is more. In their study of transnational entrepreneurship and gender, Thondhlana & Madziva (2018) noted that diaspora contribution to economic development resulted from a number of factors, such as a pride in and yearning for one’s homeland, and a desire to give back and help develop one’s country even when faced with negative attitudes towards the contribution. In our study C1 echoes this sentiment:

I always love AFRICA and I’m proud of being born and raised in Africa. I will surely come back to Zimbabwe where everything started.

Years later his dream came to be realised when he was able to launch his company in Africa (including in Zimbabwe) seeking ways his company might contribute to sustainable development initiatives using his technology. Calling on Zimbabweans of all walks of life to work together and build the nation, C1 echoes the African Solutions to African Problems mantra noting that: ‘*There is no one who will come to do that for us. Africa must rise again!*’

Similarly, C4 who has realised her dream of contributing towards educational policy and development says:

I have always been drawn to Zimbabwe and Africa despite not always being welcomed. My former university was initially not willing to collaborate with me because I was seen as disloyal having left without notice although there were extenuating circumstances. This has however not deterred me although I’ve had to work through collaborations with a government department linking me to universities thereby still indirectly benefitting my former university. They still wouldn’t take me back though. However, it’s like being rejected by a parent, you keep coming back. My Motto is that Zimbabwe is my home and I have to find ways of giving back and uplift my country. A colleague also advised me that if I don’t think about my country and work to have it looked at positively by my UK university no one will. I think I’ve so far achieved this in my small way.

Award-winning innovator C3 has also networked and started giving back:

I wanted to go out, then one day when I got back I would be respected. And I see that happening now, I have been invited now to go back, to present at the University of Zimbabwe. And to present at the Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University as well as Africa

university at the provincial level. Currently I help individuals who approach me but I hope to be able to help in a more effective way and reach out to more people in Zimbabwe and other African countries

In the context of this ‘triangular flow of human talent’ and ‘brain circulation’ (Tung 2008: 299), innovator C2 has decided to see Zimbabwe, not in terms of its failures but potential. He has, however, chosen to work directly with the sources of indigenous knowledges, indigenous communities, to tap into the country’s wealth of natural resources in a way that benefits both the innovator and the communities. He says:

I work with communities in Zimbabwe to tap into indigenous knowledges and then give back to the community through buying their products and contributing a proportion of the profit towards community development projects.

Such an approach has been well documented in the literature including knowledge sharing and compensation (Stabinsky & Brush 1996). In this regard, joint ventures with indigenous communities have been found successful.

C5 demonstrates how engaging the diaspora at national level provides the necessary confidence in the system and country that can encourage the diaspora to contribute or even for some of them to consider returning, as observed by one of the programme’s attendees:

When I left Zimbabwe, this university was not yet established. My experiences here during my visit makes this my institution of choice when I return permanently.

Overall our cases show that looking at the diaspora not as brain drain but brain circulation through transnationalism initiatives enables countries to benefit from diverse knowledge systems which in turn can have a decolonial effect as they learn to appreciate each other’s indigenous knowledges for mutual benefit. This might appear to be straightforward. However, Africa’s lingering challenges make them complex. In the context of COVID-19, there is, however, a clear message that it is no longer business as usual for Africa. As one commentator noted to C1:

The world will be different after Covid-19 and if African governments do not support their own innovators, then Africa will continue to be a begging bowl when the rest of the world is moving ahead. We need to embrace African solutions to our problems. It is now time for Africans to solve their own problems.

Conclusion

Our study has revealed the potential of the African diaspora to contribute significantly to knowledge production, innovation, and development in their COOs through the process of transnationalism. We have highlighted the need for the creation of an

enabling environment if this is to be actualised. In this conclusion we reflect on some of the barriers to this realisation which Zimbabwe and indeed Africa would need to address to make the environment conducive and propose ideas for the way forward.

Our findings indicated the existence of restrictive government systems which limit the ability of talented individuals to realise their potential for innovation within a Zimbabwe context. The study therefore confirmed the findings of Thondhlana & Madziva (2018) regarding the inflexibility of some African government systems which limit or prohibit rather than facilitate diaspora contributions. According to Chand (2016: 278), brain circulation ‘requires that the COO of the immigrants take proactive steps to leverage the diaspora, and listen to their concerns while creating a partnership that actively benefits both sides’. For example, African countries can allow dual nationality as a way of encouraging brain circulation. This is a lesson that can be learned from the experiences of South Asian diasporas (for example, India and Pakistan) as a way of incentivising the successful diasporans to provide more help to the COO while they feel integrated within both communities (COO and COR) (Chand 2016).

In addition to government mistrust, diasporans often face resistance from colleagues in the country of origin. For example, while the C5 project was largely successful in its implementation, it faced resistance from academics who remained in Zimbabwe who were put off by the perceived red carpet treatment of their ‘unpatriotic’ counterparts:

These are people who deserted the universities at the slightest sign of economic problems. Now that IOM has dangled a USD 50 per day on top of all expenses that are covered, they are now back to mock us. It is better if IOM can give us those incentives in appreciation to our resilience in remaining and holding fort when our traitor colleagues left for greener pastures.

Other local academics felt that:

The amount that they are paid per day is worth ten times my monthly salary. it is extremely unfair to reward these Diaspora professionals considering that they are already paid a fortune in foreign land. One would expect that they would cede their per diem to us in the same manner that some of them donated second-hand books and equipment.

Such colleagues preferred that, instead of coming back to Zimbabwe, diaspora academics should network with local staff and students through mutual exchange programmes to widen their knowledge and experiences. This is perhaps a sentiment to consider for future programmes.

Our study showed that Africans lack confidence in their abilities and those of their African colleagues to innovate—a ‘foreign is better’ syndrome which needs to be tackled if Africa is to realise its potential. As noted by C1, Africans did not readily

accept the products that he was marketing under his label, but were quick to accept the same products under a foreign label. This lack of confidence in the innovative abilities of fellow Africans is what Matthews (2017) refers to as ‘colonisation of the mind’. This is linked to what is seen as a ‘Pull Him/Her Down’ (PHD) syndrome and ‘Anti-Progress’ mindset.

Our findings revealed the tendency to bring down emerging innovators in Africa, resulting in many going into forced migration as well as discouraging diasporans from contributing to developing the COO. For example, C1 and C3 reflected about the many entrepreneurs in foreign countries who are African and are part of teams designing cars, aircraft, and medical science while their COOs do not benefit.

Additionally, the dilemma of the requirement to reveal trade/product secrets versus threat to national security is another noted prohibitive factor. In this regard, in relation to diaspora innovations the COO authorities may require the innovators to disclose classified or confidential information about their products as part of the screening process, failing which this may be considered a threat to national security punishable by imprisonment. However, as expressed by C1 and C3 this requirement is tantamount to theft of ideas or intellectual property.

Further, most of our cases reported the lack of funding as a key consideration in deciding to migrate and consequently settle in host countries. Programmes for leveraging the diaspora, for example C5, were also curtailed of sustainable funding.

In further pondering ways of addressing these challenges, lessons from the lived experiences of our participants and the emerging patterns are worth noting. Overall transnationalism could be more productive if it were more systematised. In doing so we acknowledge that migrants’ mobility and practices are not homogenous as determined by transnational mobility and practices which intersect with diverse socio-political aspects, including race, age, gender, class, and settlement status (Westwood & Phizacklea 2000). Our proposals are therefore meant to contribute to existing debates in a way that can encourage further conversations about how the diaspora can be leveraged to more strategically and systematically contribute to knowledge creation, innovation, and development through attitude and behaviour change of all stakeholders and partners.

One pattern that emerged from our findings is of bringing innovations back home. The outcomes of C1’s and C3’s innovation journeys demonstrate that, in the absence of funding and a clear strategy for supporting innovators, going to countries where there may be more favourable policies and better developed ecosystems would be beneficial, particularly in the context of globalisation and discourses of global citizenship. Such a move can be beneficial to both the country of origin and country of destination where the innovator, as has been demonstrated by both C1 and C3, may have strong intentions to benefit the homeland (Saxenian 2006). In this way, mobility

of human capital helps to facilitate international knowledge flows from developed to developing economies (Chand 2019).

Another emerging pattern involves working in partnership with local communities. In this regard, tapping into indigenous knowledge systems through collaboration with the COO is a potentially viable model, as demonstrated by C2's experiences. This model enables the innovator to promote indigenous knowledges in the host nation while benefiting the country of origin through the use of the innovation; a compensation system including payment for products, contribution toward community development projects, and charitable activity (for example, supporting the education of disadvantaged children). Similarly, Chand (2016: 278) notes how 'older engineers and entrepreneurs in both the Chinese and the Indian communities now help finance and mentor younger co-ethnic entrepreneurs'. Our study has further shown that collaborating with local communities as an insider catalyses the process of knowledge sharing, innovation, and development.

A further pattern relates to the development of formal structures for knowledge exchange through partnerships at national level. One of the advantages of the global circulation of human capital is that diasporans are well placed to facilitate useful collaborations between institutions in their COO and those in the COR (DeVoretz 2006, Chand 2016). Indeed, the academic route of promoting knowledge production through partnerships has been tried in Zimbabwe with relative success. Such a model is popular in the context of the internationalisation of higher education where partnerships enable cross-fertilisation and cost sharing through funding schemes which usually call for such collaborations. C4 who works at a top UK university has been able to link her host university to institutions in Zimbabwe in productive ways. As noted above, this has led to the collaborative development of educational policy. Similarly, the success of the diaspora temporary return project (C5) can be attributed to its structured, problem-based, and participatory approach. For Radwan & Sakr (2018: 522) such initiative could be further strengthened by:

stimulating bilateral training programmes, joint postgraduate degrees and distance-learning programmes. Joint graduate programmes, where students might even take courses at a foreign institution, should enable African students to obtain their degrees from their home institutions. Foreign universities should be encouraged to support with financing and even faculty full-fledge educational and scientific programmes at African research institutions.

More generally, the existing literature supports initiatives that lead to knowledge production and institution building or strengthening. In this regard, studies have argued that, while remittances count as one of the major sources of financial flows in terms of development impact in developing countries as compared to other financial

flows (for example, aid and private capital), knowledge and institution building have a more lasting impact (Kapur & McHale 2005). This way, the global circulation of high-skill labour from poor economies to rich ones and back is opening new possibilities for economic development, whereby talented citizens who go abroad to continue their studies and work in the developed economies, use their own global networks to help build new establishments in their home countries (Chand 2016). It should, however, be noted that both schemes depend on availability of funding. As noted by C5, the diaspora temporary return project could not be sustained because government could not take it over. Such a dependency on external funding presents the risk of the hegemonic effect resulting from the funding culture of funders dictating how the project should be conducted.

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Evaluation of a quality assurance framework for promoting quality research, innovation and development in higher education institutions in Zimbabwe

Evelyn Chiyevu Garwe, Juliet Thondhlana and Amani Saidi

Abstract: In the spirit of quality assurance, this paper presents a self-evaluation and peer review of the external quality assurance framework for research implemented by the national quality assurance agency for Zimbabwe. Documentary analysis and semi-structured interviews were used to develop a self-evaluation report which was then subjected to international peer review as is the norm in quality assurance evaluations. The evidence from self-evaluation indicates that the quality assurance framework generated significant improvement in the quality and quantity of research with gaps identified in doctoral training and supportive structures for research. Peer review recommended the inclusion of a performance-based research funding arrangement akin to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) used in the United Kingdom whilst throwing caution on the contentious nature of the REF. The paper recommends the development, implementation, and review of quality assurance frameworks for research to guide institutions, enhance research, and to maintain consistency and harmony in the research system. These findings can be adapted by different national quality assurance agencies involved in the regulation, promotion, and enhancement of the quality of teaching, innovation, knowledge production, and engagement/outreach in higher education.

Keywords: Research, innovation, quality assurance framework, self-evaluation, peer review.

Introduction

The world-over, quality assurance frameworks are well-recognised systematic mechanisms for improving the quality of research, innovation, and education to achieve national goals within set standards (Davidson *et al.* 2020). The key challenge that many nations face is that of ensuring that the frameworks allow opportunities for continuous improvement (Rexeisen *et al.* 2018). Indeed, as alluded to by Cleven *et al.* (2009), ‘to build further on something that is not properly evaluated means to take high risks’. The Mauritius Qualifications Authority (2018) recommends periodic review of the quality assurance frameworks to evaluate their effectiveness in achieving their intended purposes, identifying best practices and gaps therein.

This paper presents the evaluation of the quality assurance framework (QAF) for research in Zimbabwe using a methodology involving a reflective ‘self-evaluation’ exercise which is then subjected to external peer review (Mintzberg & Quinn 1998, Lillis 2012) for purposes of validation, continuous innovation, and improvement (Vlasceanu *et al.* 2004). Self-evaluation is a planned, participatory, systematic, and comprehensive quality review/reflection initiated by an implementing agency/institution, detailing what was done, how it was performed, and with what results, identifying the strengths and weaknesses thereof (Campbell & Rozsnyai 2002). Self-evaluation is aimed at documenting evidence (contextual setting, challenges, interventions, and activities) and to assess the effectiveness of the QAF’s performance against the interventions and expected outcomes. The ensuing complementary ‘external’ peer review of the self-assessment report confirms areas of good practice; identifies areas needing improvement; and provides the basis for quality improvement (Mauritius Qualifications Authority 2018).

First, the article situates knowledge production through research in the global, regional, and Zimbabwean contexts. The article proceeds to outline the research objectives and the research methodology, before presenting the findings that address the research objectives, and conclusions.

Situating knowledge production in global, regional, and Zimbabwean contexts

Knowledge production (through research and innovation) and the concomitant enterprise development are inextricably intertwined with socio-economic development (Mattoon 2006, van der Wende 2009) and are at the core of the mission of contemporary universities the world over (Fronzizi *et al.* 2019). Furthermore, knowledge quality is measured by its utility in the society in terms of bettering the lives of people (Chotikapanich 2008).

The divide between the production of knowledge, as mostly measured by research publications, and the dissemination and utilisation of it, as predominantly measured by patents and metrics on knowledge transfer and uptake, has been well debated (Collyer 2016). Despite accounting for 16% of the world's population, Africa lags behind in research and intellectual outputs compared to their Global North and Global South counterparts (see Table 1). UNESCO estimates that, in order to reach the global average number of researchers/scholars per million citizens, Africa requires at least one million new doctoral degree holders. At present Africa averages 198 scholars to every million inhabitants in comparison to, for example, approximately 4,000 in the United Kingdom. Granted, Africa faces so many challenges that negatively affect research productivity. These range from cultural constraints; coloniality of power; underinvestment in human, financial, and material resources; brain drain through migration; non-conducive institutional environments; to inadequate infrastructure and poor implementation of projects and policies (Quijano 2000). There is also the geopolitics of research and innovation, as revealed by some African scholars who have pointed out that they face marginalisation and discrimination to the extent that they are often required to publish their research as mere case studies whilst similar work done in the Global North automatically assumes global relevance (Baber 2003, Nolte 2019). Africans are agreed, however, that in order for their respective nations to prosper, research and innovation should be moved from the periphery to the core.

Table 1. Global share of scholarly publications by region (1990–2015).

<i>Region</i>	<i>Global share of publications</i>			
	<i>1990</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2015</i>
North America	41.6	36.7	31.7	28.6
Europe	34	40.2	42.6	39.3
Asia	14.5	21.1	28.4	39.5
Latin America and the Caribbean	1.7	3.2	5.0	5.2
Oceania	2.8	3.3	3.5	4.2
Africa	1.4	1.4	2.0	2.6

Sources: UIS (2005), UNESCO (2015).

Globally, significant proportions of knowledge and innovations are generated by higher education institutions (HEIs). In Africa, with few research institutes or organisations outside the higher education systems, HEIs are critical in the creation and transfer of knowledge and technology. African nations therefore recognise the centrality of strengthening their higher education systems in their quest to improve knowledge production, knowledge reproduction, innovation, and socio-economic development. To this end, national governments have undertaken various policy and structural reforms in line with Agenda 2063 of the African Union aimed at leveraging

knowledge and skills to transform and develop Africa sustainably (AUC 2014). One of the most critical reforms was the establishment of external higher education quality assurance agencies (Li 2010) to regulate, promote, and enhance the quality of learning, innovation, knowledge production, enterprise development, and community outreach. This followed the global trend in taking a strategic approach to enhancing higher education quality and the benefits thereof (Stensaker & Leiber 2015). To date thirty-six African countries and all fifteen countries in the Southern African Development Community (of which Zimbabwe is a member) have established external quality assurance agencies.

Table 2. List of African nations with/without quality assurance bodies.

<i>Region</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Agency</i>
1. Central	Cameroon	Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur
2. Central	Central African Republic	Comité ad'hoc de Coordination du dispositif de l'Assurance Qualité pour l'Enseignement Supérieur
3. Central	Chad	
4. Central	Democratic Republic of Congo*	Agence Nationale d'Assurance Qualité (ANAQ)
5. Central	Equatorial Guinea	None
6. Central	Gabon	None
7. Central	Republic of Congo	None
8. Central	São Tomé & Príncipe	None
9. Eastern	Burundi	National Council for Higher Education (NCHE)
10. Eastern	Comoros	None
11. Eastern	Djibouti	None
12. Eastern	Eritrea	None
13. Eastern	Ethiopia	Higher Education Relevance & Quality Agency (HERQA)
14. Eastern	Kenya	Commission for University Education (CUE)
15. Eastern	Madagascar*	Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique (MESUPRES)
16. Eastern	Mauritius*	Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA)
17. Eastern	Mayotte	None
18. Eastern	Reunion	None
19. Eastern	Rwanda	Higher Education Council
20. Eastern	Seychelles*	Seychelles Qualifications Authority (SQA)
21. Eastern	Somalia	None
22. Eastern	Tanzania*	The Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU)
23. Eastern	Uganda	National Council for Higher Education (NCHE)
24. Northern	Algeria	National Commission for Quality Assurance Implementation in Higher Education (CIAQES)
25. Northern	Egypt	National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education (NAQAEE)
26. Northern	Libya	None

Table 2. *Continued.*

<i>Region</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Agency</i>
27. Northern	Morocco	Agence Nationale d'Evaluation et d'Assurance Qualité de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherché scientifique (ANEAQ)
28. Northern	Sudan	Evaluation and Accreditation Corporation (EVAC)
29. Northern	Tunisia	Instance Nationale de l'Evaluation, de l'Assurance Qualité et de l'Accréditation (IEAQA)
30. Northern	Western Sahara	None
31. Southern	Angola*	Instituto Nacional de Avaliação e Acreditação do Ensino Superior (INAAES)
32. Southern	Botswana*	Botswana Qualifications Authority (BQA)
33. Southern	Lesotho*	Council for Higher Education (CHE)
34. Southern	Malawi*	National Council for Higher Education (NCHE)
35. Southern	Mozambique*	National Council for Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education (CNAQ)
36. Southern	Namibia*	National Council for Higher Education (NCHE)
37. Southern	South Africa*	Council on Higher Education (CHE)
38. Southern	Swaziland*	Swaziland Higher Education Council
39. Southern	Zambia*	Higher Education Authority (HEA)
40. Southern	Zimbabwe*	Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE)
41. Western	Benin	Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique
42. Western	Burkina Faso	Conseil Africain et Malgache Pour L'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES)
43. Western	Cape Verde	None
44. Western	Gambia	National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority (NAQAA)
45. Western	Ghana	National Accreditation Board (NAB)
46. Western	Guinea	None
47. Western	Guinea Bissau	None
48. Western	Côte d'Ivoire	None
49. Western	Liberia	National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE)
50. Western	Mali	Direction Nationale de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique (DNESRS)
51. Western	Mauritania	None
52. Western	Niger	None
53. Western	Nigeria	National Universities Commission (NUC)
54. Western	Saint Helena	
55. Western	Senegal	Authorite Nationale d'Assurance Qualité de l'Enseignement Supérieur (ANAQ-SUP)
56. Western	Sierra Leone	None
57. Western	Togo	Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique* Southern African Development Community member countries.

Source: <https://african.aau.org/list-of-quality-assurance-bodies-in-african-countries/>

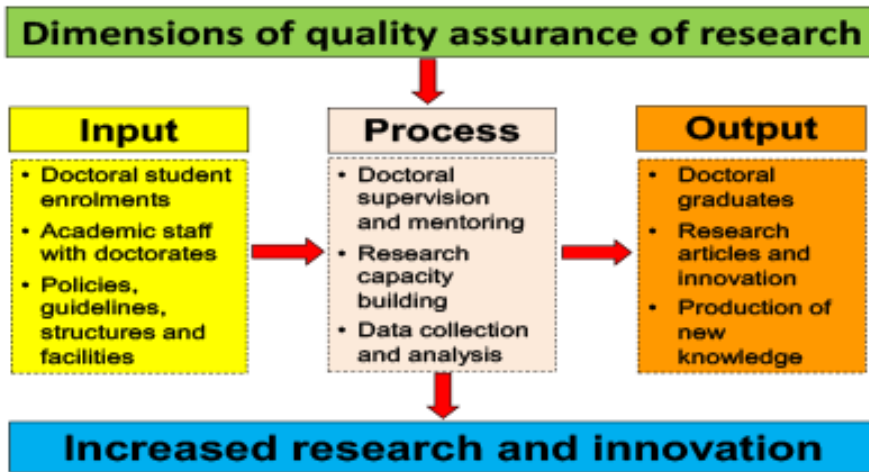


Figure 1. Indicators of quality assurance for research in HEIs. *Source:* Shabani *et al.* (2014).

Most of the external quality assurance agencies have focused their activities on improving quality and teaching at undergraduate levels, because undergraduate students constitute the majority of the enrolments in HEIs. However, some that have increasing numbers of postgraduate students, and are also making more investment in research, have also extended their focus beyond improving undergraduate teaching and learning. They have developed and implemented frameworks for improving the quality of research as well. Even for those HEIs that focus more on teaching, academics should engage in research in order to inform their teaching (Gupta 2017). Figure 1 is an example of the quality assurance dimensions for improving research in higher education.

Although Pascarella & Terenzini (2005) reported an increase in research (along with teaching and engagement) in HEIs, there is limited research on whether this improvement can be attributed to the effectiveness of the quality assurance frameworks. As indicated by Lillis (2012), a key hypothesis is to determine whether the QAF for research was effective in improving performance. Evaluating the effectiveness of research frameworks requires the assessor to fully comprehend the contextual setting in terms of challenges, interventions, activities, and expected outcomes. This paper uses the case of Zimbabwe's national quality assurance agency, the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE), to evaluate its quality assurance framework for research and innovation.

Research objectives

This study investigates the effectiveness of the QAF administered by ZIMCHE in promoting research and innovation in Zimbabwe. The specific objectives were:

1. Present a self-evaluation of the ZIMCHE's QAF for research based on the established guidelines on the quality dimensions for research;
2. Conduct a peer-review exercise to assess the self-evaluation report and identify best practices and areas needing improvement; and
3. Make recommendations on the development and review of the QAF for research.

Methodology

This paper draws from quantitative and qualitative data derived from primary and secondary sources. Secondary data was obtained from documentary analysis, described by the Institute of Development Studies (2013) as a process of collecting and systematically extracting and reviewing information from written documents. The documents included national and institutional publications, reports, guidelines, proposals, minutes of meetings, and newsletters relating to research challenges, QAF development, policies, interventions, operational procedures, and achievements over a ten-year time period from 2010 to 2020. The analysis was descriptive, highlighted trends, captured areas of good practice, and identified gaps.

The primary data was collected from views, experiences, and practices of purposively selected participants through the use of semi-structured, recorded, and transcribed interviews. Participants who were either familiar with the development and implementation of the QAF or who had user-perspectives of the framework were interviewed. These included policymakers, implementers, and users, including two officials from the parent ministry, six members of the ZIMCHE, research directors from fifteen universities, and ten researchers from Zimbabwean universities. The interviews sought insights from participants in order to gain a deeper understanding into the development, implementation, and effectiveness of the QAF in achieving the intended research enhancement goal. The appropriate protocols regarding ethical approvals from the institutions and participants were observed.

Using the analysed primary and secondary data, a self-evaluation report was prepared. The self-evaluation of the QAF included the background to the QAF development and an evaluation of the following interventions:

1. The policies and guidelines to stimulate research in higher education institutions;
2. Strategies to improve doctoral training;

3. Research capacity development strategies; and
4. Supportive structures to stimulate research.

Peer-review methodology was then employed to interrogate the self-evaluation. Tennant (2018) asserts that peer review is a formidable quality control measure aimed at assessing the accuracy, relevance, and significance of processes and outputs within the self-regulating academy and research fraternity. Peer reviewers with impressive records of experience and expertise in a similar area are called upon to review each other's work (Thomas 2018). These professionals bring valuable external insights from regional and international institutions. Accordingly, four international experts, one from South Africa and three from the United Kingdom (UK), were identified and given the self-evaluation report to review over a period of two months. The reviewers provided their commentaries on the areas of commendation and gaps requiring improvement regarding the interventions for improving research as indicated in the QAF. These commentaries were guided by their experiences and also used benchmarking to evaluate areas of good practice and areas needing improvement. The choice of a peer reviewer from South Africa was motivated by the need to provide a South–South assessment, taking into cognisance that South Africa features amongst the top producers of research publications on the African continent. In fact, South Africa and Egypt produce half of the research publications from the continent (AOSTI 2014). The peer reviewers from the UK were selected based on the long-established partnership between the University of Nottingham, UK, and the ZIMCHE.

Findings

The findings are presented in relation to research objectives as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Sections related to the research objectives.

<i>Research objective</i>	<i>Section</i>
Present a self-evaluation of the ZIMCHE's QAF for research based on the established guidelines on the quality dimensions for research	Self-evaluation report of the QAF for research
Conduct a peer-review exercise to assess the self-evaluation report and identify best practices and areas needing improvement	Peer analysis of the self-evaluation report
Make recommendations on the development and review of the QAF for research	Critical reflections on the development and review of the QAF for research

Self-evaluation report of the QAF for research

The self-evaluation report covers a descriptive analysis of the development of the QAF for research and an evaluation of the achievements and gaps identified for each of the interventions: policies and guidelines; doctoral training; research capacity development; and supportive structures. A short summary will conclude the self-evaluation.

Development of the QAF for research in Zimbabwe

The QAF for research was aimed at creating a harmonised and coherent roadmap for managing and promoting knowledge production and research impact in line with national imperatives. The QAF helps in setting research priorities and conducive environments at national and institutional levels and to plan and allocate resources accordingly to encourage research to thrive. In developing the QAF, ZIMCHE followed best practice which involves the following stages:

1. Problem identification through research,
2. Benchmarking,
3. Stakeholder involvement in identifying expected outcomes,
4. Aligning the outcomes to national goals,
5. Identification of interventions, activities, and outputs,
6. Assigning project champions.

The QAF development process took a period of two years commencing with a baseline survey in 2010 wherein the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education (assisted financially and technically by UNESCO and ADEA–WGEMPS [Association for the Development of Education in Africa – Working Group on Education Management and Policy Support], respectively), undertook a survey to assess the challenges facing HEIs with a view to utilising the results to inform the review of the national research and development strategy (Machawira 2010). The findings of the baseline survey were then presented to stakeholders, eliciting engagement, discussions, and international benchmarking that led to the development of the QAF. The QAF comprises five sections, as illustrated in Figure 2: (a) Problem, challenges, and rationale; (b) Interventions; (c) Activities and outputs; (d) Outcomes; and (e) Desired impact.

Problem, challenges, and rationale

Zimbabwe has a well-developed national research infrastructure and used to have one of the most research-intensive knowledge production systems in Africa, earning a

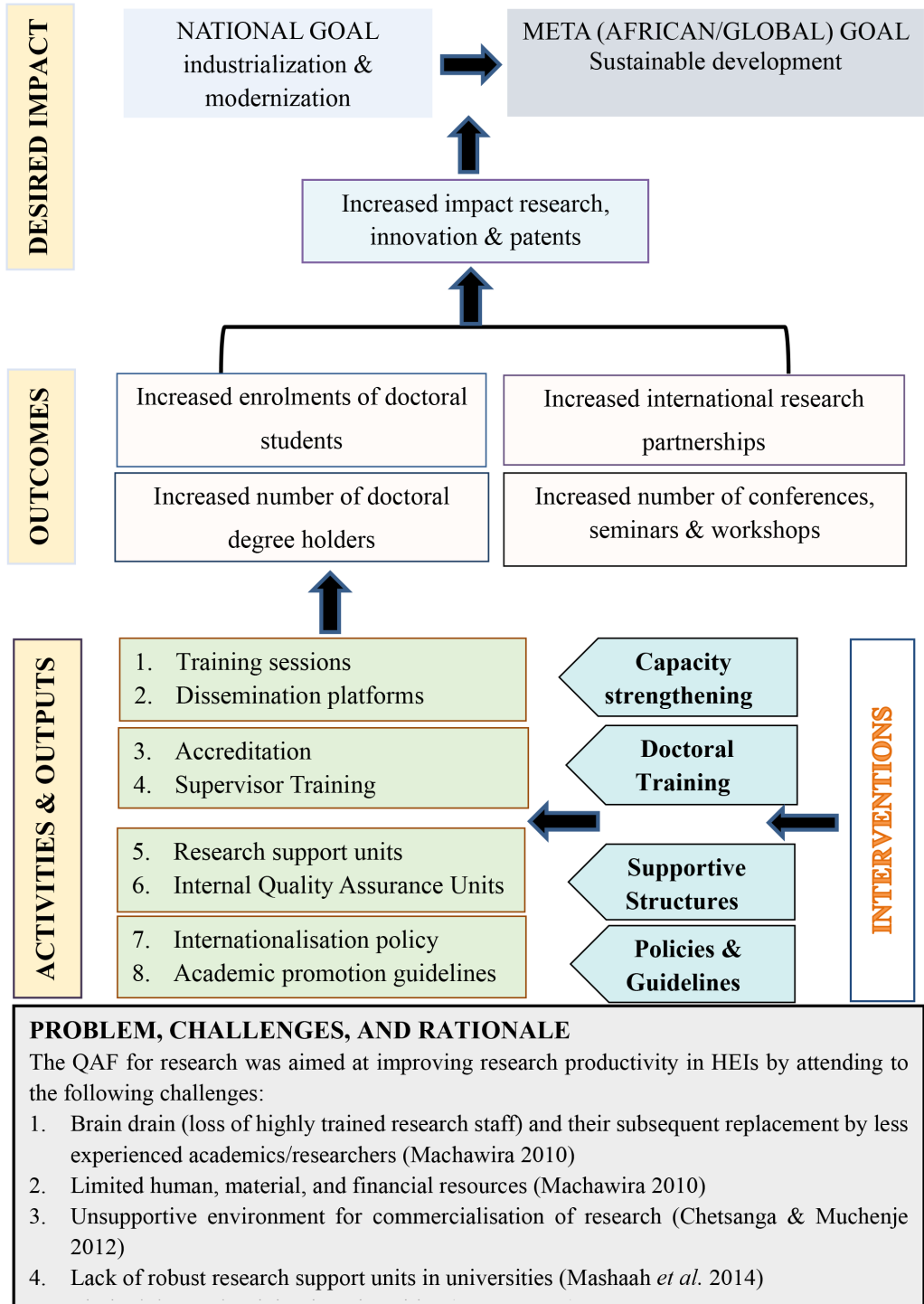


Figure 2. Framework for strengthening research and innovation in Zimbabwe (ZIMCHE 2012).

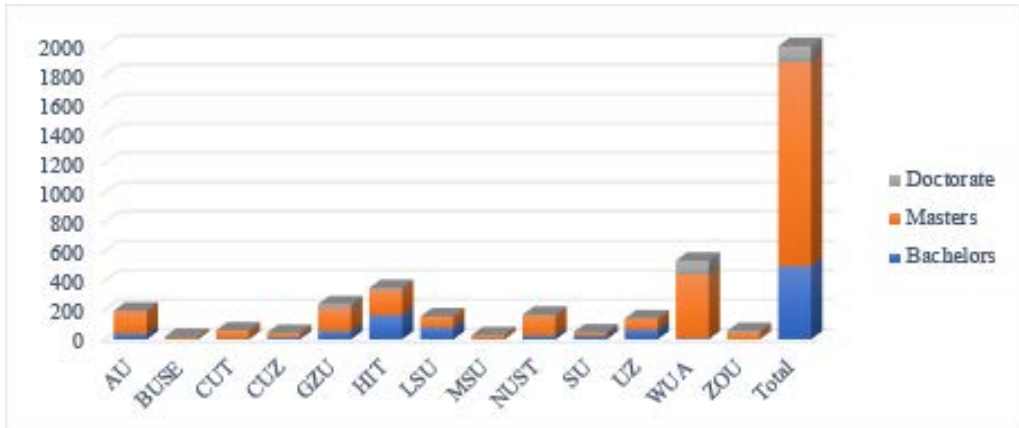
respectable position among the top ten (Tier I publishers) from 1995 to 2007 (Uthman & Uthman 2007). Zimbabwe's well-developed higher education system consists of twenty-four public and private universities registered with ZIMCHE, with an estimated one in eleven adults holding a degree. This sound intellectual base, together with the rich heritage of natural resources, position the country favourably to show greater potential to achieve high levels of knowledge generation, innovation, and socio-economic growth. Unfortunately, the prolonged economic crisis from 2000 to date, coupled with isolation from the international community, took a significant toll on the country's research missions and caused a significant decline in research productivity.

HEIs are catalysts of the high-level skills critical for knowledge production and thus they remain the fulcrum on which the country's future research, development, and innovation initiatives are pivoted (Cloete *et al.* 2015).

Studies in Zimbabwe (Machawira 2010, Chetsanga & Muchenje 2012, Mashaah *et al.* 2014, Garwe 2015) revealed five debilitating challenges leading to the decline in the quantity, quality, and contribution of research in HEIs. The first was the shortage of the requisite financial and material resources to support research and innovation development. Limited access to physical and electronic library resources (books and journal articles) featured among the material resource challenges. Where electronic resources were available, information retrieval was hindered by restrictions in access to the internet due to poor connectivity, low bandwidth, and/or frequent power outages.

The second critical challenge was the massive brain drain of senior academics from HEIs, and their subsequent replacement by less experienced academics/researchers. This implied that the higher education system no longer had the critical mass of highly qualified and experienced academics and researchers needed to sustain doctoral training and specialised academic research. The paucity of experienced research mentors and advisors had other negative consequences. For example, breaches of academic and research integrity started to occur with more pronounced frequency. There were reports of incidents where plagiarism and cheating were rampant among both students and academics (Garwe & Maganga 2015). In addition to reporting similar tendencies elsewhere, scholars found academics to be more inclined to publish in journals with low impact (Madhan *et al.* 2018). Furthermore, the increase in student enrolments meant that lecturers concentrated on teaching with very limited time dedicated to research.

As of 2020 there are twenty-four registered universities, twenty of which are operational. It should be highlighted here that in 1990 the country only had one university and in 2010 there were thirteen operational universities. The proportion of academics with doctoral degrees, an internationally recognised measure of research



Key: NUST – National University of Science & Technology

AU – Africa University

CUT – Chinhoyi University of Technology

GZU – Great Zimbabwe University

LSU – Lupane State University

ZOU – Zimbabwe Open University

UZ – University of Zimbabwe

BUSE – Bindura University of Science Education

CUZ – Catholic University in Zimbabwe

HIT – Harare Institute of Technology

MSU – Midlands State University

SU – Solusi University

WUA – Women’s University in Africa

Figure 3. The proportion of lecturers with doctoral degrees. *Source:* adapted from Machawira (2010).

capacity, had dropped from around 80% in 1999 to 8% in 2010 (see Figure 3). In contrast, as of 2011, Ethiopia, Ghana, and South Africa had 8.6%, 38%, and 34% academics with doctorates (National Planning Commission 2011, Government of Ghana 2013, Molla 2014).

The third challenge cited was the unsupportive environment for the commercialisation of research and innovation resulting in industrialisation and modernisation of the country (Chetsanga & Muchenje 2012). The fourth challenge was the lack of strong institutional support structures and systems to guide, incentivise, and promote research (Mashaah *et al.* 2014).

The final challenge regards the limited doctoral training in universities (Garwe 2015). Doctoral education and training in universities provide a pipeline of future academics and researchers, and where this pipeline is not adequate, it points towards a future of inadequate capacity to generate knowledge and innovation at levels commensurate with the country’s socio-economic imperatives. The challenges that affected doctoral training were similar to those affecting research, as articulated above, and they also mirrored those reported in other African countries (Mohamedbhai 2011, Kahsay 2015). In addition to these, specific challenges regarding doctoral training related to the inflexible regulatory framework and the non-cohesive national training system Garwe (2015), as discussed below.

Inflexible regulatory framework

A study by Garwe (2015) revealed that most academics in Zimbabwean universities opted to study for their doctorates at foreign universities as a way of avoiding what they perceived to be ‘rigid’ doctoral training regulations. The prevailing ZIMCHE standards required the major supervisor to have an earned doctorate from a recognised university, to be at the level of at least an associate professor, and to have successfully supervised at least two doctoral students to completion. In addition, the major supervisor ought to be employed by the university offering the doctorate on a full-time basis. Granted, such a quality guidelines have the best intentions and are best practices backed by research (e.g., Muriisa 2015); however, they should be contextualised to suit the national environment and needs. According to the ZIMCHE standards, each supervisor should be allocated no more than three doctoral students for effectiveness and to leave room for teaching, research administration, and university service. Many people have argued that, in the wake of the current advances in information technology, virtual supervision should be considered a viable option (Garwe 2015).

Non-cohesive national training system

The ten universities that currently offer doctoral training in Zimbabwe use varied standards and formats and in some instances, even in a single institution, faculties/disciplines use different training models (Garwe 2015). Efforts to find documents or research studies that characterise the doctoral training models and principles akin to those in other contexts (e.g., European Commission 2011) did not yield any positive results.

Interventions

In a bid to improve research, innovation, and patents and to address the foregoing challenges, the higher education stakeholders developed the QAF for research, as shown in Figure 2. The interventions constituting the QAF included: putting in place policies and guidelines to stimulate research in HEIs; strategies to improve doctoral training, research capacity, and development strategies; and putting in place supportive structures to stimulate research. These interventions compared favourably with the framework for research suggested by Shabani *et al.* (2014). ZIMCHE was tasked with the responsibility of ensuring that the interventions and activities were implemented in a timely manner within the agreed quality standards to achieve the outputs and outcomes set in the QAF. This paper evaluates the effectiveness of the QAF for research and innovation in HEIs in increasing research in Zimbabwe.

Policies and guidelines

In a bid to improve the quality of academic staff in HEIs and thus spur research productivity, ZIMCHE introduced stringent minimum benchmarks/standards to guide HEIs in appointing, grading, and promoting academics (ZIMCHE 2013). In the words of one participant:

The move was also intended to strengthen the currency and validity of what is taught by academics. In 2018 the Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development tasked the Association of Vice Chancellors to review these guidelines and convert them into enforceable ordinances/regulations. The commendable aspect of these promotion regulations is that they were harmonised and thus applicable to all universities in Zimbabwe. (RD 9)

Research shows that when ‘criteria for decision-making regarding promotion are standardised fairness and equity are achievable’ (Powell & Butterfield 1994: 82).

Table 4 shows the salient features of the promotion guidelines. Whilst Table 4 focuses only on minimum expectations for research, each university determines its own criteria for teaching and community service. In addition, each university determines the weightings for the types of research outputs, intellectual property, and recognition. These include publications (for example, books and book chapters), copyrights, licences, technologies, procedures, teaching and learning models, patents, research awards/grants, and spin-offs. Most universities engaged research directors to promote research and innovation and the utilisation of the products thereof.

Table 4. Harmonised appointment, grading, and promotion benchmarks for academic staff.

<i>Academic position</i>	<i>Qualifications/Publications</i>	<i>Grading/Promotion criteria</i>
Assistant Lecturer/Research Fellow Teaching Assistant	At least a recognised Bachelor’s Degree	Appointed on one-year contracts renewable up to a maximum of three years during which they must acquire a recognised Master’s Degree
Lecturer	A minimum of a Master’s Degree	Can be granted tenure after serving for a three-year period provided they have published a minimum of 5 articles in refereed journals (or assessed equivalent, e.g. copyrights, patents, trademarks)

<i>Academic Position</i>	<i>Qualifications/Publications</i>	<i>Grading/Promotion Criteria</i>
Research Fellow	A minimum of a Master's Degree	Can be granted tenure after serving for a three-year period provided they have published a minimum of 7 articles in refereed journals (or assessed equivalent, e.g. copyrights, patents, trademarks)
Senior Lecturer	Earned Doctorate/PhD/DPhil	May be tenured on appointment provided they have published 6–10 articles in refereed journals (or assessed equivalent, e.g. copyrights, patents, trademarks)
Senior Research Fellow	Earned Doctorate/PhD/DPhil	May be tenured on appointment provided they have published 8–12 articles in refereed journals (or assessed equivalent, e.g. copyrights, patents, trademarks)
Associate Professor	Earned Doctorate/PhD/DPhil and 21–34 publications in refereed journals (or assessed equivalent, e.g. copyrights, patents, trademarks)	Tenured on appointment
Associate Research Professor	Earned Doctorate/PhD/DPhil and 24–39 publications in refereed Journals (or assessed equivalent e.g. copyrights, patents, trademarks)	Tenured on appointment
Professor	Earned Doctorate/PhD/DPhil and a minimum of 35 publications in refereed journals (or assessed equivalent, e.g. copyrights, patents, trademarks)	Tenured on appointment
Research Professor	Earned Doctorate/PhD/DPhil and at least 40 publications in refereed journals (or assessed equivalent, e.g. copyrights, patents, trademarks)	Tenured on appointment

Source: ZUVCA (2018).

A participant from ZIMCHE indicated that:

The standards set by the ZIMCHE for academics teaching and supervising in degree programmes insist on the academic having their highest academic qualification pitched one or more levels higher than the level of the taught/supervised programme. (NQAA 2)

In other words, for an academic to teach/supervise undergraduate students, they should be the holder of a relevant master's degree. In the same way, teaching at the

master's level requires one to have obtained an earned doctorate/PhD/DPhil from a recognised university. Doctoral candidates should be supervised/mentored by professors with earned doctorates. Major challenges to postgraduate training arise from the fact that the share of academics with doctorates in Zimbabwean HEIs range from 3% to 12.5% at the highest (Machawira 2010, Garwe 2013).

In view of the foregoing, Zimbabwe embarked on a major drive to increase doctoral training as a way of increasing the pool of academics capable of supervising and mentoring students enrolled for master's and doctoral degree programmes, and who would then contribute to the national programme of churning out more doctorates through the ripple/multiplier effect. Scholars found a positive correlation between academics with doctorates and high research outputs (Cloete *et al.* 2015) and recommend that HEIs intending to foster a culture of research ought to aim for a 'critical mass' of academics with doctoral qualifications (MacGregor 2013). It should be highlighted that this can only be achieved within favourable and supportive working environments.

Doctoral training

The positive correlation between doctoral training and knowledge production is widely acknowledged as a precursor for sustainable individual, institutional, national, and global development and competitiveness (Mouton 2011, Kotecha *et al.* 2012, Benito & Romera 2013). Subject to contextual variations, the doctoral qualification can assume different nomenclature and acronyms, such as doctorate and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD or DPhil), the holder of which assumes a universal title of Doctor (Dr) irrespective of the study discipline, model of study, awarding university, or country of award (Poole 2015). Doctoral training is the highest level of formal academic award (Kiley 2009, Green 2012) wherein the trainees acquire what Walker & Yoon (2016) termed 'doctoral capital'. This refers to the collective competencies to become autonomous researchers with specialist skills, disciplinary knowledge, values, and attributes (for example, discipline and resilience) to conduct groundbreaking research and innovation that address societal challenges (Lariviere 2011, Sursock 2017). Dubbed the 'global brand' (Clarke 2014: 17), disciplines and professions consider the doctoral degree as important in performing the 'agency' role to:

educate and prepare those to whom we can entrust vigour, quality and integrity to the field. This person is a scholar... someone who will creatively generate new knowledge, critically conserve valuable and useful ideas, and responsibly transform those understandings through writing, teaching and application. We call such a person a 'steward of the discipline'. (Golde & Walker 2006: 5)

In the context of Africa, higher education massification and the attendant spike in the demand for highly skilled researchers and knowledge workers have intensified governments' efforts to improve doctoral training as an integral component of their development agenda. In the past decade alone, Africa undertook several initiatives to promote doctoral training that include research studies, workshops, seminars, conferences, dialogues, and collaborative agreements towards training a critical mass of doctoral students (IAU 2012, IAU-ACUP 2012, Kotecha *et al.* 2012, Kigali Communiqué 2014, Namuddu 2014).

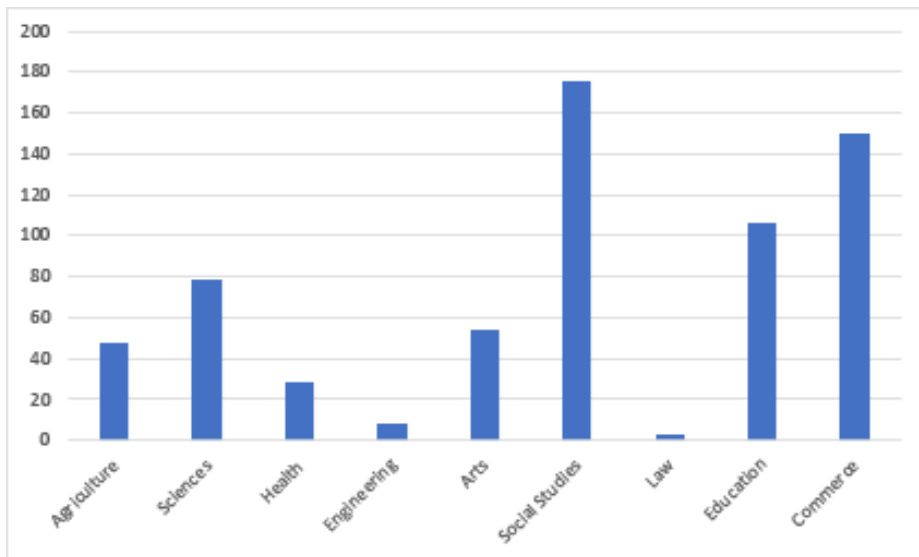
Upon the realisation that only a minority of academics held doctoral degrees (8% in 2010) and only two state universities were offering doctoral training programmes, Zimbabwe planned to increase the numbers through in-country training. This strategy of increasing the quantity of doctoral cadres trained in Zimbabwean universities was made against the backdrop of a serious brain drain attributed to the non-return of foreign-trained Zimbabweans. The major push factors were the brain drain and the regulatory framework which requires holders of master's degree to be taught and supervised by academics who hold doctoral degrees. As of 2015, six state universities were offering doctoral education and training programmes with a total enrolment of 150 and 28 PhD students graduating that year, indicating a 0.18% share of total enrolments and a 0.2% share for doctoral graduates. The universities went on a marked recruitment drive of attracting doctoral degree holders from the diaspora to broaden the base of supervisors for doctoral students (Garwe 2015). Table 5 shows the doctoral student enrolments in Zimbabwean universities by gender as of July 2019.

Table 5 indicates an increase in the number of institutions offering doctoral training programmes from two in 2010 to ten in 2020, while the number of doctoral students rose to 649, representing a share of doctoral enrolment of 0.53% of total enrolment and 4.37% of postgraduate enrolment. The distribution of doctoral student enrolment by discipline is reflected in Figure 4. The greatest share of doctoral students is in the social studies, commerce, and education disciplines.

In the attempt to harmonise doctoral training standards, the interviews conducted revealed the existence of a ZIMCHE, University of Nottingham, and University of Zimbabwe forthcoming project aimed at developing a harmonised national framework for doctoral training. NQAA 3 highlighted that *'The framework is intended to guide institutions craft their own institutional frameworks on doctoral recruitment; structure and types/models of doctoral programmes, pedagogical practices, and the organisation of doctoral supervision.'*

Table 5. Doctoral student enrolments in Zimbabwean universities by gender as of July 2019.

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>State Universities</i>			
Midlands State University (MSU)	118	47	165
University of Zimbabwe (UZ)	97	57	154
Great Zimbabwe University (GZU)	14	7	21
Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU)	50	13	63
Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT)	45	20	65
National University of Science & Technology (NUST)	20	10	30
Bindura University of Science Education (BUSE)	20	5	25
Lupane State University (LSU)	0	0	0
Harare Institute of Technology (HIT)	0	0	0
Manicaland State University of Applied Sciences (MSUAS)	0	0	0
Gwanda State University (GSU)	0	0	0
Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences & Technology	0	0	0
Zimbabwe National Defence University (ZNDU)	0	0	0
<i>Sub-Total</i>	364	159	523
<i>Private Universities</i>			
Women's University in Africa (WUA)	17	27	44
Catholic University in Zimbabwe (CUZ)	5	2	7
Africa University (AU)	52	23	75
Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University (ZEGU)	0	0	0
Solusi University (SU)	0	0	0
Reformed Church University (RCU)	0	0	0
Arrupe Jesuit University (AJU)	0	0	0
<i>Sub-Total</i>	74	52	126
TOTAL	438	211	649

**Figure 4.** Doctoral student enrolment by discipline.

Research capacity development

Research capacity development refers to efforts to ‘increase the ability of individuals and institutions to undertake high quality research and to engage with the wider community of stakeholders’ (ESSENCE on Health Report 2014: 1). Studies highlight the efficacy of research capacity development for both students and academics in HEIs in promoting an enquiry-based approach to problem solving (Lansang & Dennis 2004). Research capacity development includes components such as capacity building and capacity strengthening of individuals, groups, institutions, and/or systems (Cooke 2005). Strategies to improve research capacity include partnerships, training, and mentorship programmes.

Some of the success factors in running effective doctoral education and training programmes include research and research writing courses aimed at providing academics and students with the requisite competencies. These are critical for nurturing a culture of research in institutions, and for empowering researchers to be competitive enough to disrupt their ‘spaces’ and improve national and international development. The main activities discussed here are training programmes and research dissemination platforms.

The Government of Zimbabwe through the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development and its competent authority for quality assurance, the ZIMCHE, launched the Research and Intellectual Outputs, Science, Engineering and Technology (RIOSET) Expo. This annual event provided Zimbabwean intellectuals with a platform to exhibit their innovations and research outputs. The expo had four segments:

1. An official opening segment that mimicked a grand graduation ceremony complete with an academic procession made up only of academics wearing doctoral regalia. A distinguished lecture by a member of the Presidium would then ensue.
2. A conference segment with plenary and parallel sessions. Following a rigorous peer-review process, the outstanding research papers were published in the *Journal of Zimbabwe Studies*.
3. Exhibitions (inclusive of visual arts). A team of adjudicators were responsible for selecting those products and artefacts that could be commercialised.
4. Performing arts. The best performers were given awards to motivate them.

Supportive structures

Robust institutional research structures have emerged as critical ‘must haves’ for institutional research capacity strengthening (Kirkland & Ajai-Ajagbe 2013). For example, a research support unit (RSU) is a one-stop node offering support for

research to academics and students. It is responsible for promoting research through coordinating and facilitating researcher upskilling; grant applications; award negotiations; and transparent decision-making; as well as maintaining compliance with regulatory, disciplinary/professional, institutional, funding, and research integrity in general. Quality assurance criteria for institutional RSU efficiency include: the quantity and quality of publications per annum; number of researchers assisted; total funding secured; total grant applications/awards per year; levels of compliance; and level of satisfaction amongst beneficiaries of the services provided.

Apart from all universities having engaged research directors to promote research and innovation, only three universities have well-established RSUs. These units work together with relevant university structures to promote a culture of research by assisting researchers in proposal development and grant applications, identification of international research partners, and project management. ZIMCHE does not have guidelines on institutional research management, but expects HEIs to develop their own innovative research management structures in line with their legal Acts, the QAF, and international best practices.

Summary remarks

This self-evaluation report was prepared on the basis of an analysis of data from primary and secondary sources. Arguably, this self-evaluation report shows that a significant amount of work has been covered in implementing the framework and that the QAF is essential for the improvement of research in Zimbabwe. The areas of intervention that lagged behind significantly are doctoral training and supportive structures. However, for purposes of guaranteeing continuous improvement, the QAF for promoting the quality of and productivity in research work in the country's higher education system requires external evaluation to confirm good practices and to identify gaps based on international trends and expert input.

Peer review of the self-evaluation report

The ZIMCHE QAF for research significantly improved the quantity and quality of research in Zimbabwe in the following areas:

1. Policies and guidelines,
2. Doctoral training,
3. Capacity development/strengthening,
4. Supportive structures.

In each of these areas the peer reviewers highlighted areas of commendation and areas needing improvement as follows:

Policies and guidelines

Commendation

There is obvious awareness of the need for research productivity to be guided by clear policy and efforts have been made to design such policies. The need to contextualise such policies to reflect the socio-economic realities obtaining on the ground is highlighted. This would require the involvement/engagement of all stakeholders in policy formulation so as to help address all key variables for the success of the policies. This would require involving academics, university executives, policy makers, ZIMCHE, the business sector/industry, students, etc.

Gaps identified

Existing policy guidelines appear to be top-down. Academics consider research to be an intricate part of their professional development and thus a personal activity requiring that any form of research management should involve them. There is no clarity on what/whether a document or documents exist that institutions can draw from in formulating their own policies and strategies for promoting quality research. No mention was made of policies on performance management of academics. For example, as a way of showcasing research impact in the local communities, industry, government, and the nation at large, some universities stipulate input and output indicators of research prowess (Rieu 2014). Input indicators include:

1. Research grants/income achieved compared to expectations from each level of academic per year with much more being expected from the professoriate (Buller 2012);
2. Research collaborations and partnerships considering that HEIs are part of local, national, regional, and global ecosystems;
3. Numbers of postgraduate students;
4. Evidence or research impact (policies developed, high-level decisions based on research evidence, etc).

Output performance indicators include:

1. Number of research outputs (per individual, team, or institution);
2. Quality of research outputs (for example, journal impact factor, level of article, number of citations per article, licences, patents);
3. Quantity of thesis/dissertations per year;

4. Academic awards/distinctions based on research (for example, editorships, special awards).

In other systems, governments require HEIs to participate in competitive (performance-based) research funding arrangements wherein a proportion of resources for research are allocated to those HEIs and academics whose research productivity meets set standards (Mo & Wang 2008). South Africa is amongst the many countries that has a 'direct reward system' that gives financial incentives to researchers and HEIs to increase research outputs (Pillay 2003, Vaughan 2008). A major criticism of this system is that it has the potential to promote quantity at the expense of quality (CHE 2009), as exemplified by the fact that only 57% of the publications that were awarded a governmental subsidy in 2007 were published in internationally accredited journals (Kahn 2011).

An extreme example of the performance-based funding system for research is the Research Excellence Framework (REF) used in the UK, which accounts for the larger chunk of research funding for HEIs. The point of departure from other performance-based funding systems is that REF draws on peer review of research outputs in order to measure quality as opposed to the use of various scientometric indicators that measure only the quantity of research outputs. According to Sutton (2020), whilst improving research performance, the REF can be contentious and can cause disquiet and inequalities amongst institutions and academics. Indeed, Weinstein *et al.* (2019) found that 57% and 29% of researchers in the UK were in favour of or against REF 2021, respectively.

Doctoral training

Commendation

Again here, there is awareness of the importance of doctoral training, and steps have already been taken by ZIMCHE to encourage HEIs to develop such training. Although the need to harmonise such programmes has been noted, there is also a need to emphasise the importance of structured doctoral programmes, with competent supervision and assessment. For example, in order to highlight the importance of standards in doctoral training, the European Universities Association (EUA) established a Council for Doctoral Education (EUA 2010).

Gaps identified

Doctoral training in Zimbabwe does not indicate issues and challenges that are topical in other African countries: for example, Ethiopia, Ghana, and South Africa. These include inefficiencies relating to the rates of participation, progression, completion, and

institutional and national throughput, as well as issues of relevance, inclusivity, and employability (World Bank 2010, UNCTAD 2011, FDRE 2012, Cloete *et al.* 2015). As a result, it is difficult to provide a comprehensive assessment of the progress Zimbabwe has made in improving the quality and relevance of doctoral training.

There is no clarity as to what doctoral training looks like in these institutions. What formal structures exist for training and supporting supervisors and students? Who does the training? What programmes/courses do they offer? What material is available? What resources are available? Is funding made available? What supporting documents are students given?

Capacity development/strengthening

Commendation

Attendance at national and international research fora, including conferences/workshops/seminars, is critical for academics to participate in global and topical conversations by way of capacity strengthening. Whilst the self-evaluation report indicates the importance of the RIOSET Expo, nothing is mentioned regarding attendance at similar international events.

Gaps identified

The self-evaluation narrative seems to suggest that capacity development interventions were successful, thus considering capacity development as an end in itself. There is no clarity as to how the interventions have been translated into specific activities by institutions or an evaluation of how well they are working. This is contrary to the view of Cooke (2005) that capacity development is not an end in itself but a means to an end wherein research productivity gains reflect the effectiveness of capacity development. Indeed, Gadsby (2011) asserts that the impact of the capacity development interventions is not easy to access.

The central role of effective communication in capacity development efforts was not mentioned in the self-evaluation.

Supportive structures

Commendation

The existence of research directors at all HEIs is commendable and should be complemented with robust RSUs. The stance by ZIMCHE to encourage HEIs to develop their own institutional research support structures is good since they are encouraged to benchmark. Best practices elsewhere show that impact research is

directly correlated to freeing academics from the administrative burden associated with research support, allowing them to concentrate on the intellectual demands of research. This is made possible by the professionalisation of RSUs by staffing the units with friendly, capable, experienced, and appropriately qualified staff.

Gaps identified

Reference is made to the existence of RSUs, but there is no clarity as to what these look like. Are there personnel such as research managers and administrators who provide support to various aspects of research activity and research funding? Are there related structures at faculty/department level to provide discipline-specific support? What does research quality assurance look like at institutional level?

Research funding should also be channelled to strengthen support structures for the various aspects of research: for example, doctoral training support (put together academic teams to develop doctoral training courses); research management teams, for example, research managers and administrators, ethics committees, technical support, grant application teams; libraries should be well-equipped and provide access to up-to-date databases; funding should be provided to subscribe to both print and electronic journals, purchase research-related software, set up computer labs, and provide efficient information and communication technology, as well as offering advisory and specialist services to facilitate research (Jubb 2016, Klain Gabbay & Shoham 2019).

Critical reflections on the development and review of the QAF for research

This paper has presented the rationale, development, and evaluation of the QAF for research in Zimbabwe. In line with the third objective, this section highlights the consideration points for adoption by institutions and quality assurance agencies, particularly in Africa where the agenda for improving research and innovation is shared amongst all nations (AUC 2014). To begin with, consistent with the assertion by Davidson *et al.* (2020), the QAF for research was confirmed as an important guide and harmonisation tool for improving research at institutional and national level. Secondly, the QAF should be developed by a range of stakeholders, taking into consideration contextual issues regarding challenges, resources available, and national imperatives. Thirdly, the paper endorsed the methodology of self-evaluation and peer review as an effective assessment tool for evaluating the effectiveness of quality assurance frameworks. This was in agreement with existing literature which found self-evaluation and peer review to be cornerstone tools in quality assurance (Campbell & Rozsnyai 2002, Vlasceanu *et al.* 2004, Lillis 2012). Finally, ZIMCHE, a national

quality assurance agency, played a critical role in the development, implementation, and review of the QAF, drawing from its strategic oversight mandate over quality assurance of higher education in HEIs.

Conclusion

The QAF approach was acknowledged as a best practice in improving the quality of research and innovation globally and in Zimbabwe. The QAF presented the following quality interventions: (a) relevant national policies, standards, and guidelines; (b) doctoral training; (c) research capacity strengthening; and (d) institutional research support units. Using self-evaluation and peer review quality improvement methods, this paper identified gaps in the implementation of the QAF for research in Zimbabwe. Self-evaluation showed that, despite clearly defined interventions and standards outlined in the QAF, gaps still existed regarding doctoral training and supportive structures for research.

Drawing from the gaps identified by peer reviewers, the paper recommends that ZIMCHE needs to harmonise doctoral training by developing a common framework to guide issues like doctoral recruitment, structure and types/models of doctoral programmes, pedagogical practices, and the organisation of doctoral supervision. Regarding research resources and researcher/institution performance management, the paper recommends the inclusion of a performance-based research funding arrangement akin to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) used in the United Kingdom whilst throwing caution on the contentious nature of the REF.

In summary, the self-evaluation and peer-review methodology is a powerful continuous improvement tool for use by different national quality assurance agencies in reviewing their quality assurance frameworks for research. The paper concludes that the development, implementation, and review of quality assurance frameworks for research are needed to guide institutions, enhance research, and to maintain consistency and harmony in the research system. These findings can be adapted by different national quality assurance agencies involved in the regulation, promotion, and enhancement of the quality of teaching, innovation, knowledge production, and engagement/outreach in higher education.

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Doctoral training in African universities: recent trends, developments and issues

James Otieno Jowi

Abstract: One of the core functions of universities the world over is the generation of new knowledge through research and innovations. African universities have been facing mammoth challenges, especially on their role in research. This is partly due to their weak internal capacities for research and low numbers of staff with PhDs, which is also crucial for their growth and self-renewal. This article analyses the state of doctoral training in Africa with some insights into its implications for research and knowledge generation. The article is based on the outcomes of a study on Building PhD Capacity in Sub-Saharan Africa which was undertaken by the African Network for Internationalization of Education (ANIE) and the Institute of Education, University College London for the German Academic and Exchange Program (DAAD) and British Council. It covered six Sub-Saharan Africa countries. The study presents the key developments and some key challenges facing research and PhD production in these African countries.

Keywords: Africa; universities; research capacities; doctoral programmes.

Introduction and context

In recent years several transformations have taken place in higher education globally which have also impacted on higher education in Africa (Cloete *et al.* 2011, Jowi *et al.* 2013). One of these has been the growth of the knowledge society, which has made knowledge production key to the success of nations and societies (World Bank 2009, Oyewole 2010, Castells 2011). The capacity of a country to produce, adopt, adapt, disseminate, and commercialise knowledge has become critical for economic competitiveness, sustained economic growth, and the improved welfare of society (Carnoy & Castells 2001, World Bank 2009). Africa, though an important region of the world, has remained at the periphery of the knowledge society (Jowi & Sehoole 2017) leading to its exclusion from the networked society (Castells 2011). Doctoral training is pivotal for research and knowledge production, which are actually the main drivers of today's knowledge society. Compared to the other regions of the world, Africa's knowledge production has been quite low, standing at a paltry 2%, rendering Africa not able to fully participate in the knowledge society (Zezeza 2005, Cloete *et al.* 2011).

While Sub-Saharan Africa has 12% of the world's population, it accounts for only about 1% of the global research output (World Bank 2014). It also has the lowest number of researchers per 1 million of the population, compared to all other world regions. Sub-Saharan Africa has also faced a massive brain drain resulting in the loss of highly qualified staff to the developed countries at a time when the pioneer African academics are aging (Mohamedbhai 2008, Jowi & Obamba 2013, Van't Land 2016). This is aggravated by the fact that institutions lack the capacity for self-regeneration through training of a new generation of academics (Tettey 2009, Jowi *et al.* 2013). The consequence has been a low number of qualified researchers, low research outputs, deficient institutional capacities for research, and inadequate capacity of the universities to respond to escalating societal challenges, leading to more demands and questions about their social relevance.

One of the reasons for this low capacity is the challenges facing doctoral training in Africa, including the capacity and quality of this training (Hayward 2010, Harle 2013, Cloete *et al.* 2015). As a result, in recent years, there has been emphasis on the need to enhance the capacities of African universities for doctoral training and research to enable them respond to the growing needs of their societies (British Council & German Academic and Exchange Service 2017). This has hinged on a recognition of the growing potential within the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa to develop new knowledge and ideas that could help address the challenges faced by the region (Shabani 2010, Sehoole & Jowi 2017). For Africa to take advantage of its opportunities, there is a need to build a supportive knowledge production and research

environment for the development of the requisite human capacities that can enhance research and knowledge production in the region (McGarth 2010, Oyewole 2010). Due to these challenges and developments, doctoral training and strengthening of institutional research in Africa are gaining more attention from governments, institutions, and other stakeholders (Harman 2005, Sehoole 2011, British Council & German Academic and Exchange Service 2017).

Investments in doctoral training and strengthening the research capacities of African universities have thus become imperative. In recent years, there have already been some discernible positive outcomes, especially in the growing number of doctoral graduates in different fields and an increase in research outputs from Sub-Saharan Africa in recent years (AAU 2015) and the rapidly growing numbers of PhD graduates (Harman 2005, Sehoole & Jowi 2017). In Sub-Saharan Africa, the growth in numbers of doctoral graduates and research productivity has, however, been largely a contribution of universities in a handful of countries, especially South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, and Ghana). It is, however, notable that Africa's modest growth in research publications and citation impact is within the backdrop of serious capacity deficits. This requires African societies to enhance their expenditure on research and development, which remains far lower than the world average of 1.68%, suggesting that deliberate and concerted efforts need to be put into mobilising funding for research and development (Jowi & Obamba 2013).

As a starting point, the article takes cognisance of several developments that have taken place in Africa's higher education in recent years. These include the rapid expansion of the sector, a sharp rise in access, number and diversity of programmes, quality reforms, improvements in governance and management, and the impacts of internationalisation and developments in information and communication technology (ICT) on doctoral training and research in Africa (Jowi & Sehoole 2017). The sharp rise in student numbers, especially at undergraduate level has seriously stretched the capacity of the institutions and limited opportunities for doctoral training. This is in addition to the rapid rise in the number of institutions in these countries without due consideration of the requisite staff capacities. In Ethiopia, for instance, the number of public universities grew from two in 2000 to thirty-six in 2015 (Nega & Kassay 2017). In Kenya, student enrolment increased from 112,229 in 2006 to 539,749 in 2016 (Commission for University Education 2016). These two snapshots of the growth in the number of institutions and students are just an indicator of the situation in most other countries. With Africa's youth bulge and the growing demand for higher education in Africa, this situation might obtain in several African countries for a couple of years. These are thus some of the developments and challenges that deny the countries and institutions the opportunities to turn these potentials into realities that can benefit local populations.

Arising from the above, there has been a growing focus on the state of doctoral training in Africa. This has mainly been on doctoral training capacities, support systems for doctoral training, the challenges facing doctoral training, and some innovative developments in doctoral training in Africa. The article draws insights from the country cases of the six countries (that is, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, and South Africa) that were the case studies for the study on *Building PhD Capacities in Sub Saharan Africa*. The study was conducted by the African Network for Internationalization of Education (ANIE) and Institute of Education, University College of London and was commissioned by the British Council and the German Academic and Exchange Program (DAAD). In each of the case countries, ten universities were selected as case studies. The exception was South Africa where six universities were selected, especially due to the significant research already available on this topic. The selection of the institutions was based on parameters including the age of the institution, location, research productivity, status (public/private), number of doctoral programmes, and accessibility. From these institutions, data was gathered using a variety of approaches, including desk reviews of institutional documents, questionnaire surveys, and interviews with key stakeholders. The main informants included doctoral students, recent PhD graduates, supervisors, heads of department and deans of faculty, and university executives. At the national level, information was gathered from national research councils, regulatory agencies for university education, ministries responsible for university education, development partners engaged in higher education, and relevant private sector agencies.

The study focused on the availability and quality of PhD programmes, their link to national research agendas, national policies and frameworks on research and doctoral training, institutional priorities and policies, funding sources, and the role of international collaboration. The outcomes of the study were published in a synthesis report and country reports. Based on the outcomes, this article puts the case for building supportive doctoral training and knowledge production systems for Africa. It also highlights the various positive developments in this sphere in recent years with a key focus on some bold steps and innovative approaches being made by some countries and institutions.

Capacities and quality of doctoral training

Capacities for doctoral training

As introduced in the above sections, one of the main constraints to doctoral training in several African universities is the scarcity of opportunities for this high-level training. It has been noted that most pioneer African scholars obtained their doctoral

training abroad (Tettey 2009, AAU 2015). This trend prevailed for quite some time until some African universities began offering PhD training. While local training opportunities have grown tremendously, they still remain far from adequate (Hayward 2010, Oyewole 2010, British Council & German Academic and Exchange Service 2017), though situations vary from country to country. This is more so for training in specialised knowledge areas where, due to local capacity constraints, training is still largely obtained in developed countries (Sehoole 2011, AAU 2015). With the developments that have taken place in the sector, there is now shared optimism on the value of developing PhD capacity at home through different initiatives. These are succinctly encapsulated in the Kigali Communiqué (2014) and the Dakar Declaration on Revitalization of African Higher Education (2015). Consequently, it is notable that, over the past ten years, there has been a marked increase in the programme offerings for PhDs in the six countries highlighted in this article. This has been partly due to the rise in numbers and diversity of universities in these countries, fuelled by national policy requirements to strengthen and increase doctoral training. While this growth and expansion are desirable and are already contributing some positive outcomes, they have also brought about other challenges and concerns, especially about the quality of the PhD programmes.

In addition to the implications on quality, the growing demand for doctoral training opportunities has stretched the already deficient institutional capacities (Van't Land 2016). It is notable how governmental steering through of policies, including those related to funding instruments, puts pressure on the institutions and academic staff too, in this instance, the focus on enhanced and quality doctoral training. In several African countries, universities are therefore under immense pressure to develop their academic staff to PhD level to enhance research capacity and quality training in the different programmes. The growing influence and recognition of university rankings and the role of research, publications, and academic quality in the rankings have also contributed to this.

By 2013, doctoral student enrolments in Ghana accounted for 0.5% of all enrolments in the universities. In South Africa they accounted for 1.9%, in Ethiopia for 7.8%, and in Kenya for 1.3% by 2015 (British Council & German Academic Exchange Service 2017). This trend indicates that, from negligible doctoral enrolment rates just about a decade ago, enrolments in doctoral programmes are growing. Of the six countries that were covered in the study, South Africa has the most advanced research system and a more differentiated higher education system comprising traditional universities, comprehensive universities, and universities of technology. The number of doctoral graduates per annum in South Africa almost doubled over the period 2005–14, with a production of thirty-four PhDs per million of the population. The growth in the number of PhD graduates was more pronounced in South Africa's

historically disadvantaged universities and universities of technology, albeit from a low base. The University of the Western Cape (UWC), for instance, increased its number of PhD graduates from 35 in 2004 to 197 in 2014. In Ethiopia, where doctoral education has a fairly recent history, the number of public universities offering these programmes has grown to ten from one in 2005. The total enrolment in PhD programmes increased from 50 in 2005 to 3,135 in 2014/15. In the Ethiopian case most PhD students are enrolled in science and technology fields, which account for about 68% of all PhD graduates. In Senegal, in 2005 it was only Cheikh Anta Diop University that could offer PhD programmes, but by 2015, four of the country's six public universities offered doctoral programmes. Even though the number of private universities in Senegal has grown tremendously, their contribution to doctoral training is minimal, as they focus on undergraduate training.

In Ghana, the number of doctoral programmes rose from 100 in 2005—most of them concentrated at the University of Ghana—to more than 200 in 2017. The programmes are spread across a diversity of universities in Ghana, public and private. The distribution of programmes and enrolments by subject fields varies across the various countries and individual universities. The Kenyan study also demonstrates an increase in doctoral enrolments with much better spread across the older public universities (that is, University of Nairobi, Moi University, Kenyatta University, Egerton University, and Jommo Kenyatta University of Science and Technology) but did not show much diversity of programmes across various universities, with most programmes focused largely on humanities and social sciences.

This rapid expansion in doctoral programmes has unfortunately put enormous pressure on existing capacity, which, in most of the countries, was already stretched. It is, however, important to reflect on the number of PhDs each system should produce to meet the needs of the universities and other sectors. Despite the growth in the number of institutions offering PhDs, with the exception of South Africa, in the remaining five countries, the bulk of research outputs and PhD training is still dominated by just a few institutions, mainly the older and better established public universities. It is, however, important that there are positive developments in enrolments and provision of opportunities for doctoral training. Much in-depth analysis is needed to consider whether all key knowledge domains are covered.

Quality of PhD programmes

Quality of doctoral training in Africa is raising growing concern (Hayward 2010, Harle 2013, Cloete *et al.* 2015) despite the ongoing institutional and even regional-level reforms. Quality has been identified as a key challenge to research and PhD training in several African countries (Oyewole 2009, Van't Land 2016). Several efforts

to improve quality are being made, including strengthening regulatory frameworks, enhancing internal quality assurance frameworks, and strengthening programme accreditation and the quality of the entire doctoral training process. These, however, still fall short of the desired situation, meaning that more still needs to be done to foster better quality for doctoral training. In Nigeria, for instance, due to quality requirements, of the 152 accredited universities, only 63 were allowed to offer PhD programmes by 2017 (Akudolu & Adeyemu 2017).

While there are several challenges impacting on the quality of doctoral training, funding for doctoral training is one of the main ones. This impacts on research infrastructure, quality of the learning environment, support systems for students and staff, and the quality of supervision. These culminate in deficiencies in the quality of the research culture for the socialisation of these young researchers. This weak institutional research culture also links to the poor working conditions and heavy workload for academic staff, with most academic staff taking up consultancies and ‘moonlighting’ to augment their incomes. The unfavourable working conditions have also been a constraint in attracting African academics in the diaspora. The high workload in addition to the meagre supervision capacity also affect the quality of supervision.

The efficiency of doctoral programmes, especially regarding student completion rates and time spent to graduation, has also contributed to the quality challenges in doctoral training. Most full-time doctoral programmes are planned to take three to four years. In Nigeria and South Africa, the average time to completion of the degree is five years. In Kenya, the average time to completion is six years. While there is a paucity of data on completion rates, South Africa has a completion rate of 45%. There are, however, some vast discrepancies between institutions and disciplines. For example, UWC had a 60% completion rate, while the University of South Africa (UNISA) had 25% (Herman & Schoole 2017). Dropouts from training programmes seems to be a concern, especially in systems which did not have adequate support programmes for the students. In a few cases, dropout rates were as high as 50%. These have impacts on the efficiency and thus the quality of the programmes and systems.

There are notable developments to enhance the quality of postgraduate training in the highlighted countries. In some instances, the national quality reforms are augmented by wider regional quality assurance frameworks, such as those by the Inter University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) for the East African region. For most of Francophone West Africa, the reforms of the LMD (Licence-Master-Doctorat) in Senegal present an interesting model of restructuring and standardising quality provision which has influenced the region (Dimé 2017). Even with these reforms, funding issues, inadequate numbers of staff with PhDs, poor infrastructure for research, heavy teaching loads, and poor supervision practices remain serious challenges. These elements obtain across the six countries, to various extents. Overall, the ecology of

doctoral education across the six countries suggests quality challenges of various kinds.

Thematic priorities for doctoral training

As stated at the outset, research and doctoral training in Africa should respond to the perennial and contemporary challenges facing African societies. Several of the countries have explicitly aligned their PhD training and research priorities to their national development blueprints. Ethiopia, for instance, with guidance from its national Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP), which prioritises science and technology, requires public universities to focus their research and doctoral training on science and technology fields. Kenya, on the other hand, has focused its research agenda on its Vision 2030, which also has a strong inclination towards the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) areas. This is also demonstrated by the priority areas supported by Kenya's National Research Fund (NRF). South Africa has anchored its national research agenda on three main strategies: transforming academia to retain more black academics; developing capacity and expanding PhD training; and developing a viable pipeline for postgraduate studies, focusing on developing a new generation of academics. National research priorities across the six countries seem to focus on science and technology areas with an emphasis on health, agriculture, energy, poverty reduction, food security, infrastructure development, urban development, housing and construction, space science, good governance, sustainable development, and HIV/AIDS. These priorities also seem aligned with the United Nation's sustainable development goals and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

These national priorities also guide research and training at institutional level to a large extent. South Africa offers a good example of how to align institutional research priorities, PhD training, and PhD programmes with national research agendas. According to Herman (2013), most universities in South Africa align their strategic plans and visions with major national policy documents, such as the National Development Plan, the *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training in South Africa*, and enrolment planning by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). At the same time, through various funding mechanisms, the South African government influences and steers the institutions towards national imperatives.

Ethiopia has also implemented various mechanisms to steer alignment between institutional and national research priorities. Addis Ababa University, for example, has a research incentive policy to support research, which is aligned with national priorities, and encourages publication of research by academic staff. Some Ethiopian universities also have competitive research funding aimed at supporting priority research areas. One of the limitations of utilising funding for steering research to

achieve a desired alignment is its inadequacy. While almost all Ethiopian universities have identified research themes that are aligned with national priorities, implementation has been slow due to lack of funding (Nega & Kassaye 2017). The situation in Ghana highlights the fact that lack of research funding by government may lead to ‘goal displacement’ in research focus, as funding from donors and consultancies may not necessarily align with national priorities. There is also the establishment of research institutes and centres to champion research in particular priority areas, the introduction of PhD programmes in niche areas that are aligned with national priorities, and the establishment of research chairs, such as is the case in South Africa and Kenya. By 2018, Nigeria was in the process of establishing a National Research and Innovation Council (NRIC) as well as a National Research and Innovation Foundation (NRIF), which was to be responsible for setting national priorities on research, innovation, and development, and the awarding of research grants.

While all the countries in the study have identified broad research priorities and most universities’ research plans were aligned with these priorities, the match between PhD research foci and these priorities is, in some instances, misaligned. This is mainly because of the lack of or inadequate funding aligned with the respective priority areas or capacity constraints. For example, in spite of Kenya and Senegal prioritising doctoral enrolments in science and technology fields, a significant majority of doctoral enrolments in these countries is in the social sciences and humanities, due to inadequate funds to steer enrolments to the set priorities. It is notable that having national research priorities is by itself is no guarantee that universities will align their research agendas with these priorities.

National support system for research and PhD training

The pursuit of national research and doctoral training priorities, as mentioned in the preceding section, requires several support and steering mechanisms. Some of the case countries have, to various extents, developed some forms of intervention in this regard. Part of this includes provision of research funding, funding for institutional capacity development for research, funding support for doctoral training and supporting the establishment of research chairs in some departments, and opportunities for fellowships and visiting scholars, among others. The effectiveness of these interventions across the countries is, however, uneven. Kenya has established the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) and the National Research Fund (NRF–Kenya) to support and steer research. NACOSTI’s core role is to steer scientific advancement and technological development in Kenya through the administration of the Government Research Endowment Fund (GREF) which supports scientific research and innovations in science, technology, and innovation priority

areas for national development. By 2015, NACOSTI had funded a total of 433 PhD research projects across all universities in Kenya. It has also established a Research Chairs Initiative, which is aimed, *inter alia*, at retaining top researchers and attracting Kenyan scientists in the diaspora back into the country. The first two chairs established in 2016 are in health systems and agricultural biotechnology. NRF–Kenya facilitates the advancement of science, technology, and innovation. It mobilises resources and invests them in research and multidisciplinary collaborations among universities and research institutions in Kenya.

South Africa, which has a comparatively advanced national research system in Africa, has implemented several initiatives to enable institutions to align their research to address the national agenda. These initiatives cover the broad areas of research capacity, enhancing the qualifications of academics, transforming the demographic profile of researchers, and research excellence. The National Research Foundation's (NRF) Thuthuka Programme, which was initiated in 2001, is focused on promoting the attainment of PhD qualifications, as well as the development of the research capacity of early career academics employed at South African universities. To address past inequalities, given the country's apartheid history, 80% of all funded grant holders on the PhD track have to be black and up to 60% have to be female (Herman 2013). The South African NRF has also implemented three other initiatives aimed at significantly increasing research capacity in South Africa: that is, the Centres of Excellence (CoEs), the South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI), and the National Research Facilities (NFs).

The CoEs, which were initiated in 2004, focus on promoting collaborative and interdisciplinary research with the aim of enhancing research and knowledge production, as well as capacity development on a long-term basis (NRF 2016). SARChI aims to attract and retain excellence in research and innovation at South African public universities through the establishment of research chairs at these institutions, with a long-term investment trajectory of up to fifteen years. The National Research Facilities provide large science platforms and a unique set of critical skills to the broader research community. The facilities include iThemba Laboratory for Accelerator Based Sciences, Hartebeesthoek Radio Astronomy Observatory, South African Astronomical Observatory, South African Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity, and the South African Square Kilometre Array Project. Due to their huge capital cost, these facilities are the only ones of their kind in South Africa. Overall, the various initiatives implemented in South Africa have shaped the alignment of institutional research priorities with national imperatives, led to an increase in the number of scientific research outputs, and also increased research capacity in terms of the number of researchers and academic staff with doctoral qualifications. For instance, between 2005 and 2014, the number of doctoral graduates in South Africa almost doubled: from 1188 to 2258.

The production of PhD graduates is, however, not even across South Africa's twenty-six universities. Nine universities produced 79% of all PhD doctoral graduates in 2014 (Herman & Schoole 2017).

In Senegal, on the other hand, the Special Fund for the Development of Scientific and Technical Research (FIRST) and the National Agricultural and Food Research Fund (FNRAA) are examples of the mechanisms that have been established to support research directed to national goals. FIRST awards research grants to researchers, academics, and doctoral students in health, food security, agriculture, climate change, energy, the digital economy, and gender as critical national research priorities. FNRA, on the other hand, supports research in the fields of agriculture, livestock, fisheries, agro-industry, water and forestry, hydraulics, and the environment. Nigeria has recently (2016) established a National Research Fund (NRF–Nigeria), which is aimed at advancing research in Nigeria's public HEIs and also addresses the country's developmental aspirations through targeted research. While Ghana has neither a national research policy nor a research fund, it has a science, technology, and innovation policy which is geared at harnessing the country's science and technology capacity by, *inter alia*, strengthening the appropriate institutional framework to promote the development of scientific and technological research. Globally, PhD training is gaining growing attention and support, including the use of policy and funding instruments, due to the crucial role that it plays in economies.

Supervisory capacities

The starting point of this discussion was pegged on the serious capacity deficits within institutions, especially in regard to staff with doctoral qualifications. This further implies that the institutions have serious deficiencies in supervision of PhD candidates, noting the growing enrolments. This is more pronounced in the newly established public universities and in private ones (Barasa & Omulando 2017). The growth in opportunities for doctoral training has thus not been matched with a concomitant increase in capacity for doctoral supervision, hence straining the existing capacity. In most of the universities in the countries covered in this study, less than 50% of academic staff had PhDs. By 2017, in Ethiopia, less than 20% of academic staff had PhDs. Even though Ghana had about 50% of staff in its universities with PhDs, they were concentrated at the University of Ghana with the rest of the universities having less than 30% of academic staff with doctoral qualifications (Alabi & Mohammed 2017). The Nigerian study shows that the country has a shortfall of about 8000 academics while at the same time about 45% were due to retire within the next few years. This background shows the challenges that universities face in providing quality supervision. Cloete *et al.* (2015) recognise the serious deficits in numbers of qualified

staff in African universities and the impacts this has on PhD supervision. The very few qualified staff end up being overloaded with unmanageable numbers of students to supervise, some of them in far-drawn disciplines. The poor working environment coupled with the poor remuneration for supervision and the inadequate support frameworks for supervision further compromise the quality of supervision. While the staff suffer from this heavy load in a less supportive environment, the students on the other hand are dissatisfied with the quality of supervision (Herman 2013, Cloete *et al.* 2015) and that of doctoral training generally. This was also aggravated by PhD training largely being by a face-to-face model without discernible integration of ICT to support the provision of programmes and supervision. This was, however, different in the few universities, such as UNISA in South Africa, that hinged its training predominantly on online provision. The quality challenges and concerns are some of the reasons why most students prefer taking their training in developed countries where support systems for students and staff are well developed.

University links with industry and the private sector

In most developed countries, university–industry links play a crucial role in fostering research, innovation, and doctoral training. The developed industries also have experts who—through collaborations with universities—can support teaching, research, and supervision in the universities (Herman 2013). In such countries, the universities have long-standing and mutually beneficial links with industry. These play a key role in facilitating the symbiotic relationship between the university and industry. With regard to the countries highlighted in this study, with the exception of South African universities (Herman & Schoole 2017), the universities in the other countries have not developed proactive links with industry. This could be a two-sided issue as the universities have not adequately responded to the needs of industry while in some countries the industrial sector is still too poorly developed to have any meaningful impact on universities. In most cases (Barasa & Omulando 2017), universities have been challenged to be responsive to the needs of industry.

The South African case demonstrates this especially in the research-intensive universities. These collaborations are manifested in various forms, including industry chairs, opportunities for student internships, product development, and relevant support to these departments. The University of Pretoria, for instance, has more than thirty industry research chairs in different departments. Other than contributing to high-level knowledge production and skills development, industry chairs also ensure that the needs of industry are addressed by the universities. Another important lesson from South Africa is the establishment of national agencies that promote industry–higher education partnerships. These include the Technology and Human Resources

for Industry Programme (THRIP) and the Technology Innovation Agency (TIA). One of THRIP's mandates is to facilitate partnerships between industry, academia, and the government and to provide incentives to industry and academia to collaborate in finding technological solutions and to develop high-level skills in national priorities. TIA's role is to encourage partnerships between small, medium, and micro-sized enterprises (SMMEs), industries, universities, and science councils to develop an enabling environment that supports sector-specific innovations for global competitiveness and to provide funding for such innovations (Herman & Schoole 2017).

According to Dimé (2017), in Senegal where university–industry linkages have not been that well developed, one of the main developments has been the inclusion of private sector representatives on the governing boards of public universities, beginning in 2017. Though a positive step, the situation suggests that much still needs to be done to foster closer collaborations between the two sectors. In Ethiopia, a ministerial directive was put in place in 2013 requiring universities and other research institutions to develop linkages with industries to develop students' skills through practical training and to undertake need-based research focused on the competitiveness of the industry (Nega & Kassaye 2017). Due to the growing significance of these collaborations, in the East African region the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) has been organising a biennial forum that brings together the universities and the private sector to share experiences and create possibilities for collaborations (Barasa & Omulando 2017).

Overall, university–industry linkages is an underdeveloped area that needs to be tapped into to strengthen research and doctoral training profiles of the universities. Due to these generally weak links between the universities and the industry/private sector, the government ends up shouldering most of the responsibility for supporting doctoral training.

Funding for PhD training and research

Funding remains a serious challenge for higher education in Africa (Oyewole 2008, Jowi & Obamba 2013). With the growing student numbers and expansion of the sector amidst other requirements, funding to the universities is direly constrained. Amongst other sectors, research and doctoral training have faced the serious impacts of this underfunding. Funding for university research and doctoral education is generally problematic, which is unsurprising, considering the inadequate funding of higher education in the continent (Jowi & Mbwette 2017). Doctoral education has always had lower priority with regard to funding allocation compared to other levels of education (British Council & German Academic and Exchange Service 2017). This perception underestimates the significant role of such high-level training. The limited

funding in most of the countries has meant that most PhD students fund their studies from private sources.

With the renewed commitment to doctoral training which is also steered by respective government requirements, some countries are beginning to pay attention to providing funding for doctoral training and research. In some of these countries, governments have established national research funds and also developed policies and frameworks for a facilitative and at the same time regulated environment. Generally, funding for doctoral education and research is inadequate (Herman 2013, Jowi & Schoole 2017) despite commitments by governments and other stakeholders.

Like most African countries, the six study countries spend less than 1% of their GDP on research and development. The inadequate investment in research is also reflected in national and institutional budgets for research. In Ethiopia, for example, the research budget of all universities accounted for only 1% of the total budget allocated to the universities in 2011/12. In Nigeria, research funding accounted for about 5% of university budgets. Even though the actual funding for doctoral education is inadequate, the sources of this funding across all six countries are diverse and include: students fees; student financial aid schemes (such as Kenya's Higher Education Loans Board—HELB), local and international organisations, private sector organisations (such as Nigeria's Petroleum Technology Development Fund), industry, and the business sector. In several of the countries, for example, Kenya, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Ghana, and Senegal, research funding from industry and the business sector was reported to be minimal. Nigeria, however, had an earmarked education tax of 2% on profits of all registered companies in the country, which was then utilised by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) to support research and development of the higher education sector.

In Ghana, academics in public universities receive an annual book and research allowance to support their research activities. In 2015, the book and research allowance stood at about US\$1,256 per academic staff irrespective of their disciplinary fields, rank, or research productivity. While this allowance offers some research support to academics, it does not provide sufficient incentives for research. Plans are underway to establish a national research fund to replace the existing book and research allowances. Ghana has also the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund), which, inter alia, provides funding support for research.

A positive development across some of the six countries is the establishment of national research funds that support doctoral education, as is the case in South Africa and Kenya. Senegal has also set up the Special Fund for the Development of Scientific and Technical Research (FIRST) and a project to support the promotion of women researchers (PAPES). FIRST, which was established in 2007, awards research grants to researchers, academics as well as doctoral students, while PAPES

funds projects to enable women from educational and research institutions to advance in their careers (publications, invitations to scientific meetings, participation in thesis juries) or to complete their doctoral theses in Senegal. Research funding support also comes from the Ministry of Agriculture, which administers the National Agricultural and Food Research Fund (FNRAA). An increasingly important source of research funding is external sources, as is discussed in the next section.

Role of international partnerships and collaborations

Internationalisation has grown and taken centre stage in most university activities (IAU, 2010: 150–65, Mohamedbhai 2012, Jowi & Schoole 2017, Jowi 2017). Though internationalisation played a crucial role in the development of higher education in Africa, most African universities have not taken advantage of the opportunities that it presents. The universities that have led the way in establishing strategic and formidable collaborations have to a great extent benefited from them. IAU (2010) global surveys on internationalisation of higher education indicate that African universities find these collaborations more meaningful in supporting research and institutional capacity building. Part of this has been the training of staff, especially in specialised areas. Some African universities have developed such international collaborations to strengthen their academic programmes and research profiles, and to help set up doctoral programmes. Such collaborations have also been useful in the supervision of students, external examinations, and sharing of research facilities, especially special and costly equipment that may not be available in some of the African universities. They have also been useful for benchmarking and spurring the leapfrogging of the African universities in different knowledge domains.

In recent years, African universities have been appreciating the essence of academic partnerships and collaborations in fostering student and staff exchanges, upgrading staff qualifications, joint supervision of doctoral students, joint doctoral programmes, and research (Jowi & Schoole 2017, Aart *et al.* 2018). A general trend regarding inter-institutional research collaborations shows most focus on European and American universities, with very few intra-Africa partnerships. Intra-Africa collaborations and research networks have also begun to flourish. The Network for Excellence of Higher Education in Africa (REESAO), which brings together universities from seven French-speaking West African countries, including Senegal, is a good example. This network facilitates partnerships in areas such as joint doctoral programmes and harmonisation of doctoral programmes. The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) is another example of a research network that is designed to strengthen research and postgraduate education on the continent, focusing specifically on the field of economics.

The University of Ghana, for instance, has developed several strategic partnerships. In 2014/2015, the university received \$16,826,747.29 from different international agencies, representing 32% of its total research funding for the year. The university's major donor's include the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), the Department for International Development (DfID), the European Union (EU), the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Leverhulme–Royal Society, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the World Bank (WB), and the World Health Organization (WHO). A number of these international organisations also provide research funding to universities in the six countries. Some of these organisations have a specific focus (for example, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation focuses on malaria research), while others focus on capacity development training, for example, FAO, DAAD, the British Council, WHO, and the Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA), which have partnered with a number of Kenyan universities in providing funding and training for PhD students in advanced research methodology.

International collaborations are a vital pathway for supporting research, doctoral education, and institutional capacity in the six countries. The scale and focus of international collaborations varied from university to university, with the older and 'better established' universities having more and stronger partnerships than the recently established universities. In several instances, international collaborations played an important role in addressing national imperatives: for example, skills development in fields that are regarded as important for national development and also funding for research.

Collaborations among higher education institutions, especially those within the same country, could be a useful strategy for addressing the capacity constraints experienced by many of the institutions (for example, academics with doctorates, critical mass of experts in a particular field, and supervision capacity). This could be done through, for example, offering joint PhDs and co-supervision. Such collaborations can be steered through research funding, where institutions are incentivised to collaborate, strengthening institutional collaborations both locally and with international partners. Collaborations among higher education institutions, especially those within the same country, could be a useful strategy for addressing the capacity constraints experienced by many of the institutions (for example, academics with doctorates). Based on these outcomes and recommendations, the study lays bare some possibilities for interventions into this very important aspect of higher education in Africa. The study considers this an urgent and priority issue that needs the concerted efforts of both local and international stakeholders.

Developing the next generation of African academics

In the section on institutional capacities for research, it was noted that, in addition to scarcity of staff with PhD qualifications, most academic staff in the institutions were aging. The rapid expansion of the higher education sector in several African countries, growth in access, and programme differentiation requires that more young doctoral graduates be trained. In recent years, there has been growing attention on developing the next generation of African academics for self-renewal and regeneration of the system (Mohamedbhai 2012, Jowi & Mbvette 2017). However, though the current data from the universities show growing enrolments in doctoral programmes, the demographics, on the other hand, indicate that the majority of these doctoral students are mature and more advanced in age than their counterparts in developed countries. Most of the candidates in the case countries completed their PhD training after attaining the age of forty (British Council & German Academic and Exchange Service 2017). Though there are challenges with entry and completion ages of doctoral candidates, in South Africa, for example, there is a strategy to prioritise younger cohorts with a focus on developing the new generation of African academics. There have also been equity concerns about doctoral training, especially on enrolments of female students. Racial inequity comes out prominently in South Africa, with efforts being made to catapult the numbers of black academics getting into PhD training. Most of these are, however, international students from other African countries studying in South African universities. While the trends keep moving towards a greater need for PhDs, the universities should utilise all opportunities available to develop this badly needed cohort of a talented new generation of African scholars.

The rise of centres of excellence and university networks

Institutional differentiation and creation of centres of excellence was recognised as an important strategy that could be utilised to address the fragmented institution-driven expansion of doctoral programmes across many of the countries. Due to the capacity deficits and the need for specialised training in different targeted areas, the Centres of Excellence (CoEs) model is beginning to take centre stage in Africa. Most of them are located in some of the established universities in Africa. The Pan African University which has six campuses or centres in the different regions of Africa is a pioneering example. The different centres specialise in different fields. The World Bank and the German government have also supported the establishment of some of these centres in different regions of Africa. In addition to supporting infrastructure, they have also provided scholarships for the students and funding to facilitate staff exchanges. Some of these centres have already graduated some of their cohorts. Through the

Inter University Council for East Africa (IUCEA), the East African region is hosting a number of these centres. There have been calls to uphold the quality of training in these centres and also to support them to attain international accreditation. They also play an important role in fostering internationalisation through academic exchanges.

Some innovative initiatives

The past few years have witnessed some innovative developments in doctoral training by some universities. A number of universities (for example, University of Ghana, University of Ibadan, Moi University, and most universities in South Africa) have strategically used their international collaborations and partnerships to develop and strengthen their doctoral training. This has been in establishing new doctoral programmes, strengthening curricula, joint research and supervision, exchange of students, and making some specialised facilities available for research. The development of Centres of Excellence in Africa through different initiatives has also been an important step. These CoEs have focused on specific areas of speciality through which students from different African countries can now obtain training. Some of them have accompanying scholarship programmes and are better equipped, thus facilitating better learning and research environments. Some universities in Africa have also developed networks and collaborations through which they facilitate research and doctoral training. These include the recently established African Research Universities Association (ARUA), Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture, Consortium for Advance Research Training in Africa (CARTA), and several others (see Jowi & Mbwette 2017) which now enable the universities to combine their efforts to foster doctoral training.

It is also notable that some universities, such as the University of Ibadan, University of Ghana, and University of Nairobi, are tilting their focus to deliberately increase doctoral students' enrolments (Alabi & Mohamed 2017, Barasa & Omulando 2017). The growing ICT revolution is also providing several opportunities for online learning and supervision from a distance (Zezeza 2012). This has been given further impulse by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic that has shifted thinking and made online activities a new normal and could make this a very viable platform for enhancing doctoral training in Africa. Though still a challenge, a few innovative approaches to funding doctoral training are also coming up to augment government funding. These include funding through projects and partnerships with industry and the private sector. The DAAD model of funding PhDs in Africa emerged as one of the most viable models, especially with regard to development partners supporting doctoral

training in Africa. The establishment of National Research Funds by most governments is also an innovative move to support and sustain doctoral training.

Summary and conclusions

This article has foregrounded several developments, trends, and issues in doctoral training in Sub-Saharan Africa. It began from a background of serious challenges and deficits, but proceeded to document some of the developments in doctoral training in Africa. It showed some sense of optimism based on the outcomes of the six-country study, with an emphasis that much more still needs to be done by the various stakeholders for meaningful progress to be made in doctoral training in Africa. Currently there is higher optimism about the value of building PhD capacities in different African countries. This is in response to the already documented low capacities and the role of such specialised and high-level skills in societal development and transformation. It is important to ensure that the quality of PhD programmes is enhanced to cope with growing societal needs. Due to concerns about quality of doctoral training and socio-economic relevance, there is a need to diversify PhD training into some of the key areas which are currently excluded. The links between universities and industry seem to be rather weak except for the South African case. As the evidence from the cases indicates, stronger collaboration between universities, government, industry, the private sector, and local communities is required in order to strengthen the capacities of universities for research and development, enhance innovation and commercialisation of research, and responsiveness by universities to the need of industry is therefore necessary. The increasing demand for doctoral education suggests that enrolments will continue to increase, which will require a concomitant increase in the number of academics who can provide the required supervision. The existing capacity is inadequate. It is therefore incumbent upon the various countries to invest in increasing the number of academics with doctorates, not only to enhance supervision support but also to build capacity for research.

It is notable that some countries have recently undergone transformations in their policy frameworks, which will in the end have impacts on the research and PhD training environment. Overall, the number of PhD programmes and enrolments into the programmes have significantly grown in the last ten years, especially in the highlighted countries. This trend paints an optimistic future for doctoral training and research in Africa. Ethiopia presents a very striking example of phenomenal growth from only two PhD programmes in 2006 to 138 in 2015. In the entire sector across most of the countries, PhD training as a proportion of overall student enrolment remains remarkably low. There is progress being made in enhancing the numbers of staff with PhDs,

with the trends showing that this could change rapidly and have an overall impact on research and PhD production in the coming years.

Given the relatively low enrolments in doctoral programmes in the countries illustrated in this article, there is a need for universities to increase enrolments and graduation rates. This requires, inter alia, an increase in the supervisory capacity of universities, and an expansion and improvement in research infrastructure, and a rethinking of the funding of doctoral education. In addition, scholarships and bursaries for doctoral students should consider the fact that most doctoral students have to balance their studies with financial responsibilities to their families.

Institutional differentiation and the creation of centres of excellence is an important strategy that could be utilised to address the fragmented institution-driven expansion of doctoral programmes across many of the countries. Differentiation will ensure, inter alia, that institutions offer doctoral programmes only in areas in which they have the requisite capacity, optimisation of the existing limited capacity, and that resources are concentrated in areas where institutions have the potential to be excellent.

The realisation of a strong alignment between university research, doctoral education, and national research priorities requires the implementation of robust national frameworks to steer the behaviour of all concerned actors (universities, industry, and government). Research funding and incentives are important mechanisms for steering such alignments: for example, by prioritising areas that are aligned with national priorities. As in other fields, data remains a major challenge in analysing developments in doctoral training in Africa. Availability and coordination of data thus remain perennial issues.

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Tackling the behavioural antecedents of knowledge production: research culture, behavioural intentionality and proactive agenda setting by scholars in Africa

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Abstract: This article advances the view that the conversation around repositioning Africa's place in knowledge production requires a critical examination of the actions, behaviours, and institutionalised agendas antecedent to and concomitant to producing credible knowledge. The article explores this issue by bringing together three interrelated themes: the behavioural aspects of knowledge production with respect to organisational and research culture; the research and writing posture of academics in African institutions; and the need for deliberate and intentional agenda setting by scholarly associations in Africa.

The 'fight' for Africa's place in producing relevant knowledge must be three pronged. While there are historical dogmas that have internationally conspired to delegitimise indigenous propositions, there are also institutional barriers in-country (such as poor research/educational policy) which hinder the development of strong research prospects. Finally, research behaviour is necessarily a consequence of behavioural intention; such intention is a consequence of attitude towards and subjective norms about research. These must be tackled from a behavioural standpoint. This article therefore suggests means by which scholars and relevant institutions in African countries may reclaim and possess their own knowledge agendas and, as it were, 'tell their own story'.

Keywords: Knowledge production, Africa, behavioural, research culture.

Until lions learn to read and write, tales of hunting will always glorify the hunter.

Proverb attributed to the Ewe of the eastern coastal regions of West Africa

Introduction

Academics and policymakers appreciate that scholarly research and knowledge generation are fundamental to institutional/organisational and socioeconomic policy; as well as to rolling out socio-economic interventions that work (Sawyer 2004, Cheetam 2007). Over the last two decades, much has been written about the poor showing of scholars and universities in Africa when it comes to research output. The key causative factor running through much of the literature is resource poverty (Olukoju 2002, Devarajan *et al.* 2011). Related to this is the sometimes rather chaotic in-country policy regime around education and academic freedoms, as well as research and its place in the scheme of things (Camara & Toure 2010).

Aims and objectives

This article advances the view that the conversation around repositioning Africa's place in knowledge production (KP) requires a critical examination of the actions, behaviours, and institutionalised agendas antecedent and concomitant to producing credible knowledge. The aim of this article is to address this issue by discussing three interrelated themes. These are: the behavioural aspects of knowledge production (the issue of organisational/research culture); the research and writing posture of academics in African institutions; and the need for intentional agenda setting by scholars and scholarly associations in Africa. The broader objective is that the arguments and required actions suggested here should trigger efforts towards greater and more consistent KP within/from African countries by disrupting the KP status quo and embedding a conscious choice about how to prosecute the KP agenda.

The 'fight' for Africa's place in producing relevant knowledge must be three pronged: the historical, the institutional, and the behavioural. While there are historical dogmas that have internationally conspired to delegitimise indigenous propositions, there are also institutional barriers in-country (regarding public and research/educational policy) which hinder the development of strong research prospects. Finally, research behaviour is necessarily a consequence of behavioural intention. Such intention is a consequence of attitude towards and subjective norms about research. These must be tackled from a behavioural standpoint. This article therefore suggests required actions by which scholars and relevant institutions in African

countries may reclaim and possess their own knowledge agendas and, as it were, 'tell their own story'.

The required actions are that: universities and scholars on the African continent should commit to reinvent the research cultures within which they operate. This would entail attention to skills, efficacy, values, institutional practices, and individual behaviours which promote an inclusive use of various forms of research and KP.

I further argue that scholars on the continent should commit to writing or knowledge dissemination practices which recognise the disadvantages of operating in and from Africa but turn such difficulties into platforms for change. For example, if we cannot get into Northern journals because we lack their language skills or those journals are not interested in the matters that are of concern to us, then we should build our own journal bases in Swahili, French, English, and Portuguese; commit to developing the same as credible outlets for credible research; and train increasing generations of young faculty to learn the craft of the Northern regimes in order to systematically break into those domains.

I also argue that scholarly associations on the continent (especially in the humanities) should move away from the disjointed and uncoordinated approaches which have characterised the knowledge enterprise and instead commit to strategic, longer term, coordinated, collaborative (across the Africas, across institutions, and across associations), interdisciplinary and deliberate/intentional agendas around specific knowledge areas. This should happen with both time and dissemination objectives. Within a strategically defined period, therefore, knowledge about and of African origin, produced in and by Africans, concerning African matters should become distinct enough to be sought after because it addresses theoretical and practical issues as well as meeting standards both of quality and rigour.

Speaking from the organisational scholar's standpoint, one may put it this way: organisations are purposive entities. They go where they are directed (ideally) and attain those objects and goals that are intentionally acted for/upon; this point—I argue—is directly applicable to the KP agenda.

Approach

The article proceeds by setting out the modes of KP found in the literature. I elaborate on these as I believe each must be appreciated in the context of institutional and behavioural responses. It is important that these forms of KP are descriptively understood as distinct, but complementary. In setting out these forms of KP, in this article I am not interested in exploring their merits or demerits per se; nor how each has come to be. Rather, I am interested to show that within the global community of scholars these approaches are actively used in the knowledge enterprise. I then

explore the rising tide (within the humanities and management sciences) for a disruption of the status quo of Western hegemonic dominance of knowledge and the call for academics in Africa to assert themselves. This raises the question of how such a disruption may be prosecuted systematically, consistently, and in an impactful way. To answer this question, I set out the three interrelated themes noted above and weave into the discussion my views on why and how we in African countries may identify and deploy the various KP modes towards a sustained KP agenda. The article concludes with several recommendations which should enable scholars to turn a groundswell of concern into identifiable progress and KP outcomes.

‘The Africas’

In this article, I refer to the African continent in a pluralistic term. I refer to *‘the Africas’* —as a way of stressing the considerable diversity of the continent and its residual islands. The accepted usage of *‘the Americas’* (Burchfield 2004) to describe the American continental regions (North, South, Central, and Caribbean) is a tacit rejection of the notion of an ‘Americanised’ world (Friedman 2006) where ‘Americanised’ refers to the dominant culture of the USA. *The Americas* is an acceptance of the human, political, cultural, and physical geography differences of the region. In similar manner, *‘the Africas’* should come to represent the reality that along all the markers for establishing diversity and variedness of human existence, Africa is prime candidate and the continued usage of ‘Africa’ as an undifferentiated mass is at best a misrepresentation and at worst a deliberate process of anthropological negation. Nijman *et al.* (2020), in their influential book *Geography: Realms, Regions, and Concepts*, confirm the obvious. The world is made up of different realms in which peoples have forged their existence, responded to large geophysical forces, as well as been the creators of major changes. This applies just as well to Africa. It would be beyond the scope of this article to set out the very pertinent dimensions along which the peoples and regions in Africa differ. However, suffice it to say that, in terms of physical geography and climate, geopolitical reality, indigenous and historic linguistic variations, historical/cultural influences and differences, current political arrangements and peoples, Africa is not one place. It is many places, bound by the most common reality: the cradle of human evolution. Far too often, Africans and non-African alike, scholars and non-scholars, advertently and inadvertently speak of Africa as if it is one country. I believe the time is now, to refer to Africa in the plural, recognise its diversity, elevate, and redirect its characterisations away from the patronising and the ill informed.

The arguments advanced in the article are anchored in traditions, practices, and issues within the humanities/social/behavioural sciences and management literatures.

I acknowledge that, while there are many common areas regarding KP challenges with colleague scholars in the physical sciences, I am not equipped to pronounce on matters within that space.

Knowledge production

Knowledge production (KP) is the process/es of identifying, recognising, unearthing, systematising, and sharing the ontology of a people/time/region and the epistemological traditions which operationalise the process. Ontology considers the nature of things, the existence of things or reality, and the relationships between deemed realities. Epistemology is a necessary consequence of ontology. If we deem certain realities to be self-evident, our epistemology enables us to explore such realities in a manner that leads to codification, classification, explanatory theory, praxis, and an acceptable language of documentation. An important logic of knowledge production—which is at the core of human existence and the characterisation of man as ‘sapiens’—is the drive or urge to share and/or transfer knowledge (Reader 1998, Harari 2011). Sharing knowledge enables human survival beyond proximate needs. It also creates culture, establishes dominance, and offers opportunity for abstracted reflection, anchored thought, and human organisation. It is the praxis, culture creation, storage-for-later-use, and self-defining character of knowledge produced which have over the course of millennia facilitated the dominance of one group over another. It is the historical poverty of Africa’s attention to the entire knowledge production process that now requires that the status quo be disrupted, and a case made for alternative forms of knowing (Nkomo 2011). Importantly, what a group, profession, or a people regard as acceptable knowledge cannot be divorced from their epistemological traditions (Johnson & Cassell 2001).

Knowledge is produced by communities of creation and co-creation who reside in a variety of institutions. Universities are perhaps the presumptive owners of the knowledge production process (Maassen *et al.* 2019). However, along with universities, there are think-tanks, consulting firms, advocacy centres, government agencies, and increasingly in today’s digital world, a whole army of individual information sharers and claimants to production. Our concern—and the focus of the conversation on the need for a resurgence of Africa’s place in the knowledge process—is with the systematic production of scholarly knowledge that surfaces ontologies, produces taxonomies, and facilitates theoretical frames which aid an understanding of yesterday, guide today’s actions, and aid planning for tomorrow.

As Bakken and Dobbs (2016) note, academic disciplines are characterised by a knowledge base that contextualises both consensual and oppositional debate by

its members. In essence, those who produce knowledge are engaged in systematising the declarative, procedural, contextual, and somatic knowledge of people and societies across time and space. By so doing they create a bank of distinguishing ‘wisdoms’ by which society lives and develops. Two key characteristics of knowledge systems that influence human development are that such systems are transmitted across time, space, and people and are kept in a form that facilitates storage, access, and retrieval. Our concern is the obvious dearth of Africa’s involvement in this process—despite the real, but often romanticised history (Nkomo 2011) of African civilisations (for example: Egypt, Aksum) which produced their own knowledge and systems of documentation.

Forms of knowledge production

Gibbons *et al.* (1994) are perhaps credited with the clearest statement of forms of knowledge production. Huff (2000), Hessels and van Lente (2008), and others articulate very succinctly the various forms that knowledge production has taken since the post-war years. I present below a descriptive indication of each of the KP modes in the literature. The objective of this article is not to offer a critique of modes of KP but rather to articulate what these are and expatiate on why the African effort needs to make nuanced, informed, and strategic use of any or combinations of these modes.

Mode 1

Mode 1 knowledge production takes place within or through established academic settings. It is characterised by pursuit of scientific rigour, use of tools of observation, analysis, and synthesis which are often anchored in positivist traditions, and a commitment to ‘replication’. In many ways this mode has come to dominate much of the research and knowledge generation effort in many universities and other such institutions as well as the disciplinary distinctions which allow both social and physical scientists to pursue various particularistic research agendas. Its key check of acceptability is the peer-review process, which pronounces on validity and contribution. This mode has been described as including the pursuance of knowledge for its own sake: perhaps the so-called distinction between pure and applied science. A dominant characteristic of the cultural infrastructure around Mode 1 knowledge production has been the esoteric arguments which effectively delegitimise other forms of knowledge generation as insufficiently robust: a preference for so-called objectivity derived from ‘disinterested’ quantitative data. A consequential reality in many disciplines that have adopted Mode 1 is a default to respectability once the context is seen to be stripped, the researcher is seen to be disengaged from the researched, and the statistics are seen to be sophisticated, appropriate, and producing ‘significance’.

Mode 2

This form of knowledge production arose in recognition of the reality that other actors and actions beyond the cloistered walls of academe do contribute to knowledge and its production. It is characterised by distributed and heterogeneous efforts often targeted at or arising from application. Mode 2 KP tends to be executed along multi/interdisciplinary lines and may be housed in think-tanks, consulting firms, teaching hospitals, etc. The cultural infrastructure of Mode 2 KP is consultative communication, use of sites of issue occurrence, emphasis on co-creation, and a commitment to multiple methods of enquiry.

Mode 1.5

Huff (2000) calls for a Mode 1.5 approach to KP. Huff's call is perhaps a response to many conflicts, emergent trends, and unresolved allegiances that have characterised both Mode 1 and 2 knowledge production, such as Antonelli's (1999: 243) 'institutional formation of a market for knowledge' and Geuna (1999: 3) who considers the pressures that have emerged because of the economics of knowledge production:

Examples of the tensions characterising contemporary universities are: (1) incompatibility between the demands of elite and mass higher education; (2) friction between curiosity-driven research enterprise and targeted research; (3) the different impact of private and public financing; and (4) conflicts between the free advancement of the knowledge frontier and research driven by the needs of the society.

Huff's call for Mode 1.5 is based on the notion that Mode 2 responds to the limitations of Mode 1, which include its fixation with method and its slow-to-action character. However, Mode 2 has its own limitations, such as a focus on immediate tasks and problems and its lack of a tradition of consistent follow-through on impacts and implications. While professional schools and faculties in universities (such as those of business, medical, and engineering) may wish to pursue Mode 2, they are caught in a tension of respectability, which is derived from Mode 1 work. Mode 1.5 seeks to blend the theoretical and 'knowledge for its own sake' intents of Mode 1 while working to address the problems of society and the market as typified by Mode 2:

Mode 2 rose out of unmet needs and opportunities. Mode 1 is too slow, too inward looking; it gives priority to pedigrees. Although Mode 2 offers improved methods of knowledge production in each of these areas—timely, more practical, more democratic—I believe it has its own limitations ... (Huff 2000: 291)

The advantage appears to be that the scholars who may opt for Mode 1.5 are fully cognisant of the need to rise above the faddish character of Mode 2 and the sometimes slow and disengaged character of Mode 1. Huff writes:

Mode 1.5 should accommodate fault finders as well as facilitators. Critical observations, undertaken more often by scholars outside the United States than within, have a particularly important role to play ... (Huff 2000: 292)

Mode 1.5 culture therefore calls for scholarly consulting and academic advocacy along with Mode 1 training to enable problem-solving scholarship. This suggests the engaged scholarship that Boyer (1990, 1996) has advocated.

Boyer—scholarship reconsidered

Through a Carnegie Foundation project which explored the preoccupations of American academe, Boyer (1990) questioned the focus of American scholarship and arrived at the position he referred to as the ‘Scholarship of Engagement’. He traced the growth of American academe from teaching through service to research, but raised serious concerns with the thrust and commitment to ‘research’ as a core enterprise of the academic in America.

Increasingly the campus is being viewed as a place where students get credentialized and faculty get tenured while the overall work of the academy does not seem particularly relevant to the nation’s most pressing ... problems. (Boyer 1996: 14)

What we now have is a more restricted view of scholarship, one that limits it to a hierarchy of functions. Basic research has come to be viewed as the first and most essential form of scholarly activity, with other functions flowing from it. (Boyer 1990: 15)

He concluded that scholarship must be of an engaged form, dedicated to discovery (knowledge production/research), utilisation (application), teaching (knowledge transfer), and integration (interdisciplinary and multiagency collaboration). Boyer’s call is for a form of scholarship which blends knowledge production, sharing, use, and transfer as essential components of a single commitment. In this formulation, knowledge production cannot be pursued as a stand-alone independent activity. It must be bent towards engagement with societal issues in an active and ongoing fashion and requires constant dialogues between society’s actors and academic actors.

Mode 3

Carayannis and Campbell (2012), Etzkowitz (2008), and Watson (2011) have described the Mode 3 knowledge production system. This explicitly calls for a tripartite partnership between government, academia, and industry; with the addition of advocacy agencies/local community and business. This is variously described as an innovation ecosystem with the engaged university at the heart, promoting ‘glocal’ knowledge (local knowledge with global reach). As described by Boehm (2015: 2):

With Mode 3 knowledge production cultures or a high civic engagement by universities, or a system that values research impact on society, there is an emphasis on partnerships between universities, industry, government, and the civic sector.

Mode 3 is akin to Huff's Mode 1.5 and Boyer's Scholarship of Engagement. In all these the notion of distributed knowledge generation or multi-location of the knowledge production enterprise is key, as is the commitment to problem-solving scholarship.

Disrupting the status quo: the call for academics in Africa to assert themselves

I have considered five forms of the knowledge production enterprise. All five forms have been articulated by Western scholars. Each of these five forms serve particular purposes. The outputs of all five forms are undeniably and predominantly Western. This reality is not negative, but its impacts have been very consequential. For all the 'good' the world has seen from knowledge produced from Western science and arts, perhaps a corresponding level of ills have been visited on humanity as a result—nowhere more evident than in Africa. From the arrival of the Portuguese on Africa's shores in the early 1400s (Reader 1998) to the economic and social intervention programmes of colonisation and modern-day political experimentation (Arnold 2004), Africa has borne the brunt of the consequences of Western knowledge with all its advances and imperfections. It is poignant that Africa conducts national affairs of its fifty-five countries in English, Portuguese, or French—the languages of the colonisers. To date, most higher education institutions across African countries continue to rely on Western books, theories, cases, and arguments to educate Africa's elite (Nkomo 2011). Even from the 12th and 13th centuries when scholars in West Africa wrote about life and travel from centres of learning such as Timbukto (Freund 1984) and in the nine centuries after Ethiopia adopted Christianity, the African written word was done with Christianity and/or Islam as base material.

With the conquest and partition of Africa by the European powers and its forcible incorporation into a world system of exchange based on capitalist production, the possibility of an autonomous development of intellectual activity in Africa was cut off ... (Freund 1984: 1–2)

Were it not for the importunities of Europe, Africa might have enlarged upon its indigenous talents and found an independent route to the present ... the moment passed, however, during the fifteenth century ... since then the history of Africa has been the story of an ancient continent ... trying to accommodate the conceits of modern humans ... who came back 500 yrs ago, behaving as though they owned the place. (Reader 1998: 361)

The above quotes demonstrate the enormity of the historical challenge.

In recent times, however, there has been a resurgence of concern for self-assertion by Africans. This supplementary issue of the *Journal of the British Academy* is a case in point. The resurgence this time is not in terms of political independence or economic self-determination, but with regards to knowledge: representations about life, meanings, and philosophies of current and past peoples and societies in *the Africas*.

The calls to disrupt or question the Western dominant narratives is perhaps as old as the self-determination/assertion and independence movements of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, Osagefo Kwame Nkrumah, Amilcar Cabral, Léopold Sédar Senghor, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, and others. However, the recent calls to intervene in the intellectual narratives and discourses perhaps take off from social science writers like Mudimbe (1988), Mbembe (2002) and management scholars like George *et al.* (2016), Alcadipani *et al.* (2011), Nkomo (2011), and Nkomo *et al.* (2015). These calls are informed by several realities, which include: the poor showing of African scholarship in global conversations, the significant impact of non-African voices in African affairs, the obvious lack of contestation of colonial and postcolonial narratives which interpret African experience through European lens, and the clear need for developing home-grown ideas with which to tackle Africa's challenges and develop its institutions.

What is the problem?

Having considered knowledge and how it is produced and the call to disrupt dominant knowledge voices and assert African voices, the question that arises is how is this to be achieved? How may a disruption and/or an African knowledge production agenda be prosecuted systematically, consistently, and in an impactful way?

It is necessary to restate the challenge that confronts the issue of producing knowledge from African regions, by African actors, for the benefit of Africa, and for the purpose of constructively intruding on the global knowledge stage. I state these as a series of issues:

1. Impactful knowledge is not accidentally produced. It is the result of long, iterative, intentional, and ongoing series of structures, actions, and commitments.
2. Knowledge production requires the psychological commitment of producing actors to engage in those behaviours which facilitate production.
3. Knowledge that infuses and is diffuse is necessarily knowledge that is artfully and constructively communicated.
4. Knowledge systems are the result of ontologies, epistemes, and teleological positions—which are articulated and/or used to structure the KP process.

5. Knowledge systems are ultimately political tools for the organisation of society—whether directly or indirectly. This character produces two realities. One is social–psychological and the other is cultural–anthropological. Social–psychologically, knowledge systems are used to embed a world-view for the current and next generation, thus impacting their individual attitudes and behaviours. Cultural–anthropologically, knowledge systems define a people and their potentialities.
6. Therefore, where a knowledge system is supplanted or the world-view of a people is unseated/subverted (as happened with European colonisation of Africa and its introduction of Western ideals as normative) the effort to disrupt, counter, roll back, and reassert what was or what should be (which may be domiciled in the indigenous knowledge system) must be seen as requiring a sustained effort on the part of many actors over a long period of time.
7. Change requires a reflexive questioning of the extent to which grounded sensibilities have been so morphed as to reflect an externalised sense of what is ‘proper’. Change also requires a questioning of the instrument of subversion. In short, the renaissance is not simply about researching and producing knowledge. It is very much about questioning our assumptions and what our interpretations have now become.

‘Knowledge systems’ is a term that has been applied to the structures and arrangements around digitalised information for technological innovations (Cash *et al.* 2003). The term is used here to refer broadly to bodies of knowledge organised into theories and the philosophies behind these, along with relevant concepts and application constructs (Gurukul 2019)—as we have, for example, in ‘Management and Organisation Knowledge’ (MOK) (Alcadipani *et al.* 2011).

The issues raised above summarise the challenge that confronts knowledge production from the African perspective. The thesis of this article is that these challenges render a behavioural response imperative. These challenges require a behavioural commitment to produce, communicate, structure, diffuse, and disrupt. I argue that, without such a commitment, the groundswell which is becoming increasingly evident may remain so: a groundswell of many like-minded voices shorn of the action required to transform the groundswell into a movement that achieves. I articulate the suggested behavioural responses below.

Research culture and behavioural intentionality

The five forms of KP outlined above: Modes 1, 1.5, 2, 3, and Engaged Scholarship all have some common features. Two of the clearest are: individual intent and domiciliation within an institutional framework.

Mode 1 KP assumes that scholarship embedded within a formal university setting is the primary vehicle by which knowledge will be mined, surfaced, and disseminated. The architecture for this is obviously research agendas and research funding; possession of PhD and research training; research work set within distinct disciplinary boundaries and the performance evaluation of productivity anchored in scholarly publications. Mode 2 assumes that practising specialists commit to use their practice as vehicles for information collection which is then systematised. Mode 1.5 suggests that there is cross-fertilisation between academe and practice with a commitment to draw on collaborative expertise. Mode 3 broadens the actor space to include government agencies and businesses with a commitment to innovate in a systematic manner by working together. Boyer's Engaged Scholarship holds that the entire KP process works within and at the borders of the academy but, importantly, uses all the four responsibilities (research, teaching, advocacy, and practice) of the academy to mine and use knowledge. In all these cases, individuals/groups commit and institutions facilitate effort. What do these points mean for the varied African contexts?

In many countries in Africa, knowledge production is an activity carried out by academics through research that takes place from/in university institutions. When reference is made to the poverty of scholarly output, it is in the context of the weak showing of African academics in the global knowledge creation arenas. It refers to weak scholarship, few publications, and poor research intensification systems. The conversation which interrogates problems with research and its end-product—KP—in Africa has tended to focus on the resource poverty of universities on the continent (Sawyer 2004).

Increasingly however, it is becoming clear that the research processes by which knowledge is produced, cannot be discussed only in respect of resources available. Writers are beginning to argue that the conversation should shift to or urgently include questions about the human, psychological, behavioural, and intentional factors that make it possible to describe a university as research intensive or describe academics as research oriented. From an institutional as well as psychological standpoint, research by Pratt *et al.* (1999) and more recently by Pupilampu (2015) suggests that the behavioural and the intentional underscore the probability of academics carrying out research or engaging in knowledge producing activities. In other words, institutional facilitation and resource allocation per se may not achieve the research impetus that would lead to the sustained research through which knowledge may be created.

The organisational culture literature (Tsui 2006) shows that organisational outcomes are very much a function of firm-level culture. The research culture and the organisational culture (of which it is a part) provide the milieu—values, behaviours, and practices—within which scholarly activity takes place. Taking Mode 1 as an example, one may ask: what values underpin the pursuance of scholarly research

which leads to publications? What behaviours ensure that some academics produce, while others do not? Taking Boyer's engaged scholar as a point of departure, one may ask: what institutional practices would ensure that academe takes a holistic view of teaching, researching, utilisation, and dissemination as intertwined and desirable actions? Taking Mode 1.5 or Mode 3 as examples, the question/s that would arise would most definitely include: what institutional cultural frame would accept scholarly consulting and promote 'town' and 'gown' collaboration with the intention of systematising the resultant knowledge? These are matters of institutional culture. These are matters which cannot achieve salience except as part of a growing acceptance of a range of shared and/or contested negotiated values and behaviours. Evans (2007) sees research culture as an institutional framework which places value on research activities and outputs. The point is that an individualised commitment by an academic to work with a Mode 1.5 mind-set would be commendable. However, to facilitate sustained KP from Mode 1.5, that individual academic must operate within a milieu that increasingly comes to accept that Mode 1.5 is a useful approach to adopt. As Boehm (2015: 2) notes,

With Mode 3 knowledge production cultures...or a system that values research impact on society, there is an emphasis on partnerships between universities, industry, government, and the civic sector ...

Planned behaviour and institutional choices

The theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen 1991) suggests that behavioural intentions are informed by subjective norms and a sense of behavioural control or self-efficacy. Subjective norms and self-efficacy are very much a function of the milieu and the supportive frameworks created by the milieu. It is possible to argue that Mode 1 KP (which seems to be the aspiration of many universities in various African countries) requires institutions to articulate values which elevate basic and theoretical research. Universities would need to create institutional systems which support such research behaviour by upskilling faculty to the point of self-efficacy (terminal degrees, grantsmanship, etc).

It seems discussions around and the choice about various KP modes must take place at universities and by governments. This should lead to a recognition of the value of the various modes of KP. Key actors should then urge a differentiated adoption of these modes. Further to this, adopting institutions need to build the organisational and research culture base which can host and propel KP through the adopted mode. This must be an intentional process. To date, a country like Ghana has had university authorities and academics frown on consulting activities by faculty, to

the extent that derogatory terms are used to describe consulting. It is described as ‘*galamsey*’ a dimmer term for moonlighting, which implies an avid concern for pecuniary outcomes and a focus on using one’s time for consulting work instead of scholarly research.

The derogatory descriptions are in a sense justifiable—given that anecdotal evidence suggests many academics especially in the humanities are less productive than they could possibly be due to the time spent in consultancy work. However, it must be said that the disparaging descriptions used for such efforts as well as for persons so engaged, delegitimise an activity which may well be useful in the KP drive within the country. In this regard, legitimacy may be reasserted if institutional leaders recognise Modes 2, 1.5, and 3 as useful and credible alternatives and so facilitate institutional discussion of partnerships, associations, and collaborations and surface the scholarly outcomes which may flow from such efforts. Action Research for example, has long attained acceptability and credibility in consulting as an approach for joint problem identification and solution; and in research as a method that enables iterative engagement with the research issue/site until the research question has been sufficiently addressed.

Puplampu (2005, 2012) shows that applied interventions provide a unique opportunity to collect real-time data unencumbered with the politics of access negotiation. African countries spend considerable sums on consulting services on both social and physical science matters. One can only imagine the volumes of documented information produced through consulting reports—much of which is scripted by academics working with practitioners. Subjected to later rigorous analyses, theoretical interrogation, and systematisation, such in-situ, evidence-based, problem-related information may well facilitate the types of knowledge from which teaching, practitioner, and scholarly cases may be written. Such cases are often a strong corollary of and synchronous to theory consolidation.

It is perhaps time for the many academics in Africa who supplement their low incomes with consultancy work to turn such work to intellectual advantage by ensuring systematic data collection, obfuscation of identity, negotiating publication and ownership rights, and triangulating such data with later non-interventionist research. Ethical issues relating to confidentiality, nature of agreements, or permission to publish from such interventions may arise. These are certainly tractable.

The key learning from this consideration of research culture is that, if properly harnessed, varied research and institutional cultures may be created which enable knowledge to be produced not only from traditional research, but also through normatively acceptable alternative modes. In the African context—with so much requiring attention—this approach holds promise.

Research behaviour from which knowledge is produced is necessarily a consequence of behavioural intention; such intention is a consequence of attitude and subjective norms about research. Behavioural intention to do research is influenced by perception of behavioural control—in other words, the extent to which the individual academic perceives that they have control (self-efficacy, environmental predictability, competence, etc) over their research behaviour. Institutional culture is the milieu within which subjective norms about research are negotiated. If African scholars and knowledge producers are to make a systematic job of KP, appropriate research and organisational cultures must be negotiated and embedded.

Scholarly consulting

There is much hesitation about consulting as a legitimate activity of an academic. This hesitation has been noted above and is driven in part by the traditional notions around what is research, the role of the academic, and what it means to be a ‘respectable’ academic. The treatment of this matter in this article reflects the nuanced reality. One cannot pretend it is ‘all good’, neither can one suggest ‘it is all bad’. I would, however, like to explore several logics around this issue.

First, disciplinary differences. For some disciplines, such as business, medicine, and law, practice is in part an essential component of both training and respectable status within the field (whether as an academic or practitioner). In some jurisdictions such as Nigeria and Ghana, senior academics (who hold positions such as head of department or dean) in law, medicine, or pharmacy are expected to be members of their professional bodies; to have been called to the bar or to have experience of clinical practice. This means there is less of an issue with a practice orientation.

Second, scholarly productivity. The anecdotal evidence shows that those academics who are unable to strike a proper balance between engaging in consulting work or practice and their core university responsibilities tend to underperform where research and scholarship are concerned. This is what has led to the dim view taken of such avocations.

Third, incomplete understanding of the choices available in respect of KP modes. As discussed above, there are different KP modes. Some are more oriented towards application (Mode 2) others more towards pure research and teaching (Mode 1). Other modes seek a blend (Modes 1.5 and 3). Part of the consternation in my view is driven by the incomplete appreciation of the possibility that the academy and/or scholar may choose a particular mode of KP and as long as they remain faithful to it and deliver on its intents, their work should be seen as respectable and commendable, be it Mode 1, 1.5, 2, 3, or Boyer’s Engaged Scholarship. What is important is the choice and the dedication to KP through that choice.

Four, the third mission of the academy. Increasingly there is a global call for an urgent recognition of the third mission of the academy: active engagement with society. Maassen *et al.* (2019: 8) note:

This third mission has emerged over the last decades as an equally important part of the universities' social contract or pact with society as the primary two missions of education and research. ... It requires that universities themselves take the responsibility for linking their primary activities through mutually beneficial partnerships to social and cultural needs in society, to demands from politics and the economy.

This third mission invariably requires a dedication to active practice by the institution or by individual academics or a combination. A critical element of this is to have built into the engagement processes, active knowledge transfer (KT) not in the sense of teaching or training but more in the sense of 'doing'.

Perkmann and Walsh (2008) hold that there are three forms of academic consulting: opportunity-driven, commercialisation-driven, and research-driven. They indicate that opportunity-driven consulting has a negative impact on research productivity. Based on the logics I have expounded and on Perkmann and Walsh, I argue that scholarly consulting, or engagement of the academic with community is a viable tool for mining relevant knowledge. This is one way to turn around the derogation that is used on consulting activity. What is necessary is for institutions and individual academics to identify the options that most address their peculiar context and commit to the KP element of the process as a value system.

Writing posture of academics in Africa

Mined knowledge is perhaps of no use if it is not disseminated. Disseminated knowledge is perhaps of no use if its delivery hinders adoption. Adoption is targeted at audiences such as the practising community and the academic peer community. The academic peer community are fundamental to the diffusion of locally mined knowledge in a way that allows it to inform and influence global thinking. The 'inability' of African KP to enter the global space is at the heart of its abysmal performance in global knowledge systems. This raises the matter of what may be called the 'writing posture' of African academics.

By 'writing posture', I am referring to a combination of attributes which characterise the approach to and the scholarly writing of a defined group of academics or scholars:

1. Language use and articulation skill with regards to the language/s of the dominant Metropolitan North as well as the non-dominant South;

2. Research approach or design preferences (typically phenomenological qualitative/positivist quantitative and inferential/descriptive);
3. Choice of what to write about—and by implication what to study/research and over what period;
4. Commitment to seeing the *submission–reviewer–revision–resubmit* process through;
5. Commitment to high-impact scholarship as in targeting impactful scholarly outlets;
6. Familiarity with requirements of journals, awareness of potential outlets, and consideration of how to strategically spread and place one’s work for greatest reach and exposure;
7. Personal aims in publishing: publish for promotion, tenure, scholarly impact, or practitioner impact; or publishing to support teaching and learning (as in a focus on textbooks);
8. Types of writing projects: books, chapters, opinion/technical reports, or journal papers.

These attributes and areas of foci afford the deportment and mien of the scholar and inform how effectively their knowledge production efforts lead to impactful knowledge dissemination. The skills of the academic or scholarly consultant with regards to how to access outlets is critical in the KP process. As George (2012: 1023) notes:

in the absence of such experience, non-U.S. authors who aspire to publish in these pages are likely to find the ‘rules of the game’ opaque. ...When authors face this burden, their articles are more likely to be desk-rejected or rejected after review.

The frustration of rejection has been the making or unmaking of many an academic career. Posture represents the preparedness of the African actors to individually and collectively examine those aspects of their work which enable them to surface cogent representations of issues about/from different places in Africa for the world to see and take note. With reference to MOK, for example, many scholars have noted what seems to be a lack of research on management issues on the continent. The situation may not simply be a lack of research, but that African research has not been articulated in a fashion accessible to or accessed by non-African scholars. Breaking into global knowledge representations requires a posture of sustained dedication and engagement which goes beyond the immediate. Simply possessing ‘international data’ is not enough (George 2012). I present three ‘writing postures’ which I believe offer solutions to the problem.

Writing posture 1: What to research and methods to use

Academics and researchers who live and work in Africa (or have deep concerns for it but reside outside) have a responsibility and opportunity to carry out research and examine many of the issues, problems, and triumphs of institutions, businesses, and governments on the continent. We bear this responsibility and have these opportunities for several reasons:

1. Many students and practitioners often find themselves reading and referring to theories, cases, examples, and research executed outside Africa.
2. Many issues are as yet unexamined (George *et al.* 2016). There are many examples. For a twenty-year period (1990–2010), various governments in Ghana resorted to ‘Management Contracts’ or pursued the ‘Outsourced Management’ option as a solution to mal-performing state sector organisations in the utility, telecom, and airline sectors. What are the business, organisational, strategic, and other issues arising from outsourced management arrangements in Africa?
3. There are few—if any—documented histories of indigenous business in Africa; tracing of locally owned business, or accounts of how the demise of some came about; no examination of the nuances of pre- and post-colonial business and the entrepreneurial class, etc. *A History of Telecommunication Economics and MTN in Ghana* (‘MTN’ is the South African multinational Telco) has just been published (Agyeman-Duah 2020).
4. Research is needed to inform public policy, social reconstruction, and re-engineering efforts, and generally to provide relevant exemplars in the cognitive space of those who make decisions.

The above represent examples of *what* to research. Obviously, the matter of what to research would be significantly impacted by resource availability. Three points arise from this. Scholars and their institutional leaders need to leverage influence with governments and policymakers towards making funds available for the study of a range of issues. In addition, ‘grantsmanship’, or the skills for seeking out, applying for, and obtaining both national and international research grants, must be prioritised. Thirdly, through scholarly consulting—based on choice of KP mode—it may be possible for business firms, major institutions, and non-governmental organisations (‘not-for-profits’) to use their social responsibility agendas to support research.

But how is such research to be carried out? This raises the matter of methodology. I argue that the researcher in or from the African regions cannot allow themselves the luxury of debating the qualitative–quantitative divide, of choosing either a positivist or a phenomenological stance. Business, organisational, and policy research should confront the matters at hand using the most appropriate scientific tools with which to

observe, analyse, and synthesise events, practices, concepts, and models (West *et al.* 1992). Methodological sophistication must address the more fundamental question of relevance. This does not provide licence for shoddy research nor should it allow for equally shoddy writing. While seeking to obtain international respectability within one's field, the researcher needs to ask questions such as: Who will use the findings? How will they get to know about these findings? How will the discussed conclusions, policy recommendations, and/or future research directions contribute to institutional growth and national development? How does one resolve the tension between respectable, sophisticated science, and practical applicability?

Researchers need to address matters, such as scientific rigour, data integrity, sampling adequacy, and conceptual framing. Researchers need to make appropriate distinctions between exploratory research and research that tests established theories. We need to position our research both for the locale as well as for the international scene. These points speak to *how* research is to be carried out.

Writing posture 2: Language/presentation skill, high impact scholarship, and dissemination

To disrupt established thinking, one must gain access into its space, challenge its received wisdoms, and present alternatives. Carping from the side lines simply produces at best furtive glances at the 'troublemakers' and at worst open hostility. Anecdotal evidence suggests that research findings in many countries in Africa gather dust on obscure shelves. Alternatively, some scholars publish acclaimed research in world journals and gain reputation, yet their work has no bearing upon critical matters on the ground. The KP agenda requires that scholars work towards ensuring that their research, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are impactfully disseminated. By dissemination, I mean distributing, sharing, making available, generating discourse, diffusing, and spreading out our work. It is imperative that the writing posture of scholars interested in matters African should include a commitment to politically skilful high-impact scholarship.

In an editorial on 'Publishing in AMJ [*Academy of Management Journal*] for Non-US Authors', George (2012: 1026) notes a number of factors which hinder successful access to and publishing in the highly acclaimed AMJ by contributors who are non-US academics. He makes a telling statement:

The process of getting into well-established conversations requires that the non-US authors learn the language and rules of the game.

The 'problem' factors include poorly framed research questions against potential contribution, weak theory and mismatched methods, and presentation or manuscripts

that do not conform to style, language, and previous scholarly conversations in the subject matter. High-impact scholarship enters and influences global thinking; is surfaced in journals with repute which have a high impact factor and/or are hosted by impactful platforms (eg. Sage, Emerald, Taylor Francis; scientific/scholarly associations; known high-ranking international universities). To disrupt current thinking, scholarship in and from *the Africas* needs to proceed on the assumption that it must break into the high-impact domain and/or produce its own knowledge system that its people, constituents, and actors seek out and use.

Scholars in African countries need to pay attention to relevant audiences. I have five target audiences in mind.

1. *Students in Africa*: students must be exposed to articles, papers, concepts, and books published by faculty who teach them, who live among them, and with whom they share a common heritage. There is a KP synergy created when the topic for the week's lecture is informed or based on the lecturer's own research or applied work.
2. *Practitioners*: they are at the frontline of attempting to implement various theories and concepts through their managerial and professional practice—knowingly, deliberately, or otherwise. It is necessary to cultivate practitioners and make every effort to ensure that they have access to scholarly work but written in a form and in a language that is amenable to them.
3. *Policymakers and government*: often the lives and livelihoods of many are positively or negatively affected by the viability of policy decisions taken by people in government or in the public sector—such as regulators. We need to actively make inroads into the minds, thinking, and decision support systems of such officials. To do so, they must see our work, hear about our work, and find our analyses of issues to be both astute and suggestive of the fact that we are, indeed, on top of our field. They must find our recommendations and prescriptions relevant—even if they disagree with what we say or how we may have said it.
4. *The media*: the media can be positively and negatively vociferous. Increasingly, they set the public opinion agenda in many African countries. They do make efforts to 'educate' the public; it is necessary that we make available to the media summaries of our work, and actively encourage them to access colleagues in various specialist fields for informed comments on various matters. Such comment would be greatly helped where it draws on empirical research carried out within the region.
5. *International scholarly peers*: they comment on and often determine what is deemed sufficiently informative to be included in relevant journals and thereby influence the direction of the field. African scholars must understand and skill

themselves in the language required and the formats required. There is a paradox here, though. Frey (2003) and Singh *et al.* (2007) raise very serious and relevant concerns about the problem of ‘intellectual prostitution’ and the abdication of originality and value to the proxy of a journal as ‘top-tier’. The KP process by a resurgent Africa must walk a balanced line between high impact *and* relevance.

Writing posture 3: Personal aims and choice of KP mode

The challenges which confront individual academics and researchers in many African countries are enormous, often forcing academics to make private choices between career impact and personal financial survival. These challenges include poorly organised systems of research support; difficulties of access to organisations and research sites; lack of scholarly consulting skills; poor records and data management at public institutions/repositories—these may be government statistics, historical data, documentary evidence, and records. There are also tensions around research relevance, the international debate/publications, and the publish or perish mantra.

These challenges call for academics to make firm but evolving choices about how to construct their careers. With the drive to publish or perish, against the resource constraints noted above, many make understandable but ultimately inimical choices and sometimes publish ‘anything’ just as long as they obtain promotion or tenure. Little thought is therefore given to research projects and writing efforts which demand long-term involvements and deeper commitment to quality scholarship (which takes time). In addition, choices must be made between being an engaged scholar and being a disengaged academic who uses the academy only as a base for respectability.

The Nairobi Report (2009) published by the British Academy on UK–Africa research collaborations offers some twenty-two recommendations to enhance research collaboration as well as faculty capacity. At least six of the recommendations deal with mentoring, guidance, support, and assistance for faculty to enable them to make the appropriate career choices and access research excellence. One of the key thrusts of the report is its attention to the matter of consulting activity by academics in African countries. It is instructive that it notes the unfortunate tendency (which has been earlier alluded to in this article under research culture), for universities to consider consulting activity as time wasted or time taken away from research and scholarship. In considering the matter of writing posture, it is necessary to see the value that may come from scholarly consulting when academics take a holistic and ‘engaged scholar’ approach to their entire career and work. These issues are tractable. The writing posture is informed by the choice one makes. It is possible, for example, to adopt a Mode 1, 1.5, or Mode 2 career and then commit to driving the KP agendas

concomitant with the chosen mode. There is too much at stake for zero-sum sensibilities to characterise any part of the knowledge production enterprise.

Intentional and proactive agenda setting by academics

The knowledge producers of the West are organised. Whether through the coordination of academic research grants, support for policy-level surveys and projects, impact assessment reviews, efforts to drive new theories through the testing process, or the dissemination of philosophical and social organisation viewpoints, Western knowledge efforts have drivers, vehicles, and objects. The groundswell we see in the drive for resurgence of African MOK, for example, requires similar efforts of intentionality and agenda setting.

The groundswell

Over the last two decades, the management literatures have consistently raised the issue of Africa's marginalisation from mainstream scholarly conversations. Anyansi-Archibong (2001) wrote about African-oriented management theory. Zoogah (2008) examined studies on business in Africa and put forward thoughts towards further work. Walumbwa *et al.* (2011) used a special issue of the *Journal of Occupational and Organisational Psychology* to call for deep leadership research in Africa. Alcadipani *et al.* (2011) called for the surfacing of Southern voices in management thinking. Lituchy *et al.* (2013) published an edited book on *Management in Africa*. In that volume Zoogah & Nkomo (2013) raised the bar by pointing out rather starkly, how very sparse the African representation is in the MOK space. Walsh (2015) wrote on the complex and compelling character of Africa and alludes to various publications which suggest Africa is a rising frontier holding similar potential to China. Nkomo *et al.* (2015), Zoogah *et al.* (2015), and others suggest that the times are right for a more concerted effort at deepening and expanding management knowledge as it relates to Africa. In an evocative paper, George *et al.* (2016) refer to 'Bringing Africa In: Promising Directions for Management Research'.

Clearly, there are grounds for believing that many scholars see the need for and are committed to building an inclusive MOK base. Can this be done? How is it to be achieved? With such a groundswell of pointers, statements, references, evocations, and suggestions, one would be forgiven for thinking that it will only be a short time before African management thinking begins to intrude into the global space.

I have so far suggested in this article that there is work yet to be done to make such aspiration a reality. The work to be done is behavioural and institutional. At this point

I add yet another dimension. I suggest that scientific associations in and out of Africa need to become intentional and proactive, and set the agenda. This call for intentionality is not without reason. Walumbwa *et al.* (2011) suggested an ‘aggressive’ nine-point scholarly agenda. That was in 2011. Ten years ago. It is unclear how much has been achieved from that call and its agenda. It seems there is the need to move the matter beyond open suasion to expectations placed before professional bodies.

Scholarly associations and the agenda to disrupt, infuse, and diffuse

There are at least three major management scholarly associations concerned with African issues. These are Academy of African Business and Development (AABD), Africa Academy of Management (AFAM), and the Africa Research Group (ARG). There are likely to be many others.

A close reading of the issues raised in many of the MOK papers that constitute the groundswell referred to above, suggest there are several focal issues around which much of the thinking coalesces. These include:

1. Leadership issues;
2. Human resource and workforce issues;
3. Governance, institutional, regulatory, and policy issues;
4. Business environment, entrepreneurs, regional integration, and trade;
5. Organisational effectiveness;
6. Political, philosophical, and socio-economic history and impacts;
7. Socio-cultural reality, past, present, and future;
8. Unique challenges and related issues;
9. Challenge of current theory and MOK;
10. Sectoral concerns: education, health, agriculture, etc.

These issues require systematic attention. Below, I recommend seven specific courses of action by scholars and their associations.

Large broad research projects

Each association should set up large multi/cross-national (Africa-wide if possible) research projects on some of the areas noted above. These projects should be large and span a few years, and draw in scholars from across the continent. One is thinking here of MoW-like (Meaning of Work) and GLOBE-like (Global Leadership and Organisational Behaviour Effectiveness) projects.

Publishing agendas

Each association should commit to agendas to publish members' work in a coordinated, consistent fashion through papers, working papers, and books. Ideally, these should be based on the large projects chosen.

Synchronisation projects

Each association should offer a literature synchronisation project to mid-career scholars to review, challenge, dispute/disrupt, and synchronise various global and African literatures and theoretical formulations in chosen areas. The intention would be to identify and formulate areas of convergence and divergence; explore synergy; and proffer clear Afrocentric prospects where such are supported by the reviews executed.

Conference meetings for reporting progress

Each annual or biennial conference of the associations must have a component of the conference focused on reporting research and writing progress in the chosen areas. For example, if AFAM chooses to explore business history, employee motivation, or regional integration as its large or broad research project/s, each meeting should bring researchers working on the project together for update, discussion, and reporting. The publishing agendas would then pick on those projects that are ready for various levels and types of scholarly publication and choreograph these towards international presentation.

I contend that, if each association were to commit to such intentional agendas, African scholarship in the MOK area would more than likely intrude on the world scene in an irreversible manner. There is yet one more area of intentionality to consider.

Journal content and structure

The scholarly associations each have journals. For example, AABD has *Journal of African Business*, and AFAM has *Africa Journal of Management*. It seems the time is right to ask these and other journals on the continent to look carefully at some of the ideas offered by Frey (2003) in order to enhance originality and perhaps avoid the accusation of simply following the established practices of Western-dominant journals. It is also suggested that editors and scholars avoid the dangers that Singh *et al.* (2007) refer to. Our efforts at producing impactful and relevant knowledge must

not lead to the situation where scholars produce dry, context-stripped, but sophisticated papers which receive acclaim but are out of touch with African realities. To aid these thoughts, a commitment to three content areas additional to the regular sections of our journals are suggested. These are set out below.

Topical editorials

At the instance of the editor, the editorial board, or their nominee, topical editorials should be published which seek to highlight ongoing topical issues in academe or African society/countries. The editorial will seek to infuse a decidedly intellectual consideration of the matter. Topical editorials tend to be instructive; paradigm challenging, and are often quoted—given that editors tend to be respected members of the scholarly community who *‘must or do know what they are talking about’*.

Practitioner viewpoint paper

Properly reviewed for form and content, this may not have the status of a peer-reviewed paper and practising academics may not write practitioner papers. These should be the preserve of practitioners. The aim is to give written voice to practitioner issues and surface matters of application. This should encourage the practising community to read our journals and foster Modes 1.5, 2, and 3 KP.

Peer-reviewed teaching case

These must be peer reviewed and must be written with a technical note and a teaching note. Cases have been increasingly used as teaching material and an andragogic tool especially in business schools where faculty attempt to bring the reality of business situations into the classroom and to the minds and thinking of students. Harvard Business School, INSEAD, and others in South Africa have championed case teaching. Christensen, Garvin, and Sweet (1991) have written a useful book on discussion-teaching or teaching through discussions. The Association of African Business Schools has over the years promoted the use of cases on the continent. Anecdotally, however, case teaching is dogged by some challenges:

1. Erroneously, it is thought that cases can be developed without empirical background research, and many cases in use in Africa are of instances from outside the continent.
2. Case writing is difficult and can be an expensive process. When good cases are written, the time investment for faculty does not seem to bear fruit where it matters

most: counting towards promotion (as with peer-reviewed papers). This is because there are few quality journals which publish cases.

Where cases are written from empirical/interventionist research, have both teaching and technical notes, and have been peer reviewed, they should count as papers. The technical note sets out the conceptual and theoretical issues that the case wishes to teach or address. The teaching note summaries the case, sets out its teaching aims, points the instructor in relevant andragogic directions with respect to case nuances, provides some probing questions, and suggests the learning outcomes for students. *Africa Journal of Management (AJoM)* has certainly moved this agenda. The journal has introduced: *AJoM Research* (dedicated to high-quality research submissions), *AJoM Insights* (dedicated to unique grounded challenges from particular countries), and *AJoM Dialogue* (offering commentary and discussion on submissions that have appeared in previous issues of the journal).

A note on the country applicability of KP modes and the recommendations

Before concluding this article, it is necessary to touch briefly on the matter of potential variations in-country with respect to KP modes and possibility of uptake of some or any of the recommendations made in this article. It is unclear if there is research evidence ‘out there’ about how various countries and institutions deploy KP modes on the African continent. The main distinction that seems to dominate the discourses is that some universities are described as *research intensive*—a sort of ideal for all to aspire to. We have to accept that colonial histories have conspired to create different systems of higher education (HE) in francophone, anglophone, and lusophone countries. In addition, the HE processes gathered momentum at different times during the colonial period. It is difficult to proffer prescriptions as to how different countries may or should adopt the prospects advanced in this article. However, it is expected that the broad considerations articulated here offer enough options for different scholars in different countries to identify those modes, structural changes, and behavioural and systemic advancements necessary to prosecute a consistent and enduring KP agenda.

The recommendations advanced in this article coming together in this form are novel. However, the conceptual base and the matters of principle which underlie those arguments are not new. What is needed now is action on these recommendations.

Conclusions

Knowledge production and the scholarly dissemination arising therefrom are an art that enables the scholar to deliver the material to the ‘heart’ of the reader. Produced knowledge must mean something to the consumer of the knowledge delivered. Knowledge production is a science that enables the producer to deliver the material to the mind and cognition of the consumer. It must in fact and in perception be rigorous, grounded, and sound. Finally, knowledge production is a professional process that enables the producer to galvanise cognition, affect, and behaviour towards execution. It must be sufficiently relevant as to engender action and so affect the context as to be seen as a worthwhile effort.

This article has attempted to deal with the issue of reversing the poor showing of *the Africas* in knowledge production by focusing on the behavioural dimension. A few concluding points are in order.

First, the contested, challenged, and colonialised knowledge space within many African regions and countries requires that scholars have to break down walls and commit to collaborative and joint knowledge production (van Buuren & Edelenbos 2004, Hoekmann *et al.* 2009). Policymakers, governments, research institutions, universities, and academics need to think through, and increasingly search out, mechanisms by which to co-create, co-share, and co-validate. This is important given the numerous opportunities for collecting and validating data through policy interventions.

Second, knowledge has economic value and there is increasingly a market for knowledge and a scientific entrepreneurship (Antonelli 1999) which in this digital age is perhaps fuelled through a dispersed and disaggregated knowledge ‘ownership’ by bloggers, app developers, digital companies, and village-based researchers engaged in participatory project appraisals and so on. Analysing the economics of knowledge production in the context of the behaviour of universities in the EU, Guena (1999: 13) notes that ‘Universities are socioeconomic organisations whose economic behaviour is influenced by external opportunities and constraints.’

The knowledge actors in *the Africas* need to wake up to the reality that, as long as the market and economic dimension of knowledge are not harnessed, much income is being lost. There are intellectual, utilitarian, pecuniary, and instrumental reasons why the resurgence of Africa in the knowledge process is a matter of economic survival.

Third, universities have an important place in the KP process. Godin & Gingrass (2000) and lately Maasen *et al.* (2019) stress the three legs of university existence: knowledge creation, transfer, and societal engagement. The focal place occupied by universities requires that governments in Africa that may be contemplating changes, new laws, and funding around universities should consider that the knowledge

economy and society are here to stay. Africa cannot afford a non-strategic short-term approach to the university sector.

I believe mechanisms for knowledge transfer (KT) within country which involve academics actively engaging society and sharing knowledge by ‘doing’ their science and profession should be promoted. I further hold that it is time for coordinated research on how KP is being done in different countries and regions within *the Africas* and how the supportive activity of KT is also being done. We need to have *some* answers to *some* burning questions and issues across sectors and organisational and institutional types/situations; and we need to negotiate the generally difficult terrain of access to data. In the end, we must be driven by the quest to seek out and understand the rudiments of our business, institutional, and governmental processes, and our existence ‘as-is’. From such empirical positions, we can proceed to dilate on institutional/organisational existence and business processes ‘as we think they ought to be’, or ‘as our science supports and recommends’.

Finally, from 500 years ago when Europe found that Africa could be used and exploited to further its ends, it did so—ultimately—through a series of carefully coordinated efforts in knowledge use, trade, religion, and military efforts. Africa was not ready. Africa has never really recovered. If African scholars are to claim a seat at the table or create their own table, it would be because scholarly efforts are coordinated, targeted, and deployed with the goal in mind and set within both political and economic policy agendas. Scholars in Africa may claim to have arrived at the desired point in knowledge production when both local and international researchers/advisors seek out their produced knowledge as a matter of course, as a first point of consideration about matters African, for ‘*until lions learn to read and write, tales of hunting will always glory the hunter*’.

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Inclusive education and knowledge production

Gender and knowledge production in institutions of higher learning: an African context

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Abstract: This study focuses on the factors that contribute to the low production of knowledge by women compared to men in terms of the number of research outputs and recommends ways of narrowing the gap. Literature suggests that the social construction of gender and the consequent different gender roles and responsibilities of women or men inform this social phenomenon. This is because the social construction of what it means to be a man and a woman subordinates and confines women to the private sphere and men to the public sphere. These patriarchal discourses and practices of private and public spaces shape women's roles in society, including their participation in the production of knowledge. A cross-sectional survey in Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Kenya shows that gender indeed impacts knowledge production. The study found that women had limited access to research grants, limited exposure to higher institutions of learning, and also had limited mentorship by men as there were few women who could play the mentorship role. The study recommends full support for women researchers by providing funding, creating mentoring units, commercialising research outputs, engaging in advocacy, and crafting and implementing affirmative policies that support their work. This has a net effect of increasing the participation of women in knowledge production and in the development of national and global economies.

Keywords: Knowledge production, gender, research outputs, patriarchy.

Introduction

Even though Africa is the second-largest continent after Asia, it contributes only between 1% and 2% of all research outputs (Hassan 2001, Sachs 2005, World Bank 2005). The development of knowledge for sustainable development has been one of Africa's pursuits since 2013. Africa's Agenda 2063 goal 6 states that the continent is striving for 'An Africa where development is people-driven, unleashing the potential of both women and youths' (African Union Commission 2015: 34). In spite of these pursuits, not much knowledge has been generated on gender gaps and how to address these gaps so as to attain sustainable development. Women continue to contribute less research output compared to their male counterparts. For Africa to achieve the goals of Vision 2063, there is, firstly, a need to nurture women's development potential from an early stage, because they face social-cultural constraints as they grow up and come up the educational systems. As they constitute half of the world's population, girls and women represent a resource waiting to be tapped for the socio-economic development of the world. The United Nations (UN) recognises gender equality as a fundamental human right, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the General Assembly in 1948 (UN 2015: 15). This is also in line with the Sustainable Development Goals numbers 4 and 5 which speak to Quality Education and Gender Equality, respectively. Secondly, women's ability to pursue education is constrained by lack of financial resources and support, as many parents in Africa have for a long time preferred to educate a boy child and not a girl child who will get married and not benefit the family. Women are often forced to depend on their male counterparts in decision-making from an early stage in the educational sector where they are often subordinated to men. This early subordination also means they face the possibility of gender-based violence by men from an early age. It has been observed that men in Sub-Saharan Africa reinforce their positions by abusing women through sexual and violent means (Stewart 2006). Africa therefore faces a huge challenge in implementing Agenda 2063 goals and the Sustainable Development Goals. Africa needs to scale-up the participation of women in knowledge production so that they can equally contribute to the socio-economic development of the continent and beyond. Therefore, this study sought to investigate the causes of gender gaps in knowledge production in institutions of higher learning with reference to Kenya, Malawi, and Zimbabwe.

Literature review

This study is informed by feminist literature. It seeks to understand how to attain gender equality between women and men in knowledge production in institutions of higher education globally as well as on the African continent with a specific focus on three countries: Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Malawi.

Theoretical framework

The study draws from Feminist Theory because of its focus on gender and unequal power relations between women and men and hence patriarchy. Feminist theories were developed around 1794 (Kolmar & Bartowski 2005). Feminist Theory further amplifies the conflict approach to scrutinise gender roles and inequalities and how this has perpetuated the superiority of men against women. It also informs the dynamics of men's dominance and women's subordination and how they are both reproduced through patriarchy. However, Minangkabau (2004) argues against this conflict model of gender relations and suggests that women and men in Indonesia and other parts of the world cooperate rather than compete at work. It is also noted that in the United States of America (USA), no job is regarded as feminine, as all people are equal regardless of gender and sex (Sanday 2004).

Feminism argues that patriarchy is instituted through structures that support men to positions of power, access, and control of income and other resources. This is supported by Pop (2016) who concluded that the patriarchal system in Romania continues to create gender disparities between women and men and that this has led to the notion of male supremacy over women and also contributes to unequal power relations between women and men. It is further argued that the reproduction of women's inferior roles in society makes it difficult to change the position of women, as it contributes to the perception of men as assertive and aggressive whilst women are perceived to be emotional, charming, and gentle. He also notes that there are gender gaps between women and men in terms of labour and wages, education, and access to resources, among other things. As an example, the author notes that, even though 60% of the university graduates in Romania were women, women constitute only 20% in the formal employment sector.

Gender disparities in higher education institutions (HEIs) is a global phenomenon (Davidson & Burke 2004, Airini *et al.* 2011). Morley (2005) affirms that very little is being done to promote the participation of women in knowledge production in institutions of higher learning globally. Knowledge production involves researching, practising, creating, analysing, and recording significant information that is used to

solve current and future challenges facing the world (Nketiah 2019). Some of the challenges that women researchers face pertain to lack of support from their universities and peers (Fathima *et al.* 2020). In this study, social exclusion refers to deprivation of research opportunities, lack of mentorship, limited chances of promotion, and limited chances to attend international conferences. The extent of social exclusion is well expressed by Fahmy and Young (2017), who note that most articles published in the *Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice* are dominated by male writers. Men also want to co-author and publish with fellow men, and this leaves women with no mentors and so they end up as solitary publishers (Fisher *et al.* 1998: 36). Traditionally, women also do not get support from their male counterparts or their employing institutions (Chen *et al.* 2006, Rice *et al.* 2007, Cohn *et al.* 2014). Since the Me Too movement, editors have been receiving a lot of criticism for publishing issues with mostly male authors. This negatively weighs on women, as scholarly work is critical for tenure and promotion in universities. Even though most countries have attained gender equality in primary education, a significant gender gap still exists at higher levels of education.

Even though there has been a general increase in the number of women who are enrolling for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes globally, they still have limited access to senior positions, as result of their subordinate role in society (O'Connor *et al.* 2015). Since women are expected to play their traditional gender roles in the family, it becomes difficult to balance work and family life. Due to women's gender roles in the family and society, they are stigmatised and not taken seriously in institutions of higher learning globally. Prozesky and Mouton (2019) argue that women and men face different challenges in their careers globally. Globally, women are mostly constrained by discrimination, funding, and mentorship. Papadópulos and Radakovich (2005) note that, because the space in higher education has traditionally been the preserve of men, this has made men excel and be integrated into society easily, while women are left behind in inferior traditional roles. Literature also suggests that there are few female researchers who register for PhD and masters programmes globally. This reduces the number of women who get employed and eventually get promoted to positions of authority and decision-making (Sax *et al.* 2002, Rice *et al.* 2007, Snell *et al.* 2009).

In terms of women and men's fields of study, men dominate in hard sciences while women dominate in the social sciences (Prozesky & Mouton 2019). This suggests gender stereotyping since there are areas that are perceived to be dominated and ring-fenced by men and difficult for women to penetrate and participate in. Funding also tends to favour hard sciences and also clearly highlights men's domination of hard sciences as opposed to women's domination in humanities and the social sciences.

Gender inequalities in African universities can be traced back to the colonial era when African male students were enrolled to serve the interests of the white elite while women looked after the family (Mama & Barnes 2007). Ronning (2000) notes that there is power imbalance in academia and proposes the democratisation of institutions of higher learning globally. Guzura (2012) suggests that women's limited participation in knowledge production should be viewed from a colonial context and this is further reinforced by patriarchy. In this regard, men have power in the areas of moral authority, political leadership, control of property, and social privileges. This has led to under-representation of women in institutions of higher learning in Africa and beyond. Even though women have to some extent been role models in areas of research and leadership in their institutions (Nketiah 2019), African women need to break the barriers associated with knowledge production processes in institutions of higher learning.

In Zimbabwe, women are still under-represented in positions of leadership in institutions of higher learning, though this is thirty-nine years after independence (Choruma 2019). Even though Zimbabwe made great strides in universalising education after independence, this has not completely addressed gender disparities. In Zimbabwe, harmful social norms and patriarchal practices create gender inequalities leading to the exclusion of women in leadership. Women in institutions of higher learning have been subjected to various forms of discrimination (Munando 2017). A study in Zimbabwe found that gender stereotypes constrained women from advancing to positions of leadership and this resulted in lack of confidence and low self-esteem (Chabaya *et al.* 2009). Women's role in the family is also a major constraint as it supersedes that at the workplace. More men occupy senior academic and administrative positions compared to women in Zimbabwe. Garwe (2015) found that, even though there is a legal framework to promote women, there is lack of political will to deal with gender-based violence in schools and institutions of higher learning by the government and this has cascaded into other sectors of the economy. She also notes that funders have withdrawn funding because the country is deemed an economic risk as a result of non-compliance with the agreed-upon rules on the use of funds.

Table 1 shows enrolments at universities in Zimbabwe by sex. Enrolments for women are higher at lower levels, but there are bottlenecks at postgraduate level. This is shown in Table 2, where no females completed their PhD studies in 2019. Numbers for female students start dropping at masters' programmes. This could be part of the gender educational trends that shape gender disparities in knowledge production in Zimbabwe.

In Kenya, women are under-represented in universities and there are very few of them in positions of authority (Odhiambo 2011). Only four vice-chancellors out of

Table 1. Enrolment at universities by sex of students, 2019.

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>% Share of women</i>
Africa University	1,161	1,380	2,541	54.31
Arrupe Jesuit University	91	7	98	7.14
Bindura University of Science Education	2,703	2,973	5,676	52.38
Catholic University in Zimbabwe	1,277	1,521	2,798	54.36
Chinhoyi University of Technology	5,267	4,742	10,009	47.38
Great Zimbabwe University	5,615	9,104	14,719	61.85
Gwanda State University	187	59	246	23.98
Harare Institute of Technology	1,107	716	1,823	39.28
Lupane State University	1,226	1,847	3,073	60.10
Manicaland State University of Applied Sciences	417	171	588	29.08
Maronera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology	120	73	193	37.82
Midlands State University	10,874	11,004	21,878	50.30
National University of Science and Technology	4,925	3,920	8,845	44.32
Reformed Church University	183	435	618	70.39
Solusi University	675	771	1,446	53.32
University of Zimbabwe	8,293	9,130	17,423	52.40
Women's University in Africa	653	2,530	3,183	79.48
Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University	64	985	1,049	93.90
Zimbabwe National Defense University	25	12	37	32.43
Zimbabwe Open University	6,672	8,769	15,441	56.79
Total	51,535	60,149	111,684	53.86

Source: Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development (2017).

Table 2. Distribution of population by highest level of education completed, in Zimbabwe in 2019.

<i>Level completed</i>	<i>Percent</i>			<i>Total</i>		
	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>
None	59.6	40.4	100	616,502	417,944	1,034,446
ECE	50.6	49.4	100	433,763	423,684	857,447
Primary	53.1	46.9	100	2,956,740	2,616,188	5,572,928
Vocational, National Foundation Certificate	51.1	48.9	100	9,999	9,554	19,553
Lower Secondary	52.6	47.4	100	2,493,028	2,246,422	4,739,450
Upper Secondary	40.8	59.2	100	98,197	142,601	240,798
Vocational Certificate	48.7	51.3	100	46,941	49,380	96,321
Vocational/Apprenticeship/Teacher Training	59.7	40.3	100	79,354	53,512	132,866
Tertiary-Short Cycle	51.7	48.3	100	70,325	65,674	135,999
Tertiary-Higher National Diploma/Bachelor/ Bachelor Honours	47.7	52.3	100	98,749	108,242	206,991
Tertiary-Masters/Doctoral Medical Courses	45.1	54.9	100	19,127	23,303	42,430
Doctorate	0.0	100.0	100	0	998	998
Not known	42.5	57.5	100	755	1,021	1,776
Level not known	0.0	100.0	100	0	347	347
Total	52.9	47.1	100	6,923,483	6,158,870	13,082,353

Source: Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (2018).

Table 3. Enrolment in public and private universities by gender and academic level (2016/2017).

Enrolment Programme	Public universities		Private universities		Total enrolment	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
PhD	5,449	2,923	698	507	6,147	3,430
Masters	27,952	20,815	5,037	4,417	32,989	25,232
Bachelors	233,882	167,045	39,969	37,522	273,851	204,567
PGD	491	399	129	81	620	480
Total	267,774	191,182	45,833	42,527	313,607	233,709

Source: Commission for University Education (2018).

sixty-two at the time of the study were female. It is also important to note that, even though women researchers are under-represented globally, Kenya was found to be far less representative (Morley 2010). Akala (2019) avers that, even though there are progressive policies in Kenya on equality and equity in higher education, gender inequalities still persist. This has resulted in Kenyan women being relegated to the peripheries of power for decades. This is attributed to lack of opportunities and inferior education for women. This has affected the number of women who become researchers in institutions of higher learning and take up positions of authority. Limited enrolment is one of the many factors that contribute to women's limited occupation of leadership positions (NACOSTI 2014). It is observed that at all levels (bachelors, postgraduate diploma, masters, and PhD) there were more male students than female students across all the academic levels, as shown in Table 3.

In Malawi, there is little documented information on gender and research in higher institutions of learning. However, statistics show that only around 6% of girls proceed to high school, meaning that those who progress to university are even fewer, leading to their under-representation in all sectors (Commission for University Education 2018). Gender-based violence on women in Malawi is reported to be perpetuated at primary, secondary, and university levels (Bisika *et al.* 2009). Literature gathered on Zimbabwe, Kenya, and Malawi notes that women have not been successful in reaching senior positions in academia as a result of gender discrimination.

The following section outlines the objectives of the study and methodology that was used.

Research objectives

Main objective

To investigate the causes of the gender gaps in knowledge production in institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe, Kenya, and Malawi.

Specific objectives

1. To analyse the levels of research outputs by sex in institutions of higher learning;
2. To identify practices and discourses affecting women in the production of knowledge in institutions of higher learning;
3. To analyse gender-related challenges affecting the production of knowledge in institutions of higher learning;
4. In light of the study's findings, to make recommendations to governments, institutions of higher learning, and researchers across Africa and beyond on how participation in the production of knowledge by women can be enhanced.

Methodology

A case study approach was taken focusing on institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Kenya. The rationale for choosing the three countries was for comparison purposes to examine context-specific data from each country and to draw conclusions. The study was carried out from April 2020 to June 2020. Questionnaires were distributed electronically to both private and public institutions of higher learning in the three countries. The survey asked a mixture of closed and open questions. The open questions offered the respondents the opportunity to provide further comments. Eleven questions were formulated from the objectives of the study (Table 4). The objective was not to get high response rates but to involve individuals who represented the population of interest. In this study, the population was researchers in institutions of higher learning, both female and male. In the context of this study, institutions of higher learning refers to universities and colleges offering degrees. Purposive sampling was applied, targeting individuals who met the following criteria:

1. more than five years' research and teaching experience in an institution of higher learning;
2. a degree in any discipline; and
3. appreciation of gender-related issues.

The findings of this study can be generalised by inference, since challenges in the three countries were found to be similar, even though they varied in magnitude. Data was presented and analysed following the sequence of the objectives.

Table 4. The following research questions were developed to address the objectives of this study. Responses were requested to provide further comments on specific questions.

-
1. Gender: male female rather not say
 2. Age group
18–30 31–40 41–50 above 50
 3. Title _____
 4. Level of education
Bachelor's degree Master's degree Doctorate/PhD
 5. Work experience?
Less than 1 year 2–4 years 5–8 years more than 8 years
 6. Position _____
 7. Which of the following gender-related challenges are affecting you as a researcher? Comment on your response.
Violence
Social and economic exclusion
Exploitation
Gender discrimination
 8. Which of the following gender-related practices and discourses are affecting you as researcher?
Power relations
Social justice
Collaborations
Governance
Leadership
Religious and cultural practices
 9. Which types of research outputs have you produced?
Referred journal articles
Published conference proceedings
Presentations at conferences
Commissioned reports
Book chapters
Book/s
Patents/trademarks
 10. Specify any other challenges
 11. Provide any recommendations/solutions/comments to the identified challenges
-

Findings and discussion

This section presents and discusses the findings of the study in relation to the literature. Table 5 shows the response rates by country, where Malawi had the highest response rate followed by Zimbabwe and Kenya, respectively. The response rate for this study was 37%, which is plausible since the acceptable response rate for online surveys is 2%. The response rate in the three countries could have been affected by the restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the intended respondents

Table 5. Responses by country by sex.

<i>Country</i>	<i>Questionnaires administered</i>	<i>Male responses (%)</i>	<i>Female responses (%)</i>	<i>Responses rate as percentage (%)</i>
Kenya	50	14	10	24
Malawi	50	34	16	50
Zimbabwe	50	28	10	38
Total	150	25	12	37

Source: authors.

could have had challenges related to internet accessibility and connectivity, which they could only access when they were at their workplaces. In a normal environment, the response rate could have been higher.

What can be drawn from the three countries is that there were more male respondents than female respondents, showing a gap in gender. This could imply that there were more males employed in the institutions of higher learning compared to females. This could be an indication of the gender inequalities that still exist in institutions of higher learning in the three countries and beyond. This is to some extent confirmation of the belief of Feminist Theory that patriarchy means that men continue to overshadow women in institutions of higher learning.

Age group and gender distribution

Figure 1 demonstrates the distribution of respondents' age groups, with overall dominance of both males and females in the 31–40 age group (25% for males and 21% for females). There were more male respondents (11%) who were more than 50 years-old compared to females (7%).

Most of the respondents were youthful and so they still had time to contribute to the socio-economic development of their countries and beyond through research, provided they got the necessary support from their employers and peers. In view of this, there is a need to support this young generation of male and female researchers so that they can realise their full potential. This still productive age group is supported by Africa's Agenda 2063, which is calling for their full participation in developing their economies through knowledge production (African Union Commission 2015).

Level of education

Figure 2 demonstrates the respondents' levels of education, which is particularly centred on masters' degrees with male respondents dominating both the masters and PhD/doctorate levels. It was noted that those who were in the 41–50 age group or the

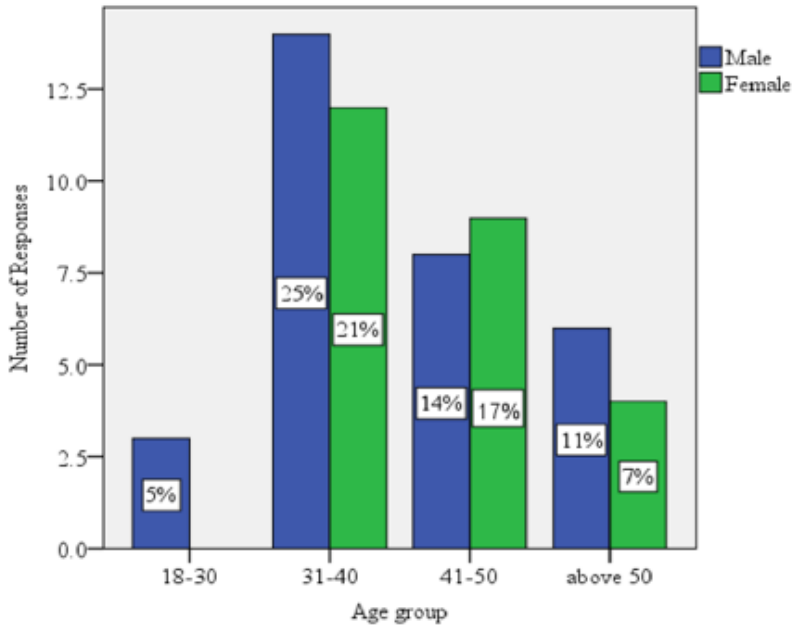


Figure 1. Gender distribution.

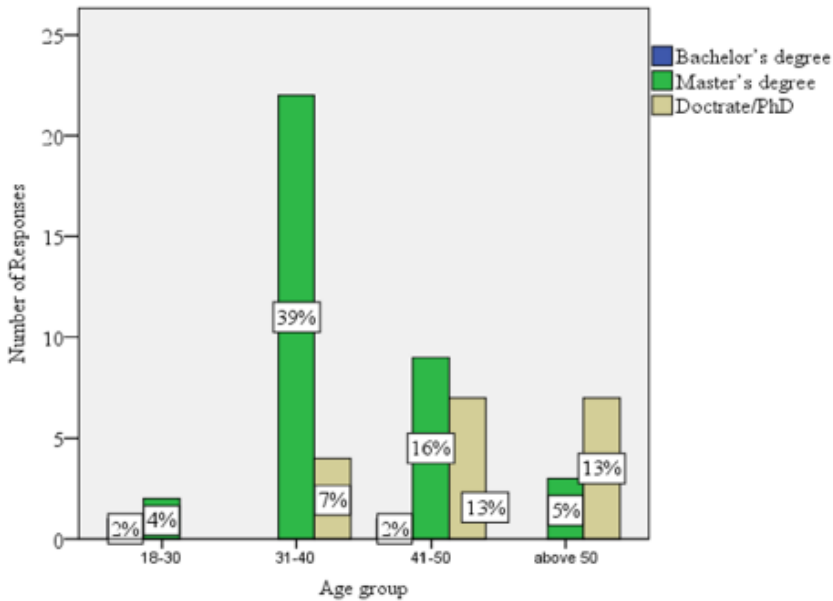


Figure 2. Level of education.

50 and above age group had the highest number of PhDs for both females and males, standing at 26%. Those in the age group 31–40 had the highest number of masters' degrees (64%).

This could mean that the chances of acquiring PhD/doctorate degrees for those in the 30–40 age group were still high, considering their youth. It is also clear from a comparison of Figures 1 and 2 that there were more male respondents with PhDs compared to their female counterparts and this could also explain the disparities between genders in terms of opportunities and access to higher education and positions of authority. There may be various reasons for the gender and age difference in PhDs. Even though various African universities have in recent years made a conscious effort to increase the number of staff with PhDs and have offered them opportunities to acquire one and international donors have offered support for staff to acquire PhDs, it is possible that in the selection of staff for PhD support, gender played a role. The findings of this study confirm the persistence of feminism and patriarchy in institutions of higher learning, as alluded to by Guzura (2012) in study that was carried out in Zimbabwe. This leads to women's limited participation in knowledge production. In this regard, men have power in the areas of moral authority, political leadership, control of property, and social privileges. This has led to under-representation of women in institutions of higher learning in Africa and beyond

How gender-related challenges are affecting researchers

This section presents and discusses gender-related challenges affecting researchers.

Gender-based violence

On gender-based violence, 75% of female respondents indicated that they were affected by gender-based violence and 18% of male respondents reported the same, whilst 7% remained neutral. The forms of violence that were mentioned by the respondents were sexual harassment, verbal abuse, and bullying.

It is important to acknowledge that gender-based violence against women in and around educational settings is a global phenomenon, and this is supported by Feminist Theory and the findings of this study. This is also supported by Airini *et al.* (2011) and Davidson & Burke (2004). Even though there are progressive policies in the countries under study, gender-based violence still persists. Rampant gender-based violence in institutions of higher learning could lead to deprivation of opportunities for female researchers. Patriarchy has led to an unequal power balance between females and males in institutions of higher learning and this could be leading to gender-based violence (Pop 2016). This could also be based on sexuality, gender identities, and sex.

As long as there is a lack of political will to address gender-based violence through practical policy implementation, women will remain downtrodden. This is also supported by Munando (2017; see also Chabaya *et al.* 2009) who found that women in institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe have been subjected to various forms of discrimination, such as gender stereotypes, thereby constraining them from advancing to positions of leadership which resulted in lack of confidence and low self-esteem. In order for governments and institutions of higher learning to achieve their goal of equality and equity in institutions of higher learning, they should observe the tenets of Africa's Vision 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals numbers 4 and 5 which speak to quality education and gender equality. These advocate for the recognition and support of women researchers in contributing towards the development of their economies across the continent and beyond.

Social and economic exclusion

Women in all three countries were found to be affected the same way in socio-economic activities in their places of work. In this study, social exclusion refers to discrimination against women in participating in social programmes and activities as a result of gender, social identity, or sexuality. On the other hand, economic exclusion refers to the denial of resources to women that would allow them to grow professionally and assume positions of responsibility and power resulting in financial benefits. More female respondents (67%) were socially and economically excluded compared to male respondents (25%). Only eight (8%) remained neutral. Only 2% of women researchers indicated that they had an opportunity to attend regional and international conferences and workshops. Female researchers in Kenya and Malawi also complained about heavy workloads to the extent that they had little time to engage in research. It was also noted that women researchers in Zimbabwe had equal workloads to their male counterparts, but still remained socially and economically excluded from most important projects and programmes.

Even though universities could be providing resources for research, it could be that gender is playing a part in their distribution. Gender could also be playing a part when it came to nominations of who should attend conferences or workshops that required funding and institutional support. This is seen to be perpetuating the patriarchal system which still has a strong grip in institutions of higher learning in the three countries, since very few women indicated that they had the opportunity to attend regional and international workshops and conferences. Since women were given inferior roles and heavier workloads, they had less chance to do private consultancy alongside their academic work, denying them extra income and recognition. This also included limited chances of getting funding or personal financial resources

to attend regional and international conferences and workshops. Even though the issue of gender inequalities cannot be generalised in patriarchal societies, like the ones under study and beyond, men and women do not always benefit equally from economic resources. The subordination of women has even cascaded into the workplace where men are given preferential treatment. Traditionally, HEIs have been the preserve of men and this has perpetuated the reproduction of gender inequalities, leading to social and economic exclusion (Papadópolos & Radakovich 2005). Patriarchal structures and ideologies, the discursive and material contexts of people's lives, and the extent to which women are emancipated or subordinated in their societies, influence whether development initiatives will differentially advantage women or men. These factors, however, are particularly difficult to assess in Africa since countries have different social and cultural backgrounds. Social exclusion was observed to be in the form of discrimination by ethnicity and gender in Kenya and this affected women's participation in knowledge production. In Zimbabwe and Malawi social exclusion was not related to ethnicity but to gender in general. This perception of women can also affect their access to research funding and mentorship by their male counterparts and superiors who make decisions on these matters. The findings of this study concur with those of Pop (2016) who found similar challenges among women in Romania, and was found to be the case in Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Kenya and possibly across Africa and beyond. It is perceived that patriarchy is the dominant socio-cultural regime throughout Africa and this finding is supported by Feminist Theory and the findings of this study. The limited participation of women in knowledge production could be because of their limited access to education and related resources. It is, therefore, critical for governments and institutions of higher learning to advocate for legislation and policies that empower women in education and their participation in socio-economic activities. The promotion of innovation and research outputs by women could advance their standing, enabling them to play critical roles in the economic development of their economies through their research outputs. This is because most progressive economies are a result of innovations which are a product of research. Depending on the nature of research outputs, some of them can be commercialised, leading to industrialisation and employment. This is how economies are grown, because research is used to find solutions to current and future problems. The socio-economic exclusion of women researchers in knowledge production also affects their participation in development.

Gender discrimination

Gender discrimination in this study refers to the treatment of people based on their gender, sex, or sexuality. Of the respondents who were women 84% were facing gender

discrimination; 11% of male respondents were not affected by gender discrimination whilst 5% of male respondents remained neutral. Sexual harassment, implicit bias, and sexism were mentioned as forms of discrimination affecting women researchers. This was said to be mostly from their male counterparts who happened to be in positions of authority. However, in Malawi, it was noted that gender discrimination occurred at every level. Even junior male academic and administrative staff were found to be perpetrating gender discrimination against female employees. In Zimbabwe, even though it is practised, it was found to be silent. Female respondents indicated that such remarks and behaviours were damaging and retrogressive. This was reported to be negative and diminished confidence in women researchers. In Kenya gender discrimination was along the lines of ethnicity. Women researchers in Zimbabwe called for proportional representation in all positions of authority. It was also highlighted that the few women researchers were grooming other women to assume leadership positions.

The presence of high levels of gender discrimination in the three countries under study was worrisome. It calls for immediate action so that there is gender equality and equity. Implicit bias is a form of stereotyping concerning the perceived role of women, in this case their subordinate role in society (Odhiambo 2011). It could be that their male counterparts were soliciting for sexual favours when female researchers requested assistance with their research work. Gender discrimination was found to be an impediment to the participation of women in knowledge production in the countries under study. While this study is not global in nature as it was confined to Zimbabwe, Kenya, and Malawi, the findings concur with those of Airini *et al.* (2011) and Davidson and Burke (2004) that gender discrimination is a global phenomenon. Odhiambo (2011) also added his voice by indicating that women in Kenya were under-represented in institutions of higher learning to the extent that there were very few of them in positions of authority in academia. Morley (2005) affirms that very little was being done to promote the participation of women in institutions of higher learning in Africa and beyond. Gender discrimination can manifest in many forms: for instance, limited access to resources, opportunities, and assignment to inferior roles like teaching and supervising in undergraduate programmes. This can also lead to limited access to resources and mentorship. Gender discrimination is the worst impediment to the progress of female researchers in Africa and beyond.

Exploitation

Of female respondents 72% were being exploited in one way or another and 9% of male respondents reported the same, whilst 11% remained neutral. In this study, exploitation refers to the act of treating people unfairly or using resources in order to

benefit an individual at the expense of another person. Women researchers indicated that they were given inferior roles in their departments, such as teaching and supervising bachelors' programmes and to a lesser extent masters' programmes. It was noted that only 2% women were supervising PhDs and 5% were supervising masters' students and the larger chunk of PhD supervision was for men. When it came to resources, female researchers indicated that they were only given opportunities to attend local seminars and conferences, yet their male counterparts participated in international conferences. It was noted that research funds and other resources were controlled mostly by male researchers and they determined their allocation as well. It was found that some female respondents complained about heavy workloads, leaving them with little or no time to do research. This is also linked to economic and social exclusion whereby they had very few opportunities to be involved in research, access to research funds, or opportunities to be mentored. Since few of them were involved in research, this also affected their attendance at regional and international conferences.

The findings of this study are in agreement with those of Papadópulos and Radakovich (2005), who note that traditionally, space in higher education has been the preserve of men and this has propelled their successful integration into society, leaving women in their traditional roles of looking after the family and engaged in inferior roles. Ronning (2000) confirms this as he argues that the main issue is about power imbalance in academia, which is in favour of men as a result of the socialisation process. The democratisation of institutions of higher learning could alleviate the gender-related challenges that girls and women face with respect to educational attainment. Guzura (2012) suggests that the lesser participation of women in knowledge production should be viewed from a colonial context where opportunities were almost non-existent for women in Africa and other parts of the world before independence.

Practices and discourses are affecting researchers

Figure 3 depicts practices and discourses that are affecting researchers, particularly women. The study noted that there were cross-cutting issues affecting researchers in institutions of higher learning in the three countries. Women were found to be more affected because of their subordinate roles and their undervalued positions in society as a result of the patriarchal systems that are still prevalent in Africa and beyond. They were given heavier workloads compared to their male counterparts.

Women were also found to have limited freedom and participation in research, and this obviously affected their research outputs, reducing their chances of participating in the development of their economies. Limited access to research funding was

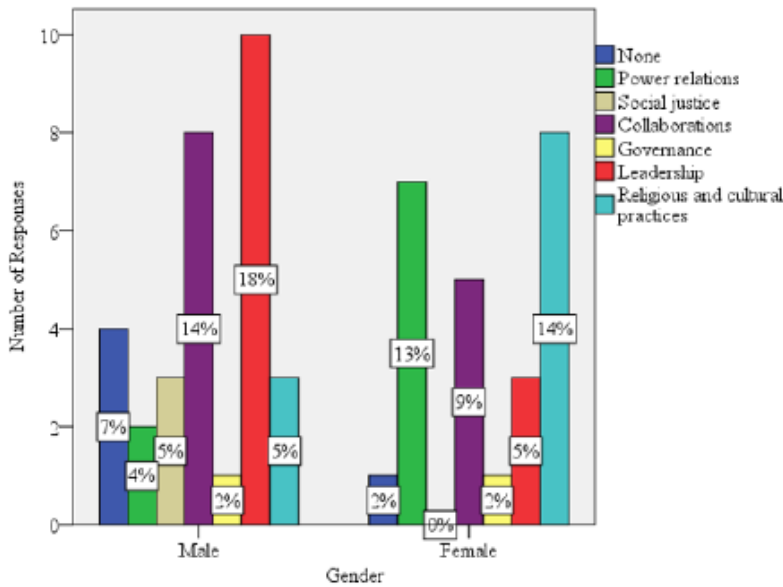


Figure 3. Practices and discourse affecting researchers.

found to be affecting their research outputs as well. It was noted that men made most decisions since they were in positions of power, yet women were involved in productive tasks that cater for the family. What strongly came out of Zimbabwe was that research was not rewarding at all and funding was virtually non-existent. In Malawi and Kenya it was noted that research funds were available for those who could produce good grant proposals. It could also be that women researchers were lacking in this area which was found to be male dominated. Most of the research that was being done by both male and female researchers was self-funded and this presented serious challenges. It was found that men would take decisions to spend part of their salary on research while women would perhaps regard their salary as part of the family income and not wish to spend that on research. It was noted that in Zimbabwe the government and institutions of higher learning were promoting girl children and women in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). In Malawi and Kenya it was the survival of the fittest which left women exposed.

Gender inequality in higher education has manifested itself in areas of specialisation which are regarded as being for men or for women, leading them to particular careers. This could be as a result of societal and cultural factors resulting in the classification of careers and areas of study as female or male. Society holds the belief that boys do better in school than girls. In some cases, subjects could be assigned by gender identity and this could be perpetuating male dominance. This supports the proponents of

Feminist Theory. In Zimbabwe patriarchy is still being practised in some parts of the country giving less space to women (Sanday 2002). The findings of this study are not in line with Africa's Agenda 2063 (African Union Commission 2015) which seeks to tap into the potential of women to aid Africa's development. This means that the African continent needs to do much more to promote female academics in the area of research, through funding and other initiatives.

Leadership was found to be affecting female respondents more (58%) than male respondents (5%). This was in terms of leadership roles and authority. Some of the respondents indicated that their male bosses asked for sexual favours in return for promotion or other rewards. Further to that, women were found to be most affected by religious and cultural practices (67%). Of female respondents 63% were found to be affected by power relations compared to 4% of male respondents. However, it was noted that 9% of the respondents indicated that they were not affected in any way. Most female employees (78%) indicated that their research outputs were not being used to develop their economies. This could be attributed to cultural beliefs in which women's work is not taken seriously.

It is a major concern that gender practices and discourses were not being taken seriously by different societies, as it was found to be affecting women researchers most. The findings of this study support the ideology of Feminist Theory whereby women's views and contributions are marginalised or silenced, since they are regarded as inferior. Gender norms are beliefs that are held based on gender differences. These are connected with power relations, gender roles, and standards that govern human behaviours and practices in a particular social context and at a particular time. This is about how men and women are expected to behave. What is important is to note that gender norms are hierarchical and create space in favour of men. This thinking has resulted in the subordination of women and still continues to do so, as evidenced by the findings of this study. Traditional gender roles emanating from the family home are a major impediment for the advancement of women researchers, since they inform their career paths. It is also clear that gender beliefs are shown in men's and women's short and long-term goals, social identities, and anticipated future social and economic roles. This can also affect both their occupational and educational choices. In order to achieve gender equality in institutions of education, there is a need to address these norms which are retrogressive to the development of women.

This can also be attributed to how gender norms, cultural values, ideas, and values shape institutions and the family. Men have strategically placed themselves in positions of authority and power and they continue to preserve that. The findings of this study concur with those of Fahmy and Young (2017) who notes that most articles published in the *Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice* were dominated by male writers and there were a few collaborations with female researchers. This is an

indication that women still trail behind in terms of knowledge production due to a number of challenges militating against them, which means they cannot equally contribute towards the socio-economic development of their countries. This is because of men's cultural and religious beliefs. This area becomes critical as it shows how gender norms and values shape institutions, including the family. In order to achieve gender equality, this means addressing these norms and values. This may call for policy interventions from governments and higher education institutions.

It is clear from the findings of this study that institutions of higher learning and governments in the three countries were not doing enough to address gender gaps in knowledge production by failing to fund research and support women researchers. They are also failing to address most of the issues affecting women researchers. Even though some female researchers had published some work, Prozesky and Mouton (2019) insist that gender gaps in knowledge production still persist.

Types of research outputs

Figure 4 shows the types of research outputs in which both male and female researchers were participating. It was noted that women researchers were doing equally well compared to their male counterparts in terms of publishing in refereed journals, standing at 22% each. However, it was found that most of these female researchers were partnering male researchers who in most cases proposed areas of research and provided funding. Men were doing well by publishing in conference proceedings (17%) compared to female researchers (11%), meaning that more male researchers attended and participated in international conferences compared to their female counterparts. What was encouraging was that women outpaced men in commissioned reports, presentations, and book chapters. Neither male nor female respondents had registered patents.

It should be noted that where women participated most it did not benefit them much because these formats are less prestigious than having an article published in a well-known refereed journal. No female researchers in this study had produced a book, whilst 1% of male researchers had done so. The findings of this study concur with those of Pop (2016) who found that women in Romania still constitute a small number in employment and in occupying positions of authority in academia. This is the case in Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Kenya and beyond, as evidenced by the research findings. Although there were some research outputs for women, there was no evidence as to how these were supporting economic development.

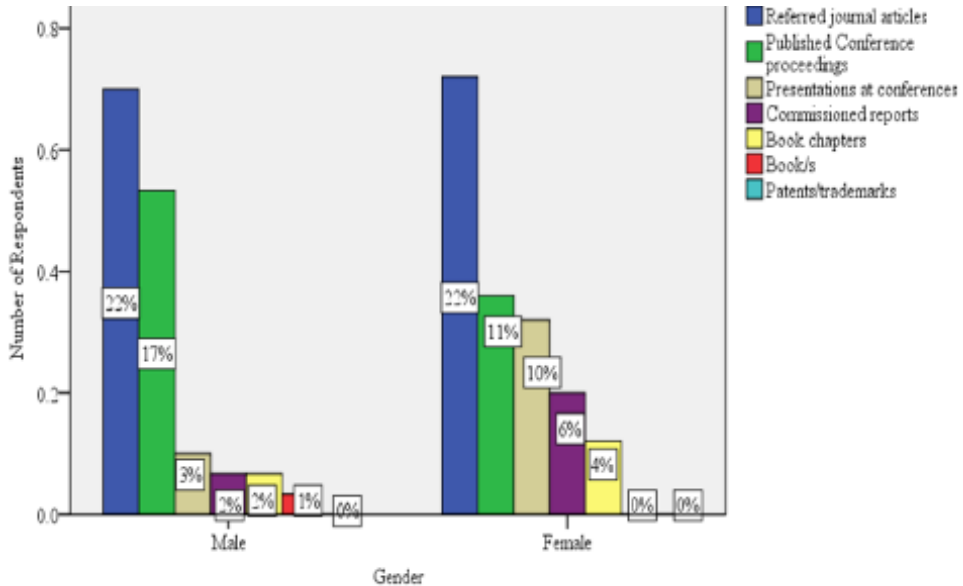


Figure 4. Research outputs by gender.

Recommendations

Since gender inequalities were found to be affecting female researchers more than their male counterparts, it is recommended that governments and institutions of higher learning enact and implement policies that advance the interests of female researchers. In terms of dealing with the challenges cited, creating communities of researchers for women is important. This could assist in sharpening their skills so that they can fully participate in research, leading to economic development. Supporting the work of female researchers through funding and mentorship is important. In order to address these gender gaps, there should be a shift to all-inclusive gender-receptive approaches that would move beyond simply enabling women's access to HEIs to issues affecting women's ability to fully participate and perform within these institutions. Since women are faced with a plethora of challenges, there is a need to make sure that they can participate equally in knowledge production. Women should be engaged in research that is directed at national development by creating value in order to remain competitive on the global market. These research outputs can also be used to inform government and institutional policies. Depending on the nature of the research, some of the outputs can be commercialised. In light of the findings of this study, this could be the opportunity to promote innovations from women so that development is fully realised. There is a need to conduct research on the relationship between gender and workforce productivity in institutions of higher learning.

Conclusion

Female researchers in Kenya, Malawi, and Zimbabwe were found to be facing similar challenges, notably: lack of funding; gender discrimination; lack of mentorship for female researchers and lack of collaboration with male researchers. However, social and economic exclusions were also affecting female researchers more than their male counterparts and this was found to be affecting their participation in socio-economic development. Gender discrimination was found to be rooted in cultural beliefs, norms, and values in Zimbabwe, Kenya, and Malawi. In Malawi sexual harassment and gender discrimination were found to start at primary level and few female students progressed to secondary education, thereby affecting those who proceeded to university. Researchers in Kenya and Malawi complained about heavy workloads, yet in Zimbabwe workloads were found to be the same for both men and women. Zimbabwe had higher percentages of female students at undergraduate level, but the numbers dwindled at higher levels. For Malawi and Kenya, numbers were suppressed from the lowest levels. In Kenya, social and economic exclusion was arranged along the lines of ethnicity and this affected women's participation in knowledge production and economic development. In Zimbabwe and Malawi social and economic exclusion was not about ethnicity but about gender and sexism. It is important to acknowledge that patriarchy is the dominant socio-cultural regime in the three countries and beyond. Patriarchy was found to be deep-rooted in the three countries under the study. Whilst in Kenya and Malawi funding was available, in Zimbabwe it was difficult since traditional funders withdrew as a result of lack of accountability on the financial support provided in the past. What came strongly out of Zimbabwe was that research was not rewarding at all and funding was virtually non-existent. A few women researchers in Zimbabwe were also grooming and supporting upcoming female researchers. It can therefore be concluded that gender inequalities in institutions of higher learning have affected the participation of women researchers in knowledge production and their participation in economic development.

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Digital historical research and the repositioning of Africa in knowledge production

Bernard Kusena and Miriam Zhou

Abstract: Africa's historical knowledge production has exhibited promising signs of progress, particularly in strengthening the continent's weak link in the global knowledge network. While such knowledge ought to intersect and interact with other bodies of knowledge from the rest of the world, the terrain is shifting quickly due to changing historical circumstances. This study deploys a case study of Zimbabwe to illustrate how the slow digital transformation in historical research has hindered efforts to confront the overarching question of constrained knowledge production in Africa. The over-reliance of economic history, archaeology, or history on the use of centralised state archives poses complex methodological challenges, particularly for the study of the recent African past. Despite the advantages offered by digital humanities, the research options for these disciplines continue to shrink in the face of serious discomfort by academics in embracing digital sources of data that complement paper-based archival evidence and re-gear the continent's research performance. The article stresses that the sources of historical data, particularly on Africa's post-colonial history, can be found in digital form outside state repositories.

Keywords: Digital humanities, archival evidence, repositories, knowledge production, digital historical research.

Introduction

Although traditional historians and educationists who are cautious about the use of methodologies in historical fields may pose a debate regarding the quality of evidence produced by text messages and other digital channels, there is a growing consensus on the need to tap into the wealth of digitised data generated through communication gadgets by people in their everyday lives. This study explores the contribution that could be made by embracing digital evidence as a tool for knowledge production vis-à-vis archival material in view of growing calls to reposition Africa in knowledge production. It opens up new lines of inquiry on how to repurpose digital evidence towards sustained historical research. The article deploys political economy theory to demonstrate the relationship between political policy that demands digitalised evidence-based research and the availability of economic resources required for the procurement by the wider population of mobile phones and recording infrastructure that capture lived experiences in communities even far afield.

Background

Following the opening up of airwaves to private players in 1998 and Strive Masiyiwa's battle with the Zimbabwean courts to enter the telecoms business, the proliferation of wireless communication infrastructure, such as mobile phones, has brought exciting opportunities to Zimbabwean researchers. The state-owned parastatal NetOne, which had previously enjoyed a monopoly in this niche area of wireless communication, proved incapable of meeting demand for the service; hence the entry of private players like Telecel Zimbabwe and Econet Wireless. After successfully lobbying the country's regulatory authority for admission into the information transfer business, Telecel and Econet expanded their network coverage to include previously marginalised areas both within and outside urban centres (Robb *et al.* 2017).

The three mobile network operators, Econet Wireless, NetOne, and Telecel Zimbabwe, continued to invest in network upgrades to support data services. This has opened up new opportunities for people in different localities to embrace the use of cell phones. Thereafter, the expanding use of cell phones began to impact hugely on access to digitised data, which researchers have found more easily accessible than traditional archival evidence due to bureaucracy and other legal complexities. Although a lot of vigilance and scrutiny in verifying the authenticity of data posted through modern platforms are required, the mere availability of such data has been a milestone because, traditionally, it required long periods of waiting for such material to be released by the archives.

Against this background, this article illuminates the grey areas surrounding access to electronic information. For instance, while digitised data is a welcome source of critical evidence, it comes with a huge cost. Many rural people, especially ordinary people, cannot afford the ever-spiralling costs of electronic gadgets, yet this is where historical data can also be retrieved. Handsets with built-in mechanisms that provide functions like WhatsApp, the internet, Short Message Service (SMS), and Twitter (along with data bundles) remain expensive, and even more so when Zimbabwe's economy continues to teeter on the brink of disaster. Apparently, these shortfalls tend to compromise and frustrate the 'history from below' initiative that aims to extract historical data from disadvantaged but data-providing populations.

The traditional approach in data collection

The most common source of data used by historians in Zimbabwe and many other African countries has been state repositories where after periods extending to 20–25 years, materials are sent for archiving. Traditionally, this paper-based system has been considered the best source of historical evidence. Environmental historians have added their voice to this issue, highlighting that there is growing need to rethink data capture and storage for climate change. For example, Brunet and Jones (2011), have argued that, while traditional archival literature is available in archives, there are benefits to digitalising data on the historical climate in order to help the populace appreciate climate variability and change in the 21st century.

Analyses have been carried out on exactly what historians' sources are and how they should be approached. The debate has underlined the fundamental question of what history is, and how and why it should be written (Momigliano 1966, Le Goff 1992, Collingwood 1993, Kelly 1998, Ginzburg 2012). Other scholars have also interrogated the term 'archive' itself. Blouin and Rosenberg (2011), for example, have attempted to unpack this term, making the point that what constitutes an archive is not always clear cut. They claim that, although predominantly understood as a formal repository of official records, the concept is often extended to accommodate more diverse documentary residues of the past.

Opportunities and threats in digitalisation

Digital sources of evidence are not a new phenomenon. They have been created and used by historians in Western nations. They have their own downside. Just as paper archives can be vulnerable to theft and forgery, the bona fide researcher is at the mercy

of the archivist on whose criteria, knowledge, sensitivity, and skills the researcher depends. 'The Art of the Archive' (2013) has shed light on the pros and cons of the digital research tool. In this regard, digital preservation can be hindered by swift technological changes, so it is important to have secure digital storage. However, the categorisation of an archive assumes less importance once it has been fully digitised. The rapidity of search mechanisms and multiple-point access are enormous benefits in terms of saving time, focusing research, and the revelation of unexpected material.

The contents of recent and contemporary archives themselves are at risk or are not always as rich as they might be: for example, faxes fade. 'The Art of the Archive' (2013) further observes that floppy disks are not eternal. Emails are not always printed out and filed: they have that personally unsigned, detached look that suggests a certain inferiority to a postal communication. A question has been raised by researchers: Who will know what a lightning press on the delete key has wiped from the historical record? In addition, funding constraints can be a hindrance to endeavours to utilise digital historical information. To finalise an archive and place it online is not only costly but is also laborious. Archives are also frequently omitted from the larger strategic planning of institutions. With recent cuts in the arts sector and proposed further cuts to humanities budgets in global settings, the ordering and digitising of archives are less likely to receive financial support.

As the discussion around digitalisation took centre stage, one area of research interest that academics and artists seized upon was family history. Hunter (2007) brought in an interesting angle about photography, an important source of historical data critical to researchers. That article sheds light on ways to recover and improve old photographs using digital tools. For instance, the main forms of deterioration of primary material such as photographs are discolouration, tearing, cracking, water spot damage, or loosening of the emulsion from the celluloid. It is a common problem that, once the information on an old photograph is gone, it can never be recovered. To depend strictly on repositories for such material will not yield positive results, given the nature of deterioration such precious documents can suffer under prolonged periods of storage.

The advent of digitalisation has brought along with it exciting opportunities where the need to utilise computers has become indispensable in the digital era. While far from perfect, computers are a good way of translating old photographic material into a digitised form, which loses some of the information, but preserves what it can in a form which is likely to remain readable for many years to come. Until 2007, the best methods of storage included CDs and DVDs but they have since been overtaken by rapid transformations in information technology. However, whatever the changes may bring, one constant is that it is easier these days to store, reproduce, and publish

photographs in digital form. Hunter (2007) actually predicted that, in the future, film cameras will be obsolete and only digital imaging will be possible.

Photographs are beautiful, but they also tell a story with historical significance. For this to happen, digitalisation offers greater opportunities for one to clearly add information such as dates, places, names and relationships to photographs and other digital records. Harry (2007) maintains that there are arguments galore about the best method of storing the digital information one has gathered, but is quick to advise that the volatility of technology is one big reason to retain one's original sources. The great thing about digital photography and storage is that computer technology drives the whole world of storage systems and it will always be possible to upgrade digitally stored photographs to the latest medium with no loss of information. Old photographs are a major resource for family historians as they provide not only some historical information, but also historical context.

Contributing to this debate, Svensson (2016) states that digital material includes relatively recent materials, such as archived emails, websites, online fiction, old games, surveillance data, online videos, dance performance sensor data, and live data feeds, all of which can be useful for humanistic inquiry. He is supported by Kominko (2015) who wrote about the British Library's Endangered Archives Programme that was founded to digitise and bring vulnerable documentary materials into the academic domain. The programme belongs to a long tradition of scholarly efforts to find and publish new pieces of historical evidence. Large and often heterogeneous digital materials inform the need for tools and expertise to manage, retrieve, and search data. Analogue tools, systems like concordances, library catalogues, or new kinds of tools should draw more distinctly on the attributes of modern digital technology.

Repositioning Africa: court records as historical evidence in a comparative context

Historians of various kinds, from environmental, social, and economic to legal, have relied heavily on court records, either in physical or digitised form, to reconstruct stories that affect human relations. A legal scholar, for instance, uses digitised court proceedings to bring out interesting historical issues that affect people in their everyday lives. A critical question to explore is how far historians can agree to use WhatsApp evidence as a source of data on which analyses of historical material can rely. There is a general consensus that it is not reliable. Perhaps one way to look at it is how such evidence is treated in other fields. The area of law is one such realm where litigation progresses through adducing evidence.

Digital evidence, also called electronic evidence, is either stored or transmitted in digital form, which litigants to court processes can deploy at trial. Key to this process is the question whether or not such information has a high probative value. The evidence should be sufficiently useful to prove important arguments in a trial. In some jurisdictions, a court hearing a matter needs to determine if the evidence is not hearsay, or is authentic, relevant, or admissible.

Riding on this framework, courts in many parts of Africa have begun to accept digital evidence in pursuit of justice. Emerging scholars have dubbed this information era ‘a golden age of evidence’, citing the variety and volume of digital material that reveals conversations, locations, timelines, photographs, and videos. On the international front, two famous cases thrived on account of digital evidence to uncover the dynamics that ultimately played a key role in the outcome of the cases. The first such case was that of Paul Ceglia vs Mark Zuckerberg which occurred in 2010, involving Paul Ceglia, a wood pellet salesman from Wellsville, New York, and Facebook and Another (that is, Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook’s Chief Executive Officer).

The brief facts of the matter are that, in 2003, Ceglia wrote a contract in which he allegedly hired Zuckerberg to undertake computer programming for his company called Street Fax. He claimed that this contract entitled him to a 50% share of Facebook. Coincidentally, Zuckerberg, then a Harvard student, had responded to an advert published by Ceglia for which he had been paid \$1000 after completing the work. The turning point of this matter arose when Ceglia then subsequently alleged that he had also made a \$1000 investment in “The Page Book”, prompting him to claim that this was ‘seed investment’ which actually entitled him to a 50% share of the company.

In support of this claim, Ceglia’s legal team mounted a series of correspondence by email between the two litigants that purportedly showed the 50/50 share agreement. The courts were overwhelmed by the matter to the extent that the application of digital evidence was necessary in order to arrive at a more informed verdict. Thus, the courts allowed Facebook to conduct forensic testing on Ceglia’s computer despite the latter’s disapproval. It was during this testing process that Facebook found the original contract embedded in the electronic data on Ceglia’s hard drive. Although observers had warmed to Ceglia’s evidence, the original contract never mentioned Facebook or “The Page Book”, but it mentioned his Street Fax Company.

Further to the above revelations, the forensic data showed evidence of the use of six USB devices which, according to court papers, Ceglia had claimed had been lost. There was also a forged contract in one of the folders which Ceglia used to support his claim against the defendants. The unearthing of this crucial evidence further spurred on Facebook’s forensic experts to analyse Zuckerberg’s email account since his days at Harvard. They found no signs of the email chain Ceglia produced alleging

an agreement between him and Zuckerberg to share the company 50/50. These combined analyses led to the case against Facebook being dismissed, with Ceglia facing charges of attempting to defraud Facebook of billions of dollars.

The importance of digital evidence to historical research interest is also manifested in the criminal case of *People v Garcia and Another* 2012, involving the murder of 74-year old Clifford Lambert, a Miami dealer. The co-defendants in this matter, Daniel Garcia and Kaushal Niroula, were on 7 September 2012 convicted of murder after they had stabbed Lambert. The circumstances of the case are that Garcia and Niroula planned to con Lambert using information Garcia had obtained on Lambert, which included his phone number and address. Niroula also called Lambert to pose as an attorney representing the estate of May Department Stores Company heiress, Florence May Schoenborn. Fully aware of Lambert's interests in artwork, Niroula told Lambert that he had inherited some valuable artwork from the Schoenborn estate.

Having set out their plan, the two made arrangements to drive to Lambert's Palm Springs residence, roping in Mike Replogle, a Bay Area attorney. On arrival, two other accomplices, Migual Bustamante and Craig McCarthy, were let in, one of whom stabbed Lambert to death. They proceeded to stuff Lambert's body in his own car, then drove to the desert where they buried the body in order to conceal the evidence. Immediately after commission of this crime, Garcia began to use Lambert's debit card and, along with Niroula, opened a new bank account using Replogle's identity and account information. Posing as Lambert, Replogle gave Russell Manning, a San Francisco art dealer, the power of attorney over Lambert's accounts and estate. They, thus proceeded to transfer upwards of \$200,000 from Lambert's account to the new account. They transferred other various amounts until Lambert's original account was drained.

When the matter was brought to trial, the prosecution relied on a hired digital forensics researcher, Jonathan Zdziarski, to unearth the scam. Garcia, a self-actor in the trial, was the last of the defendants to be tried, submitting the argument that the police had actually framed him by tampering with his phone, inserting texts on it. It was through digital forensics that the hired expert was able to access Garcia's phone and proved beyond reasonable doubt that police had not tampered with his phone and that the texts revealed an order from him to murder Lambert. His conviction was, thus, based on digital information.

There are initiatives available to researchers to access data. Some companies, such as DigitalSTRATA and others, have tasked themselves with the responsibility to collect, preserve, and analyse all types of data. On their website,¹ Digital STRATA,

¹<https://www.digital-strata.com>

for instance, have pointed out that they can do digital collections for all platforms, devices, and data types. They are able to manage custodial and non-custodial data sources, computers, servers, mobile devices, USB devices, and cloud (Dropbox, Box, Google Drive, and iCloud) activity. Further to this, the company can provide database, web, wiki, social media, structured and unstructured expertise; onsite, remote, and targeted collections; as well as evidence management, including chain of custody, secure storage, and matter-end destruction. Over and above this, DigitalSTRATA specialises in data forensics, covering a wide range of digital devices, operating systems, and cloud activity. This also includes forensically sound content and metadata preservation; deleted data identification and recovery; smartphone and tablet analysis, Windows Registry, artefact and log file analysis; analyses of calls, chats, web histories, and log files; password and encryption cracking; and cloud activity.

In the African context, the courts are rethinking their position with regards to digital evidence, and for the historian, this is welcome. In East Africa, there has been a proposal for a paperless digital system which ensures that evidence is not lost or tampered with. Already, in Sudan, this system has been introduced through the Court of Justice of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), while it is being piloted in Kenya's Court of Appeal. The paperless system is also being used in civil litigation cases in South Africa. It enables evidence to be uploaded and managed digitally, meaning that it becomes impossible to lose papers or documents without trace. Its advantage is that it does not demand investment in information technology infrastructure because it can simply be switched on as it is cloud-based. It has been dubbed CaseLines. Inasmuch as this system has been welcomed by the courts in pursuit of objectives to eliminate financial and other barriers to justice, historians and other scholars in future can also access this material.

Courts have noted the efficiency brought about by the paperless digital system. Processes such as physical filing have become obsolete, bringing judges and litigants closer to justice. In South Africa, as in COMESA, CaseLines has been hailed as capable of ending the need for paper while also allowing the presentation of digital bundles, including multimedia evidence, in court. Lawyers are able to file applications and evidence in more secure environments, away from their offices, saving on the cost of copying and transporting paper files. At the same time, this cuts the risk of losing or misplacing files. In addition, the system supports pretrial preparation, especially for lawyers supporting clients in different countries.

Digitalisation also offers pretrial tools that enable lawyers to prepare and secure role-validated video-conferencing for virtual hearings. While it is true that the digital system at the COMESA Court, which is based in Khartoum, Sudan, and where twelve judges from each member state sit, offers exciting advantages to lawyers by saving considerable time and cost to file applications and send paper copies of evidence to

the court, it could be said that other jurisdictions are already enjoying bigger benefits from this system. For instance, CaseLines has delivered paperless hearings for lawyers and courts in the United Kingdom and the United Arab Emirates, with the platform holding over 300,000 cases at any given time.

The COVID-19 archive, its challenges, and the fresh demand for digitalisation

Even as the world continues to grapple with social distancing and battles the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, academics have been prompted to rethink the use of digital sources in producing historical knowledge. Globally, many countries have already taken tentative steps to ease lockdown measures in order to allow citizens to move freely and revive the economy. As has been noted on various media platforms, people should embrace the ‘new normal’ brought about by the pandemic. In Zimbabwe, as with the rest of the world, visitors coming into the country are required to submit to a coronavirus test within a prescribed number of hours of departing for the country and present proof of a negative result upon arrival. Affected citizens are required to self-quarantine after arrival.

It is against this background that Zimbabwe faces a huge challenge resulting from the pandemic because its physical archives have been closed as part of efforts to curb the spread of the virus. This is the first and foremost impact of the pandemic on historical research because data for future research is not being captured. The failure to switch to digitalisation is prolonging the problem of data mining using new technology. Yet the experiences associated with ongoing lockdown measures should be recorded in various social media platforms; thus casting COVID-19 as an opportunity for African knowledge production.

Wekesa (2020) raises the question of whether there is a danger of Africa being marginalised in terms of knowledge production and dissemination in this era of coronavirus disruptions. He argues that, even in the absence of the pandemic, the continent’s presence on the internet is below that of other regions of the world. To support his view, he analyses web-based evidence guided by an understanding of the heightened role of online material in knowledge production. In searching the internet, he discovered that the term ‘Covid-19’ produced upwards of six billion results. A further click on the phrase ‘virtual conference’ brought up results exceeding one billion. For him, these huge figures have obscured many specifics, such as Africa’s own direct contribution to the knowledge items being generated. This implies that African research entities need to undertake closer analyses in order to gain a more nuanced picture of the continent’s performance in global knowledge production.

Zimbabwe, however, cannot pass the affordability test. The prohibitive costs of digital tools is stalling progress in the efforts required to harness data from various sources, so most of this data is eventually lost before it has been collected. As people make history, some have shared photographs, messages, and experiences in quarantine centres, all of which material is important for historical analysis. A recent snap survey revealed that some people in remote areas lack sufficient information about events in the country regarding their expected conduct in view of proposed measures. For instance, in Betera Village, Mutare, it has been business as usual, with people still gathering for social events without masks. If this is true of cell phone gadgets, what is the situation with respect to computer and internet connectivity? How can we tap data from these remote communities? This leads to Wekesa's (2020) conclusion that, even without the benefit of an empirical study, we can cautiously claim that Africa-specific knowledge production and dissemination over the internet is far lower than that from other continents.

The Zimbabwean state is being challenged to reframe its perception of digitalisation in the most general terms. There appears to be an apprehension of what digitalisation might cause or not cause on the political front. The failure to support access to information and the blackout of the internet and social media in January 2020 following the disturbances in Harare is enough of a signal to suggest that the state is unwilling to extend these opportunities to the masses. For several weeks, the whole country was disconnected from internet activity as the state sought to contain the violence. From the point of view of historical research, these are the people who make history. Their everyday lives should be captured and recorded, leading to Africa potentially increasing its research output in the foreseeable future.

A further observation is that Africa's underperformance in global knowledge dissemination is not an entirely new development. Global knowledge flows are greatly imbalanced to the detriment of the nations of the Global South. Scholars agree that these inequalities are being reproduced and further institutionalised in the circumstances of COVID-19 (Wekesa 2020). The point of departure is that COVID-19-related African knowledge production and dissemination can help redress these imbalances. Although the underperformance problem persisted before the outbreak of this novel virus, the pandemic presents an opportunity to address it.

The main question, though, is how far Africa is willing to invest in digital technology as a means to boost its volumes of research output. Looking at the case of Zimbabwe, there is negligible attention being paid to requests by stakeholders for improved budgets for the information technology ministry. During the years of the Government of National Unity, this ministry made important inroads under the then opposition Minister, Nelson Chamisa, with a target of bringing everyone across the rural and urban divide to connectivity. The short duration of his tenure seems to have

brought all these energies back down to the then prevailing situation. At the time of writing, the ability of people, even the working class, to purchase appropriate communication infrastructure had diminished. This has partly been a result of insufficient interest by the state in further investment in this area, and partly because of the volatility of the local currency which has brought back conditions of hyperinflation characteristic of the 2008 period.

Historical data abound in the daily communications people make, some of which might form an important database for historical review using appropriate data selection tools in a historical study. Wekesa (2020) echoes this observation, highlighting that there is no doubt that Africans are producing lots of knowledge in their informal conversations as in formal engagements of varying types. This knowledge is being produced daily in villages and urban spaces, by African government officials and businesses, by students and researchers. Thus, there are increasing calls for data collectors to package African knowledge products in ways that are convenient and accessible. In order to leverage the vast amount of source material being produced, research entities should erect strategies that make better use of communication infrastructure and resources.

Conclusion

The article has demonstrated that it is possible for Africa to increase its output of historical research if academics shift from the current framing which shuns digital data. Indeed, there should be a lot of care in handling data extracted from digital sources. But it is still possible because, by training, historians are capable of identifying and selecting historical facts from past events. Its limitations notwithstanding, there is increasing attention being paid to the use of digitised data that makes contemporary historical research a lot easier to conduct due to readily available evidence. The outbreak of the novel coronavirus has changed the whole research landscape, pushing historians to rethink their apprehension about digital sources of data. In many places, court proceedings are conducted on digital evidence, meaning legal historians can rely on such primary sources in their quest for historical knowledge production.

This article has also highlighted the ethical challenges encountered in the deployment of social media data for historical research. It has raised important ethical questions about the implications to the academic historian of 'exploiting' citizen scientists. On the one hand, it teases the view that these historians should actually acknowledge and thank the citizen scientists in their work. However, on the other hand, there is a need to seek 'consent', especially in situations where there are oral

interviews or photographs, a fact that resonates with ethical standards in the conduct of research worldwide.

The article has dealt with the question of privacy. Tweets are in the public domain and can be mined easily. However, what about personal WhatsApp messages? Historians ought to secure the consent of the owners of such material to be able to use it for historical writing. In addition to these shortfalls, African historians themselves have no training in using digital or digitised material. Unlike American historians who already have some grounding in these technologies, Africa's universities such as the University of Zimbabwe have no comprehensive programmes offering training in these areas.

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Geopolitical diversity in Occupational and Organisational Psychology: shaking off historical comforts and confronting real-world challenges

Bill Buenar Puplampu and Chris Lewis

Abstract: This article explores the limited and myopic theoretical and research resource base of Occupational and Organisational Psychology (OOP), a field which is a major contributor to global management thinking and practice. As a field, OOP has tackled many work-related human challenges. Considerable progress in both theory and practice in nearly 120 years of active engagement with society has led to theories of work, motivation, selection, performance, organisational behaviour, and development. Much of OOP work now informs and interfaces various Human Resource and general management initiatives. These advances notwithstanding, we note a major gap: the lack of diversity in the geopolitical and international sources of OOP theory. This article argues that to migrate theory and research into impactful practice—globally—OOP must engage a deliberate process of fostering alternative, autochthonous, and indigenous knowledge from geopolitical areas which are under-represented. The article proposes corrective actions and agendas which would assist OOP become more diverse and support the growth of Africa’s contribution to global knowledge production in the work and organisational sciences.

Keywords: Geopolitical, diversity, Occupational and Organisational Psychology, Africa.

Introduction

The body of knowledge of Occupational and Organisational Psychology (OOP) has enabled the profession to tackle many work-related human challenges across issues such as well-being, leadership, motivation, assessment, performance, work design, organisational change, and development. Considerable progress has been made in research, theory, and practice in nearly 120 years of active engagement with society. Apart from direct psychological interventions, OOP now informs and interfaces various Human Resource and general management initiatives.

These advances, notwithstanding, we note a major gap: the lack of diversity in the geopolitical and international sources of OOP theory. This article argues that to migrate theory and research into impactful practice—globally—OOP must engage a deliberate process of fostering alternative, autochthonous, and indigenous knowledge from geopolitical areas which are under-represented.

Specifically, to improve Africa's contribution to global knowledge production in the management and organisational sciences, a field such as Occupational and Organisational Psychology must deliberately foster a more inclusive sourcing of research and theory, as well as practice information from various African countries. We argue the need for an intentional agenda towards what we call geopolitical diversity (GPD) in OOP. We challenge the historical position that theories of work and organisation developed in the Global North must be applicable to the Global South. We challenge the notion that the current body of knowledge is a 'true' representation of the work and organisational experiences of humanity. We challenge the mindset which presumes that Africa's knowledge so mined, must necessarily be subject to the validation of Northern metropolitan scholars. We challenge the received wisdom, that OOP theory and research—as is—has been 'scientifically' derived. We raise issues with types of samples, research methods, lack of attention to meaning, and lack of attention to the globally diverse philosophies underpinning peoples' work lives. We take issue with the context-stripping that has characterised the pursuit of 'scientific respectability' in OOP.

Under-representation of the Global South

A matter of concern to those occupational and organisational psychologists who work outside the Global North is the rather poor attention to the development of OOP theory beyond the dominant postulations derived from the UK/Western Europe and the USA. There seems to be an assumption that OOP theories should sit and travel well, context notwithstanding. This is a patronising interpretation of

organisational reality which has been queried by Trompenaars (1993), Fletcher (2009), Nkomo (2011), and others.

Drawing on the drive for indigenisation of management thinking and the growing concern for context (Johns 2006), challenges with OOP research and theorising (Anderson *et al.* 2001), as well as ongoing scholarly work in different African countries, this article makes the case that OOP would benefit from drawing in a more diversified field of research from other locations, such as South America, Africa, and Asia. We suggest that continued neglect and under-representation of such geopolitical areas of the world undermine the prospect of a truly global OOP. With reference to Africa which has some fifty-five countries, more than 1.2 billion people and much prospect for socio-economic transformation, it seems a globally inclusive OOP which draws in Afrocentric understandings, would be better placed to assist policymakers, researchers, and practitioners to tackle the organisational and work issues which abound. How may this matter be addressed?

We argue that the solution lies in methodological reflexivity, multi-perspective inclusiveness, as well as a deliberate and sustained promotion of efforts to mine work-related understandings from an autochthonous and indigenous perspective from countries in Africa and other parts of the Global South.

For example, work motivation theory explores the initiation, maintenance, and qualitative direction of work behaviour and has key principles such as the intrinsic–extrinsic and drive–process divides. Despite evidence of varied approaches to motivation (Latham 2007), there is hardly any build-up of understandings from non-Western areas (Munro 1986; Pupilampu 2013). In many of these places, the drive–process and intrinsic–extrinsic divides appear tenuous and artificial (Pupilampu 2017). Meanwhile these are the geopolitical regions with many concerns around productivity and work performance. Must occupational psychology interventions necessarily occur in the theory testing and externally derived mode? We argue not.

Leadership theory has grown considerably. In 2011, the (British) *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology (JOOP)* attempted to explore leadership in Africa. Muchiri's (2011) paper shows the need to factor context into how leadership operates and Nkomo and Kriek (2011) conclude a set of grounded realities which are required of corporate leadership in the new South Africa. Pupilampu's (2010) work in Ghana, indicates the impact of larger political considerations in the minds of institutional leaders and suggests how engaged leaders may build structures that outlive themselves. These scholarly efforts suggest that there is considerable scope for new indigenous learnings on corporate leadership in Africa and point to the potential for such to inform the global discourses on leadership.

The essential argument

The position advanced by this article is that occupational and organisational psychology needs to enter a phase in which there is deliberate effort to mine alternative, varied, and diverse understandings from further afield—beyond what mainstream OOP theory is used to. The question may be asked: how much testing has already taken place to ascertain the applicability of extant theory to different locations? The counter argument is that knowledge generation in under-represented locations may proceed with or without the testing of existing (nonlocal) theory. Indigenous and autochthonous forms may be accessed for their value and potential contribution.

Real-world problems and challenges of poverty, modernity juxtaposed with tradition, disease, information asymmetry, discontinuous development, institutional weaknesses, ‘produced resource’ poverty amid ‘natural resource’ wealth; these are the issues in African countries and other parts of the Global South. There are cultural issues, economic opportunities, social stagnation; political, institutional, and State-level weaknesses; thriving traditions and norms, and the considerable influence of religion (Nkomo *et al.* 2015). Africa and the Global South can contribute to truly internationalising OOP by providing context-rich evidence. We argue that relevant theory and research that is impactful on practice must draw in location-specific knowledge. Location-specific and autochthonous knowledge needs to feed into the development of indigenous theory. In an increasingly globalised international space, conceptual relevance, rigorous research, and impactful practice cannot be attained without deliberate attention to varied and locally mined knowledge. This is what we mean by geopolitical diversity in research and theory.

Geopolitical diversity

Geopolitics is an ‘old’ field which perhaps came into its own with the cold war. It represents the reality of multiple nation states and the unequal and varied political power relations between and among countries in the context of their international relations. These differential powers are often concomitant to and consistent with military might, trade, economic development, and, lately, regional alliances.

Diversity in psychology refers to the understanding that people differ in their abilities, values, personality, and dispositions (Mollerman 2005). In OOP, much is made of workplace diversity as a key resource which offers the organisation a range or pool of abilities, experiences, opinions, talents, skills, and strategic cognitions (Ely & Thomas 2001). In cultural studies, diversity underscores the recognition of multiple histories, traditions, cultures, cultural goods/services, meanings, peoples/races, religious options, and societies (Harris & Moran, 1996).

Combining the three perspectives (international power dynamics, socio-cultural dynamics, and individual dynamics) we submit that geopolitical diversity (GPD) in OPP is the quality of recognising firstly that the power structures within our science are varied and uneven and many nations and regions of the world are not as represented in the science as may be ideal. Second, that there is no mono-cultural experience by which to assert a universality of theoretical propositions. Varied cultural contexts, histories, and experiences are therefore legitimate for research and theorising. Third, commitment to both researcher reflexivity and the lived voice of the researched (Johnson & Cassell 2001) are important and critical to developing an OOP that is globally connected and locally relevant. In sum, GPD in OOP is a call for methodological inventiveness and theoretical comprehensiveness derived from geographic inclusiveness. It is a call to shed historic comforts and get involved with the real-world work challenges of more than 75% of the earth's population.

In the rest of the article, we tackle the history and impact of OOP and its historical dogmas and comforts. We tackle the challenges of the Global South in general and the concerns of Africa in particular—with a focus on management and organisational issues. We then set out the needed changes within OOP from the theoretical and gate-keeping as well as research methodological perspectives. We offer a corrective agenda as well as a consideration of how OOP scholars in different African countries may claim or reclaim the imperatives required to infuse mainstream OOP with learnings from the African context.

Occupational and Organisational Psychology: what is it, and how is it doing?

The use of the discipline of psychology to help understand the relationship between people and work has about a 120-year history—developing most of that time from the United States, Europe, and Australia. Different terms are used to describe this applied discipline including: 'work', 'industrial', 'organisational', 'occupational', 'and 'business' psychology—depending on which of the geographical areas the development has come from. For the purposes of this article, the title 'Occupational and Organisational Psychology' (OOP) will be used. There are other applied area descriptions that are sometimes seen as overlapping OOP by those wishing to understand the psychological aspects of work. These include: Industrial Sociology, Behavioural Science, Behavioural Economics, and Management Science. The nature of the distinction is outside the discussion of this article.

The historical development of OOP has broadly been to move from focussing on a psycho-physiological paradigm, to a social process paradigm; then an

organisational process paradigm, and more recently an affective process paradigm, but all of these are still of interest (Kwiatkowski *et al.* 2006, Carpintero 2017).

The applied domains of OOP can be presented in many ways. An illustrative list might be: job analysis, work motivation, individual differences including psychometric testing, employee selection, performance management, training and development, working with technology, organisational development and change, team building, leadership, and stress and well-being.

OOP, especially from its American and European roots, has tended to emphasise a scientific basis for understanding people at work. Therefore, in experimental terms, it has treated both people and work as either the Independent Variable (IV) or the Dependent Variable (DV). That is, seeking how you change the people component to fit into work, or how you change the work component to fit with people.

Over its history, OOP has grown in influence. It is widely taught, normally at a postgraduate level, across higher education sectors, and has led to the creation of professional and scientific associations to regulate standards in most of the ‘founding’ countries. It has strongly influenced management practices, especially in Human Resources and played a significant role in government policymaking. In the United States it was ranked as the ‘fastest growing occupation over the next decade’ (US Bureau of Labour Statistics 2014).

Challenges within OOP

Whilst its roots in the historically more industrialised parts of the world have caused the issues raised in this article, these have been exacerbated by some shortcomings in the development of OOP itself. Psychology, its underpinning discipline, for reasons given below, consists almost entirely of ‘arbitrary’ metrics (Blanton & Jaccard 2006) and relies totally on the observation and measurement of behaviour to achieve its scientific goals. Any attempt to claim the identification of innate psychological constructs is easily challengeable.

OOP began experimentation by observing behaviour change produced by different situations or conditions. For example, did productivity improve by altering work patterns? Here behaviour was used as the DV. Later, behaviour (in the form of how subjects responded to tests or questionnaires) was and is used to identify levels of cognitive or affective traits. Here the behaviour is the IV. More recently, research into areas such as consumer behaviour by ‘behavioural psychologists’ has utilised behaviour change as the DV.

The distinction is important. When using behaviour as an IV, the judgement about the relationship between innate psychology and behaviour must be made at the beginning of the experimental procedure, whereas when used as the DV it is made at

the end. The relationship is difficult and highly subjective and different between the two situations. All innate psychological constructs have to be considered as non-ratio scales (there is no observable zero point) (Blanton & Jaccard 2006), whereas behavioural measures are ratio scales with known scale qualities. Thus, behaviour and innate psychology are inevitably different metrics that are only comparable in a largely illusory way. This renders any meaning subject to bias, including cultural bias.

Thus, GPD might not be just a matter of research exclusion but one of inherent problems in OOP itself. Any applied psychology discipline requires quite a large conceptual leap from the base discipline to its applications, especially if such applications take place outside of the initial context of the development of base theory or construct. Another major problem is the development of OOP as a 'scientific' research-based discipline, which has tried to search, rather naively, for 'laws' of work behaviour. A classic example being the 'landmark' Hawthorne Studies (Roethlisberger & Dickson 1939), recently discredited (Mannevuolo 2018), which suggested that human relations, rather than physical conditions, will increase productivity. This was, for many years, accepted as a generalisable finding.

The problem has been that most experimental studies in OOP are context dependant. They are conducted, for example, in a particular business sector or industry, or even a particular office or factory. Whilst sometimes the context is controlled and becomes the IV, more usually OOP research relies heavily on serendipity. One may argue that these are 'case studies' with little or no external legitimacy. There can only be real generalisability if there is successful replication across other contexts. Thus, those seeking to utilise the conventional 'scientific method' are faced with having no control over the origins of the data from which conclusions can be drawn. This can produce errors in identifying research objectives together with random, systematic, or exclusion errors (Jones-Rooy 2019). So much of OOP research does not lend itself to generalisation and therefore cannot be universally applied. This issue is very much at the heart of this article.

As a result of the above, a methodological battle has raged within the discipline. The 'scientific' purists hold on to a belief that a positivist approach will always count for more, whilst some argue that using evidence of what has naturally been found is no less empirical and is the essence of OOP (a point discussed later in this article). It has caused, for quite some time, a noticeable divide between those academics and practitioners who prefer quantitative methods and those who mostly adhere to qualitative approaches (Pratt & Banaccio 2016). Thus, much OOP research often falls between 'two stools'; with many using quantitative methods and failing to see such work really as 'case studies'. Not only has the outcome limited generalisability but has limited the learning from the process. OOP must learn that usually the only thing that is generalisable is that its work is not usually generalisable. It must develop a way to

accommodate this. If this is achieved, the impact of OOP will continue to grow and be recognised for its universal value.

Confronting historical dogmas: is it blatant myopia?

As mentioned above, so much research in OOP lacks external validity. That is, it lacks evidence that findings in whole or in part can be validly applied to any other situation than is present in a particular research design. This is partly due to the difficulties of research and theory building in the applied social sciences in general and some specifics in OOP that have been discussed.

WEIRD samples

Whether it is because academics have been under pressure to publish research to further their careers and therefore been attracted to quicker and easier research projects, a phenomenon has existed for many years that shows little sign of abating (Pollet & Saxton 2019). This is that research samples are dominated by subjects from Western, educated, industrialised, rich, and democratic (WEIRD) cultures (Henrich *et al.* 2010). These are the characteristics of America, Europe, and Australia where OOP has been developed, a geographical area often referred to as the 'Global North'. Therefore, these samples, that are conveniently local, are WEIRD samples. Even more so if they are students or business organisations well known to the researcher. Examples of the country sources of samples for much relevant research can be noted by examining the content of highly regarded journals in the applied social sciences (including outlets for OOP research). The evidence is suggestive: USA 68%; UK, Europe, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand 27%. Thus, the WEIRD cultures had 95% of the sampling balance. The rest of the world had 5%, with Africa having the lowest representation (Arnett 2008). Another study also reported that 68% of samples were from the United States, with 'The West' accounting for over 90% (Henrich *et al.* 2010). More recently (Pollet & Saxton 2019) reported 81% of samples as 'Western', with only 6% of the remaining samples being from African countries. They also observed that 70% were either student samples or sourced online. The scholars referred to above were clear to point out why WEIRD samples will not contribute to the global knowledge of a social science field. Arnett listed markets, religion, community size, and the evolution of fairness and punishment as particular issues that might not be accommodated by using WEIRD samples. Henrich *et al.* identified reasoning style, conception of self, and importance of choice and notion of fairness as the issues.

From a global point of view, WEIRD sampling is seriously harming the integrity of OOP, but it does not appear to be going away.

Worryingly, a solution to the problem is seen, by some researchers, to be the use of very large samples via the internet. Whilst supporting this notion, Jones (2010) offers caution that this might be moving from WEIRD to ‘wired’ people. The use of big samples be it by the internet or the retrospective use of ‘Big Data’ will remove some bias by being more inclusive, but this is likely to include ‘racial’ groups as perceived by the researchers. They are likely to miss the key issues of ‘culture’ and ‘ethnicity’. The benefit of large sample research to most researchers is that it reduces ‘error variance’ across the sample, which removes the effect of the bias across the sample (Lewis & Drye 2018). In this case, it removes the influence of any cultural effect—a classic case of context stripping. This is the very opposite of what GPD is trying to achieve.

Confronting historical dogmas: the context concerns of the Global South

The ‘Global South’ is a descriptive term typically used by donor agencies and multilateral agencies such as the World Bank. The term emerged as an alternative less pejorative handle to reference the countries of Central/South America, Caribbean, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Carl Oglesby (1969) is credited with earliest use of the term. These countries account for a little over 5.5 billion of the world’s population, the vast majority of the world’s natural resources, but approximately 5% or less of global trade and high finance. Until 2009, when the global financial crises forced a review—and subsequent creation of the G20 at the level of heads of state—Global South countries were hardly consulted on global economy issues (Kaul 2013).

Historically, nearly every country in the Global South has experienced colonisation by a Northern metropolitan power. Some countries have experienced severe trauma meted out to their indigenous peoples (for example, Belgian Congo). Others have suffered the indignity of resource dispossession through inward migration which has favoured peoples of the Global North (for example, South Africa). In terms of living standards and social experience, poverty is endemic and there are wide income/wealth disparities within countries. Another key marker is weak physical infrastructure such as roads and telecommunications. However, there are wide differences. Countries such as those described as the BRICS (Brazil, India, China, and South Africa) have made considerable progress in road, rail, and telecoms. Countries such as Kenya have led the world in the use of mobile telephony for banking services; countries like Ghana have now been described as middle income.

Socio-culturally many countries categorised as part of the Global South have grappled with internationalisation that has ‘eliminated’ borders and exposed

traditional ways of life to compete and coexist with Western and globalised society and social arrangements.

Africa

For the purposes of this article, a bit more attention will be focused on Africa. The continent is not an undifferentiated whole. It is made up of fifty-five countries; distinct geographic regions; and eight regional economic blocks recognised by the African Union. These are: Arab Maghreb Union (AMU); Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA); Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD); East African Community (EAC); Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS); Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD); and Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Arnold (2005: 970) in a significant work on Africa's modern history traces the independence struggles and concludes:

Africa has little influence and less power, a fact that attracts the major powers like vultures to a carcass to be exploited. If there is to be an African renaissance it will be achieved by the skillful deployment of what Africa itself controls.

Reader (1998) in an influential book on the history of the continent, demonstrates humanity's debt to Africa as the cradle of sapiens' evolution. The challenges of the continent are perhaps best captured by Knight (2011: 5; 681) who describes the struggle of indigenous Southern Africans with a focus on the Zulus uprisings in the late 1800s as they sought to dislodge the entrenched white settlers. He writes with poignant pathos:

The invasion was, moreover, part of a broader process of colonial penetration of Zululand which began with the arrival of the first white adventures ... lasted for the best part of a century ... and which left the Zulu people dispossessed.

The defeated lost not only the lives of thousands ... but also their independence and the very fabric of their way of life.

In recent times, many scholars in the field of management have described some of the challenges of the African continent. Nkomo (2011) writes about the colonial legacy and its imprint on characterisations and non-characterisations of leadership examples in Africa. Lituchy *et al.* (2013: 2) note that:

Its relationships with the world external have been so commoditised that it seems wherever Africa is discussed, the discussion turns to its resources.

Given the range of issues identified about Africa and the Global South, what are the specific problematics and issues in these geopolitical areas which are poorly handled by current OOP? We identify four major areas.

National political dimensions of in-firm experiences

Work by Munene (1995), Nkomo and Kriek (2011), and Pupilampu (2010, 2017) shows that in the varied country contexts of Africa, managers and executives cannot overlook the national political imperatives which have an existential reality for their firms. Nkomo and Kriek (2011) find that organisational leaders in post-apartheid South Africa needed to connect with the larger political changes in the country and bend their leadership efforts towards offering hope and championing diversity. Both these themes have direct organisational as well as larger political/socio-economic character derived from the politics of the country. Similarly, Pupilampu's work in Ghana found many organisational processes subjected to the incursions of national political actors.

A simple reading of over 100 article titles and abstracts (akin to the approach used by Pisani, 2009) constituting the papers published in the *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology (JOOP)* over a five-year period (2015–19; Vols. 88–92), shows that very few of the abstracts contain words such as: 'politics', 'country', or 'national development'. Those that did tended to be papers described as 'cross-cultural'. There are perhaps several interpretations of such a situation. Two such interpretations may be that those considerations did not arise in the case of the articles considered, or, location notwithstanding, editors did not require such information to label the context of the research reported.

Size of the informal sector

The informal sector of socio-economic life is huge in many African countries. Medina *et al.* (2016) indicate that the informal economy operates outside of the administrative rules, licensing contracts, and general legal control. They conclude that as much as 65% of economic activity takes place within this sector. Activities here would include operators of kiosks, table-top sellers, sole proprietors, transport owners, motorcycle taxis, and food vendors who take orders from home, cook at home, and deliver to clients from home etc. Add to this the SME (small and medium-sized enterprise) sector which is suggested to be 95% of business firms in sub-Saharan Africa (Ndiaye 2017). The implication here is: given the organisational and business sampling used in much of OOP research, how relevant would the prescriptions be?

Environmental constraints on the effort-performance hypothesis

Much of the received wisdom in organisational behavior is that guided individual effort can lead to enhanced performance. Crucial factors here include self-efficacy, environmental control, and job resources. These are at the core of goal setting theory (Latham 2007). The difficulty for application to many areas in Africa is that there are such a wide range of environmental contingencies over which workers often have little or no control. Take information asymmetry; power outage and lack of consistency in provision of utilities; poor national physical infrastructures, and still developing legal frameworks.

Context: macro issues and religious sensibilities

The above points all have a bearing on the issue of context. Writing on employee motivation in the African setting, Puplampu (2017) notes that contextual factors on employee motivation include: socio-political history, national economic circumstances, spirituality, and religion.

Context is both a subtle as well as an overt reality which needs to be recognised for its complexity. Johns (2006: 386) has offered a seminal treatment of the issue. He defines context as:

Situational opportunities and constraints that affect the occurrence and meaning of organisational behavior as well as functional relationships between variables.

Johns indicates that context operates at two levels: the omnibus (larger milieu and atmosphere) and the discrete (specific variables directly impinging on behaviour), each exerting nuanced influence on phenomena. He also offers a six-point taxonomy of context as: salience, situational strength, cross-level effect, an event, shaper of meaning, and as a constant. Johns' (2006: 389) analyses suggest that researchers need to regularly design context influences into their work: 'The point being made here is not that context is never studied. Rather *it is that its influence is often unrecognized or unappreciated*' (emphasis Johns'). Why is all this relevant for OOP research and theory?

Historical comforts

First, in the last two or three decades, there has been increasing disquiet within the field about resource myopia (Drenth & Heller 2004) and the narrow range of organisations from which OOP derives its samples and among which research is carried (Patterson 2001). There is also concern about 'weak science' leading to populist,

puerile, and pedantic research efforts (Anderson *et al.* 2001). There is also some disquiet about the issues OOP research has focused on and successive editors of the leading scholarly journal the *JOOP* have called for greater attention to meaning, lived experience, philosophical underpinnings of peoples' work life, and so on (West *et al.* 1992, Sparrow 1999, Arnold 2004). These concerns speak to both omnibus and discrete context.

Second, the dominant position of much of OOP scholarly output, seems to be that rich and/or applicable description of the context may not be required. Third, both research and theorising seem to assume that scholarly prescriptions are applicable irrespective of location, meanings, and underlying social and/or organisational philosophies. An example of this may be found by looking at the Tadic *et al.* (2015) paper in the *JOOP*. The research was about primary school teachers in Croatia. The paper offered no description about Croatia or the lives of primary school teachers in that country; nor did it touch on why—if at all—the issue/s of job demands/well-being/job resources were critical for study (at the time, with that group or that sector in Croatia). In setting out the 'practitioner point' bullets (which is now a requirement for publishing in the *JOOP*) the authors made no qualifications as to the applicability of the findings or suggestions or points within or outside Croatia. The writers, however, did indicate the need to replicate the work in other 'work settings' (720). This is not meant as a criticism of the work. It is simply a reflection of the context poverty we speak of. Is the lack of context detail a result of journal policy, the assumptions of the authors, an unquestioned normative position, or blatant myopia as we noted earlier?

This is, perhaps, the heart of the historical comforts that OOP has allowed itself to enjoy. Research and theory seem to assume context and universality of application. OOP seems to assume rigour is dependent on replication through sophisticated quantitative means. OOP ignores other world regions and hardly tackles the 'global', 'national', and 'cultural'. The field appears non-cognisant or unconcerned about the potential reach of its theoretical formulations; a potential reach which calls for greater regard and inclusion of 'otherness' (Hegarty 2019: 48). The historical comforts may have become so ingrained that Hegarty's description may be symptomatic: 'People cannot always access the assumption they have made which is limiting their thinking.' Never mind that these 'people' are psychologists!

The net result is that OOP is shorn of potentially valuable contributions from other regions meanings, philosophies, and communities. We now consider how the field appears to 'conspire' to keep out the 'other'.

GPD in Occupational and Organisational Psychology: confronting dominant theory and gatekeeping

There are two obstacles facing GPD of OOP that are related to the phenomenon of ‘knowledge’. The first is about its quality; the second about its communication.

Theory challenges

GPD needs benchmarks to judge its effectiveness. These would normally be solid theory, an attribute that has been said is noticeably lacking in OOP, as stated by Herriot & Anderson (1997: 13):

No other sub-discipline in the organisational sciences has exhibited such a paucity of theoretical perspectives ... if the discipline fails to stimulate a diversity of theoretical perspectives and epistemological approaches, it runs the risk of becoming an overheated engine house of remote, blind, empiricism.

It has been argued that this problem has been aggravated by researchers in the field of psychology (therefore by implication OOP), failing to acknowledge the assumptions and preconceptions they bring into research. That is failing to clearly recognise the distinction between justified belief and opinion (Johnson & Cassell 2010). This is worsened by OOP researchers who are sometimes guilty of attempting to develop theory with the sole purpose of prediction, making assumptions about what they are measuring and the validity of the prediction, when these are both—according to Lewis & Drye (2018)—largely illusions.

To be fair to OOP, perhaps many attempts to build theories get quickly overtaken by the need to demonstrate practical application. The very nature of the field is to create tools that benefit an efficient relationship between people and work; in practice that often means devices that enhance business and/or management performance. There is a business ‘bottom line’ issue here. Theories are developed into management ‘techniques’, with application treated (perhaps inadvertently) as a form of replication or test of the original research work. Theories become a feature of the original methodology. Eventually the applications fail as replications and the lack of generalisability shows through (Tourish 2019). The theory starts to be seen as a ‘fad’ and its use declines. This lack of sustainable theory is a problem for OOP.

By way of example, the ‘Two-factor Theory of Motivation’ (Hertzberg 1966) had a huge impact on research and practice in ‘motivation at work’ during the second half of the last century, but as has been pointed out (Hertel & Wittchen 2008) the theory could not be replicated using other methods (King 1970) and can be explained by attribution theory (Weiner 1986). Far less is heard of the theory now.

Another, more recent, example is ‘Engagement Theory’ that identifies the performance benefits of personal engagement of individuals with their work (Kahn 1990). This is reported to now be in decline (Briner 2014). This is alleged to be so because its application is made difficult as the basic assumptions are ‘normative’ and ‘aspirational’ rather than ‘analytic and operational’ (Keenoy 2013).

Theory building in OOP, therefore, has challenges—not helped by the tendency for theories, after initial publication, to be syphoned off to serve as new management practices. In furtherance of GPD, maybe what OOP needs is not devalued ‘established’ theories but ‘theoretical suggestions’ that can be hypothesised and tested using more local methodological designs.

Communicating non-western formulations in western outlets

The second obstacle is that which constrains GPD academic output from penetrating the Global North home of OOP. This is about getting research in the field published. Research needs to appear in academic journals. Research in supposedly prestigious outlets is treated with greater reverence and impact—relevance and inherent quality notwithstanding (Singh *et al.* 2007). Without this, it is believed, the value of the research will not get the recognition it may deserve. But ‘prestige’ is driven by several factors. The first is that ‘prestigious’ journals in the field are almost exclusively found in the Global North, fuelled by research audit exercises used to judge the performance of universities, departments, and individual researchers. The second is that they operate in a highly competitive hierarchy and, third, they tend to publish in the English language.

Historically, journals have tended to look inwards to the research practices of their own region. This has made it difficult for academics in the Global South to break in. Indeed, any focus outside has often been presented as a ‘special edition’ of the journal. This has meant that Global South researchers often feel that they must fit into what they see as a Global North methodological template. Tourish (2019) refers to the work of Bell *et al.* (2017) that management studies researchers in India are put under pressure to use positivist and quantitative methods to have the chance of publishing in American journals.

Inter-journal competitiveness is a problem. Prestige is often seen to be related to rejection rate. The harder it is to get a paper published the more highly some will regard the journal as it publishes only the ‘best’. They offer the number of citations over a two-year period (the Impact Factor) to support this claim. However, this may not be a valid test as over a two-year period 90% of papers are not cited at all, and 84% are not cited over a five-year period (Alversson *et al.* 2017). Further, Pidd and Broadbent (2015) set out to find how the prestige rating of business and management

journals compared with the ratings that these same papers achieved in the 2014 UK Research Excellence Framework (REF). They found a huge variation between the two. Many papers accepted by prestigious journals were poorly rated by the REF, and ‘vice versa’. It should be noted, however, that the REF itself has been criticised for applying narrow traditional criteria in assessing academic worth (Sayer 2014, Tourish 2019). If this criticism is valid, it indicates a further bias against scholars from the Global South.

Add to this the traditional reviewing system which has recently been described as full of bias with reviewers approaching their task ‘through the lens of criticism’ (King *et al.* 2018, Tourish 2019). This is an obstacle that is largely self-explanatory.

The final obstacle is one of language. Any academic wishing to publish in an English-language journal whose first language is not English knows they have to deal with the issue: get their paper ‘translated’. However, in the Global South this is not quite so straightforward. Ghana is a good example. Its official language is English and most people who have gone through the education system speak it. However, the country has over twenty other recognised languages based on tribal heritage. For most, this will be their first language. Thus, many researchers in Ghana and elsewhere in the Global South where a similar situation exists, will be confident that they can write a journal paper in English, but may produce a formal style that is unfamiliar to a journal reviewer, and thus affect the chances of the paper being accepted. Here is a problem of how a lack of GDP impinges on language use and how language impinges on GDP. This issue has to be resolved.

GPD in Occupational and Organisational Psychology: confronting method reflexivity

For much of its history, Occupational and Organisational Psychology has struggled with tensions between its philosophical base in the human experience of work and its efforts to gain scientific respectability. To gain respectability, OOP has pursued methods which enable it to demonstrate commitment to rigour, replication, and reliability—often, this has meant a positivist and quantitative emphasis. This tension, discussed above, has not been resolved. It has, however, produced much by way of debates, concerns, and calls for pause which have been variously referred to in this article.

Several conclusions may be drawn from the methodological progress of OOP and from the debates in the literature. These include the following:

1. OOP methods have been overwhelmingly positivist.
2. Much use is made of sophisticated tools such as statistical meta-analyses and structural equation modeling.
3. Scholars have noted the drive for identifying or concluding causal relationships among variables to the neglect or consequential elimination of context.
4. Whilst much progress has been made, the positivist stance has perhaps inadvertently led to much atheoretical scholarship as well as less focus on 'real-world' problems.

We criticise the consequent exclusion that inflexibility facilitates. In a special issue on 'Work Motivation', the journal *Applied Psychology: An International Review* (Vol. 49 No. 3) of the year 2000, seventeen papers and an editorial were published. None touch on work motivation from Global South or African domains. The issue was described as a 'Special Issue on Work Motivation: Theory, Research and Practice'. In the Centenary Issue (2001) of the *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* (Vol. 74 Part 4), described as 'Emerging issues and future trends in OOP', there were eight papers, an editorial, a summary, and a concluding piece. None of these touched on this key OOP area from alternative locations.

Is this because not much OOP research takes place in these alternative locations? We think not. We posit that this is the direct result of exclusion arising from methodological foci and a lack of an internal diversity ethic. Interestingly, for a special issue of the *JOOP* (2013, Vol. 86 Part 2) described as 'Getting Diversity at work to work' the focus of the eight papers was on diversity management issues within organisations without alerting the science of OOP to the reality that to appreciate diversity in practice and to inform it, researchers need to appreciate the diverse and deep contexts from which the members of an organisation may come.

Reflexivity required

Patterson (2001: 383), echoed without so saying, the urgent need for OOP scholars to recognise and become more reflexive of research and theorising.

Researchers must be wary that a great deal of the research literature reported in journals is derived from the private sector blue chip corporations ... this may distort reality. ... Rousseau and Fried ... criticized the lack of reporting of the organisational context ...

There is a paradox here. High reflexivity suggests a greater effort to frame issues because of how one sees those issues. This could lead to insularity. However, the nature of reflexivity needed at this time, is suggested by Johnson & Cassell (2001: 127):

Perhaps the most we can hope for ... is to become more consciously reflexive by thinking about our own thinking, by noticing and criticizing our own epistemological pre-understanding and their effects on research.

With specific reference to GPD in OOP and inclusion of Afrocentric thought, OOP needs to pause and reflect on how its epistemes and inherent teleology conspire to prevent it from tackling those issues which affect the majority of the world's people and thus stop it from becoming truly global.

What is the way forward? Before exploring some thoughts as to the way forward, it is perhaps necessary to set out what the African context/s and the Global South context/s may provide to OOP.

Why diversify? And why GPD?

There are many 'reasons why' and there are many benefits that could accrue to OOP if it achieves GPD. We set out some of these below.

Truly global

Perhaps the most significant benefit that would accrue from a geopolitically diverse OOP, is that the field would finally become truly global and representative of the business of OOP in our world. Successive conferences of the British Psychological Society's Division of Occupational Psychology have had themes which suggest the need to tackle real-world problems. Themes have included: 'Resilience in a challenging world ...' (2016); 'Research into practice: Relevance and rigour ...' (2017); 'Evolution or Revolution? ...' (2018).

The challenging world 'out there' is 75% or more Africa and Global South. As it currently stands, OOP—deliberately or otherwise—is a field which demonstrates a colonial mindset. The colonial mindset operates by assumption of right of dominance or preeminence derived from a de-legitimation of the other and/or the indigenous. Nkomo (2011: 366) explores the 'hegemony of western conceptualisations' of management thinking and notes in a reflection of how deeply altering colonisation can be, that:

While my search revealed that Africa was all invisible in the mainstream leadership and management literature, I also found a body of literature that has risen in response to the exclusion and marginalisation of Africa in [the] ... discourse. Yet, these alternative representations often unwittingly preserve ... the ideological coding of Western (primarily US) conceptions ...

A truly diverse OOP can help to decolonise theory.

Theoretical re-imagining

Data from non-Western areas would assist the reconsideration of many theoretical assumptions which currently guide OOP. Many social science fields have recognised and worked to include and reinvent their theories using data findings from many countries. This is perhaps one of the reasons why Economics as a social science is such a dominant force in developing areas. Its theorists do not shy away from researching and drawing in data from the remotest of locations.

Relevance for practice

African countries continuously spend considerable sums on consulting services aimed at institutional and organisational improvements. From leadership through motivation to organisational development, locally mined concepts which resonate with the history, experience, and traditionally deep-seated norms of the locale would more than likely facilitate better adoption and application of important OOP concepts.

Contribution of indigenous knowledge to global knowledge

A geopolitically diverse OOP would stimulate the inclusion of autochthonous and indigenous knowledge to the global conversations. This goes to the heart of the context demands made by Johns (2006). Referring to why Nkomo & Kriek's (2011) submission won best paper, the then outgoing editor of the *JOOP*, Jan de Jonge (2013: 3) noted:

Their study shows that research on leading organisational change can really make a difference to policy ... leading ... change in societies that undergo this kind of fundamental restructuring is a huge challenge that has not yet been adequately addressed in the Western leadership and change literature.

The above quote along with the context concerns raised earlier, suggest that the time is right for OOP to interrogate itself and commit to a strategy of inclusion.

The way forward towards GPD and Africa's inclusion within OOP

In this section, we set out our thoughts and suggestions as to how OOP may drive an inclusive GPD programme. We offer a five-point agenda.

Research approaches and methods

We suggest that OOP scholars should ask the question: what methods are best disposed to mine the realities of ‘other’ areas? What research approaches would facilitate sustained attention to and engagement with Global South OOP issues? Puplampu (2016) makes suggestions for management research which are applicable here. He suggests that use of Hermeneutics, Graphic Scales, and Applied Interventions as useful tools. These are rather specific. Perhaps more generally, a greater use of phenomenological approaches is called for.

We argue for a greater use of the Case Study Method (CS). The major case for the adoption of the CS is the acquisition of knowledge. Flyvbjerg (2006) usefully referred to the following view: ‘Quantitative knowledge does not replace qualitative common sense. Qualitative knowing, with all its faults, is all we have. It is the only route to knowledge’ (Campbell 1975: 179).

Thus, if knowledge cannot be generalised it does not mean it cannot enter the collective process of knowledge acquisition in a given field or society (Flyvbjerg 2006). It follows, therefore, that the use of geopolitically diverse case studies would enhance the generalisable understanding in the field of OOP. Case studies also work well as a test of ‘falsification’. Karl Popper’s much-cited view that you might theorise that ‘all swans are white’ until you came across one that is black is an example of one case being sufficient to negate a whole theory. This illustrates the relevance of the CSM, and its role in GPD.

Finally, it should be noted that case study methodology is not driven by the need to average the data and dismiss outliers. These having been described as probably the richest source of understanding (Lewis & Drye 2018). It also provides exemplars and paradigm cases (Geertz 1995) and gets closer to the researched than quantitative research—allowing the correction of the process through ongoing feedback.

Developing theories: theory sensing or theory suggestion?

Scholarly theories are the product of world views domiciled within the milieu or context of the theorist. Theories may be speculative or may arise from attempts to bring analytical consistency to a social or human problem. Drawing on Colquitt and Zapata-Phelan (2007) and Whetten (1989) theoretical contributions must satisfy several important criteria. These include all-round 360° consideration of matters that explain the variance in phenomena; hence answering the questions: What? How? Why? Who? Where? When?

For OOP to access these criteria, a consideration of autochthonous knowledge, indigenous knowledge, and grounded knowledge is necessary. Each of these address nuanced representations of lived reality.

While notions of autochthonous reality suggest that the factor or variable originate from a location, allochthonous reality refers to elements that are imported into an ecosystem. Indigenous reality is often closely associated with the autochthonous, in that both refer to a level of nativity or originality which predates external invasion or colonisation by whatever means. The extent to which present-day human societies can lay claim to ‘autochthonous-ness’ is obviously a matter that may be subject to much romanticisation (Nkomo 2011). This issue is resolved by a commitment to grounded knowledge.

To attain GPD, OOP scholars need to work to develop theories that are grounded to the locale. In pursuing grounded theory (both as method and as philosophy), OOP scholars are likely to unearth nuanced distinctions between autochthonous and allochthonous realities. A country that would lend itself to such discovery would be South Africa. With a history of over 300 years of European presence (allochthonous) and over 30,000 years of Bantu/Khoisan presence (autochthonous), it would be interesting to understand what constitutes work motivation (or engagement or leadership) for the now indigenous population of both African and European descendants but who have been shaped by a difficult and differentiated history of conquest, exploitation, subversion, dominance, and apartheid. It is worth noting that the UN holds that indigenous people are effectively first nation people who were at a geolocation before settlers, colonisers, and vanquishers showed up (undated UN Factsheet). We specifically reject the suggestion, for example, that a theory developed in South Africa without these grounded and differentiated understandings would sufficiently capture ‘an African reality’—and by extension would sufficiently represent an ‘African understanding’. GPD is a tough prospect.

Is there a place for theory testing? Colquitt and Zapata-Phelan (2007: 1298) suggest theory building and theory testing need not be viewed as a ‘zero-sum’ ideal. We agree. Yet we raise a caution. Theory testing by its nature, imposes a preexistent rubric. This preexistent rubric force and unwittingly enshrines a lack of epistemological reflexivity (Johnson & Cassell, 2001). As indicated earlier in this article, a scathing comment was offered by Herriot and Anderson (1997) about this. This calls for what we describe as ‘theory sensing and theory suggestion’. In other words, OOP should be aware that its propositions must carry an inherent recognition that our theoretical propositions are ‘suggestions’ and tentative based on emerging findings from ‘somewhere’ awaiting explorations ‘elsewhere’.

These points of caution dispose us to call for a disruption of the theory testing received wisdom. In its place and in the interest of GPD, theoretical fecundity, and commitment to the voice of the locale, we suggest more OOP research in ‘other’ places should take place. Such research should proceed with a deep commitment to unearth

locally grounded reality—even if such reality in the end is found to be consistent with already-existing suppositions.

Journal access

We think it is necessary for the scholarly journals which carry OOP research and theory to accept that both past editors as well as current scholars have been raising (and continue to raise) the issue of the focus and character of scholarly submissions. For GPD to work, scholarly journals must firstly accept the need to surface work from other areas such as African countries. Second, journals must consider the value that may be brought to the scholarly conversations from ‘other’ places. Third, journals need to work with scholars in such countries to better appreciate how to communicate to and with audiences for whom the locale and the indigenous may have no salience for their lives and professional execution. The gatekeepers need to keep the gate open a little more.

The African proposition

There is a resurgence within the African region, of its intellectual and knowledge capabilities. Various bodies and institutions have begun to mainstream an African agenda which is beyond the political and more related to the institutional and the intellectual. We speak here of initiatives such as the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD); the African Union’s Agenda 2063, and the renewed interest in the functioning of the various economic and regional blocks. In recent times, France is said to be releasing its stranglehold on the currencies of its old colonies and a West Africa Monetary Institute/Union is being seriously considered. Major Western Higher Education Institutions are setting up campuses in Egypt, Ghana, and other places. Various African countries offer the prospect of dual socio-economic reality (modern–traditional) as well as the full spectrum of micro, SME–large national and international corporates. There are real possibilities for OOP scholars to work with their African colleagues at universities and scholarly associations, with the intent of addressing the historical under-representation of psychological realities of African countries in the OOP international conversations. In 2015, the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) was set up with sixteen-member universities from nine countries—in like mode to the Russell Group in the UK; with the aim of enhancing the quality of research in Africa and executed by Africans to find solutions to development problems in Africa. We refer to ARUA to show that OOP scholars in the Global North can find OOP scholars in the Global South, with like-minded commitment to research and research quality.

The role of international psychological associations

There are major scientific psychological associations in the West. These include the British Psychological Society (with its Division of Occupational Psychology); the International Association of Applied Psychology (with its Division of Organisational Psychology); the American Psychological Association (with its Division 14 — Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology). The OOP divisions of these scholarly associations need to deliberately stir up from their historical comforts. The study of OOP and its application to the human condition in the 21st century seems rather jaundiced when its greatest focus has been on the peoples and economies of the Global North who constitute approximately 11–15% of the global population of 7.8 billion.

Specifically, it seems reasonable to argue that the OOP associations should perhaps take a cue from the Academy of Management (AoM of the USA) which has in the last decade and half recognised the need to reach out and globalise the study of management. This has led to the setting up of regional affiliates, the holding of conferences in Africa and elsewhere, and a deliberate attempt to highlight African and other management issues by having relevant caucuses at each AoM annual conference. Specifically, these efforts have included direct engagement with scholars in African countries. OOP should adopt a similar strategy.

Conclusion

OOP has been far too comfortable with its presumed progress in tackling work issues. With progress comes responsibility. This responsibility—for OOP—should certainly include recognising that the application of OOP tenets (developed in the West) to other regions leaves several questions unanswered. Particularly that: as psychologists our interests should include studying, understanding, and applying tools of intervention to people, organisations, and economies based on *in situ* knowledge surfaced within the locale. The current situation where OOP theory and tools developed elsewhere are continuously applied in regions with different political, economic, social, historical, and philosophical traditions and contexts, seems rather un-psychological.

Research-to-Theory-to-Research-to-Practice is a continuum or cycle which must be informed by context-driven commitments (Johns 2006) not esoteric arguments of rigour and prescribed content based on externally derived notions of acceptability. Perhaps in the end, OOP should take a cue from the research of some of its own scholars and apply the diversity proposed for organisations to itself (Groggins & Ryan 2013: 264): ‘To promote a positive diversity climate, attend to structural inclusiveness.’ This suggestion from OOP scholars is targeted at practitioners. We dare say, it is

directly applicable to OOP itself. The suggestions advanced in this article would facilitate structural inclusiveness and geopolitical diversity of OOP. The question is, how ready and willing are Occupational and Organisational Psychologists to shake off historical comforts and bend their energies to the real-world problems that confront more than 80% of the global population? Human history suggests that inclusiveness and diversity is always a mindful and deliberate choice, hardly ever spontaneous.

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Internally displaced persons and COVID-19: a wake-up call for and African solutions to African problems — the case of Zimbabwe

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Abstract: In this paper we engage with the situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) residing in two informal settlements in Zimbabwe, within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. We draw on an ongoing collaborative, interdisciplinary, and impact-oriented project that seeks to help IDPs to be better prepared to protect themselves from the COVID-19 pandemic. We start by providing an analysis of the existing COVID-19 preventative messages and their applicability to the IDPs' situation, and further argue for the need to adopt Transformative Public Health Education (TPHE), to allow co-creation and co-production with IDPs in order to produce messages and interventions that suit their lived realities. We then move on to show the importance of leveraging local low-cost COVID-19 solutions, drawing on the example of the innovations that the project adapted in order to meet the needs of the IDPs residing in the two informal settlements.

Keywords: Internally Displaced Persons, COVID-19 pandemic, Zimbabwe, informal settlements, innovations.

Introduction

The novel Coronavirus disease 19 (COVID-19), caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome Coronavirus-12 (SARS-CoV-2), has been at the centre of a worldwide panic and global health concern since December 2019. Indeed, the World Health Organization officially declared COVID-19 a global pandemic on 11 March 2020 (WHO 2020a). The pandemic has seen healthcare systems in even the most advanced countries being overwhelmed. However, despite the fact that COVID-19 is a global pandemic, each context has experienced the crisis differently.

Zimbabwe, like many other African countries, recorded low numbers of COVID-19 in the first phase, but has seen a spike in an ongoing second phase. The country experienced over 1,000 deaths in the month of January 2021, including four cabinet ministers and several high-ranking politicians and professionals. There are fears that the new SARS-CoV-2 variant (501Y. V2), which was discovered in South Africa in November 2020 and has already been detected in other Southern African countries, such as Botswana and Zambia (Makoni 2021), could have been transported into Zimbabwe over the Christmas festival period when thousands of Zimbabweans living in South Africa returned home (Chakamba 2021). This is very concerning given that Zimbabwe's health system was already overstretched before the COVID-19 epidemic. Way before the pandemic, several hospitals did not have adequate equipment, running water, electricity, or medicines (Kidia 2018). With the arrival of the pandemic, the first death from COVID-19 involved a young man who was from a wealthy family, but could not be put on a ventilator due to unavailability of resources such as electricity and connection cables (Daniels 2020). At the same time, persistent strikes by health workers have also worsened the situation, especially for low-income households who cannot afford private hospital charges.

The second wave of the pandemic, and particularly the alarming death rates it has brought, especially among political figures, comes as a wake-up call for Zimbabwe, which has just joined the world in the race to acquire vaccines. Indeed, as the COVID-19 virus takes its toll, non-pharmacological preventive measures, such as social distancing (to reduce contact), hygiene practices (such as regular washing of hands using soap), and the use of sanitisers and protective clothing such as masks, have become more critical to mitigating the impact of the pandemic on societies, the health system, and the economy. To complement these, the government has put in place some tight lockdown measures, including a curfew from 6am to 6pm (except for essential services).

Speaking at the burial of two cabinet ministers, who were buried in a single ceremony, the Zimbabwe Vice-President Constantino Chiwenga lamented that COVID-19 'does not discriminate between the powerful and the weak, the privileged

and the deprived, the haves and the have-nots. It is a ruthless juggernaut that leaves a trail of despair and desperation' (Mutsaka 2021).

While it is true that the COVID-19 virus 'does not discriminate between the powerful and the weak, the privileged and the deprived, the haves and the have-nots', we argue that internally displaced persons (IDPs) are a population which, due to various factors, is extremely vulnerable to the spread of the COVID-19 virus. These factors include population density, as IDPs live in cramped conditions in informal settlements. These are spaces which make it extremely difficult (if not impossible) to exercise the recommended social distancing measures (Refugees International 2020, UNHCR 2020a). Most crucially, displaced people generally lack access to even primary healthcare services. What this therefore means is that, for this population, 'intensive care—the kind of care that COVID-19 patients need when they develop acute respiratory distress syndrome—is scarce to non-existent, especially in camp settings' (Refugees International 2020). This is further made more complex by the fact that displacement in itself often leads to serious health conditions, such as malnutrition, psychosocial stress, and other infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis, and these are health conditions known to be risk factors for COVID-19 infection and mortality (Refugees International 2020).

Focusing on the situation of IDPs in Zimbabwe, this article argues for the need to leverage local low-cost COVID-19 solutions in informal settlements, to protect and address the contextual needs of IDPs. We see this as an important approach to undertake, in a context where the global COVID-19 pandemic is threatening to limit the capacity of the developed world to support developing countries, and therefore resonates with the mantra 'African solutions to African problems'.

The article will proceed as follows. Section 1 provides the background to IDPs in Zimbabwe. Section 2 offers a discussion of the study on which this paper is based. Section 3 provides an analysis of the existing COVID-19 preventative messages and their applicability to the IDPs situation, and further argues the case for a Transformative Public Health Education (TPHE), and the need to rethink some of the current and generic COVID-19 messages to suit IDPs' local realities. Section 4 discusses the importance of leveraging local low-cost COVID-19 solutions, drawing on the example of the innovations that the project is currently adapting in order to meet the needs of IDPs residing in informal settlements. Last is the conclusion.

1. IDPs in Zimbabwe

The United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (GPID) define the internally displaced:

as persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised state border. (Deng 1999: 6)

While internal displacement is a significant feature in the Zimbabwean context, the number of those who are internally displaced is not fully known. UNHCR (2011) estimates it to range from 80,000 to 1 million. While Zimbabwe has ratified both the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the 2009 Kampala Convention for the Protection and Assistance of IDPs in Africa, the adoption and practical implementation of these instruments in domestic law are issues of grave concern. More generally, both the causes of disruptions and the constraints on the implementation of humanitarian programmes can be attributed to Zimbabwe's challenging economic and political environment (Hartnack 2005). To this end, academics have argued that the Zimbabwean IDP phenomenon is 'highly complex' (Rodgers 2006) as it is a result of a wide spectrum of events, which range from 'disastrous government policies [to] a few isolated weather related displacements' (Naidu & Benhura 2014: 153).

Most crucially, the IDPs themselves have complex and intersectional identities, which makes it difficult for some of them to claim their human rights. Notably, most IDPs are people of foreign origin (mostly Malawian, Zambian, or Mozambique) who are naturalised descendants of farmworking migrants/refugees, who became displaced as a result of Zimbabwe's controversial land reform (between 2002 and 2004) programme and the subsequent 2007 government cleaning-up exercise operation, dubbed 'operation murambatsvina' (Hager 2007, Hammar 2008). This echoes the assertion by Juss (2013: 263) that 'displacements that occur due to man-made ... actions are more prevalent than those caused by natural disasters'. Meanwhile, due to their migrant background, most IDPs ordinarily do not have access to a rural home; hence they reside in informal settlements. As Hartnack (2005: 173) argues,

Despite the fact that ... most of the [former] farm workers are Zimbabwean-born, they are still perceived, especially in nationalist discourses, as 'foreigners' who are not deserving of the same rights and entitlements as other citizens of Zimbabwe. In the land reform programme, they have been largely ignored as beneficiaries.

In their research with IDPs residing in two informal settlements—Mandebvu and Epworth (both close to the capital city Harare)—Madziva and Chikanza (2019) have shown that both settlements (like many other settlements; see Hammar 2008, Naidu & Benhura 2014) exhibit signs of socio-economic deprivation, as characterised by muddy structures, housing an average family of four per room. In the context of COVID-19, such structures are highly contagious as they lack critical facilities for

practising the pandemic standard of hygiene. In other words, due to their social and economic deprivation, IDPs in Zimbabwe undeniably have needs that are distinct, which not only require special attention, but may lead to poor outcomes in health, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic if no urgent action is taken. This further means that, because of long-existing inequalities, IDPs are more likely to feel the consequences of the pandemic both in the short and long term. Thus, as UNHCR (2020b: 2b) argues, IDPs ‘may face risks which are specific to their displacement in the context of COVID-19’. The IDPs’ situation in Zimbabwe thus calls for an urgent and well-coordinated timely and effective public health response.

2. The study and methodology

This article is based on data collected for the project, ‘Internally Displaced Persons and COVID-19: Leveraging local low cost COVID-19 solutions in informal settlements in Zimbabwe’. This is an impact-oriented project which brings together an interdisciplinary team from three Zimbabwean universities, two UK universities, and a local NGO, focusing on IDPs who reside in two informal settlements, Mandebvu and Epworth. Mandebvu, located 19 km west of Harare city centre, is situated at a former farm, now deserted following the controversial land reform programme. Epworth is a peri-urban and semi-formal settlement, about 20 km east of the city centre. A cross-sectional study was carried out in the two identified study communities. Participants were selected using random and purposive techniques. The inclusion criterion was any adult who had lived in the communities for at least six months prior to the study. The sample included both adult males (35.49%) and females (64.51%) who were abled or disabled. Our primary sampling unit was a household, and the head of the household was interviewed. Gender balance was achieved by systematically alternating respondents between households. COVID-19 Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) questionnaires were used to collect data from the selected participants.

The sample size was calculated using the formula:

$$n = \frac{z^2 r(1-r)[1 + \rho(m-1)]k}{e^2}$$

where n is the sample size in terms of number of participants to be selected, z is standardised z -score (normal variate) corresponding to a 95% confidence interval. The estimate of the indicator of interest to be measured by the survey is denoted by r and is taken to be 0.6 using the DHS suggested prevalence rate so as to achieve a minimum margin of error, and the intra-cluster correlation coefficient of $\rho = 0.45$ was selected using knowledge of the characteristics of the infrastructure. The number of

households to be selected per study area, m . The factor accounting for non-response, k , was calculated to be 1.1, considering that in developing countries the non-response rate is typically 10% or less. The margin of error, e , is taken to be 0.030 (97% confidence). Using these values, the sample size is 600 participants. This sample size was adequate to achieve the objectives of this study. The sample was drawn from Epworth with a population of 226,671 and Mandebvu with a population of approximately 30,000 (ZIMSTAT 2017).

Due to the nature of the disease and the need for safeguarding both the researcher and the research subjects, protective masks and sanitisers were given to respondents before the interview, and World Health Organization guidelines (WHO 2020b) including social distancing were observed. Furthermore, COVID-19 Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) questionnaires were used and administered using tablets riding on the KoBo Collect platform, and no papers were exchanged. Questions focused on: COVID-19 knowledge and safety and preventive measures; economic situation; existing skills; health and care needs (older people, women, children, etc); caring practices; support networks and community solidarity.

Data was directly captured and stored on portable devices (which were encrypted and anonymised) while in the field. After the data had been anonymised and redacted—(and translated from Shona to English) a copy of the data was submitted to institutional data repositories and other platforms of partner institutions following the same guidelines.

Primary data analysis was done in KoBo. Further analysis was done in SPSS, to allow for further probing and tests for association.

3. COVID-19 preventive messages and their accessibility for IDPs

It has long been established that information is power (Black 2014)—it can be used effectively or abused, and at times it may fail to reach some sectors of society, especially the most vulnerable (Hutchins *et al.* 2009). In times of global health pandemics such as COVID-19, proper management of information (collection or dissemination) is critical for it to achieve the intended purpose.

The Zimbabwe Ministry of Health in partnership with local and international organisations (for example, UNICEF) have made information on COVID-19 abundantly available to the bulk of its populace, which is disseminated through diverse channels, including print and electronic media, community engagement and mobile outreach vans. The government's intention is to penetrate even hard-to-reach communities using a multi-sectoral approach for the public health education process.

Certainly, communication is essential in providing information to the public, as this helps to increase preparedness to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. To this end, the Ministry of Health and Child Care (MOHCC) has developed a Risk Communication and Community Engagement Preparedness, Readiness Response Plan to COVID-19 (February 2020). The plan has identified stakeholders at high risk of COVID-19, which include: people moving across borders; people working at ports of entry (POE); business persons engaged in cross-border trading; workers in health care settings, including traditional healers; personnel in pharmacies; persons with underlying medical conditions, their family members, and immediate contacts. Missing are IDPs, which raises the question of whether the messages that IDPs are receiving are appropriate for them.

We conducted a survey in which we solicited information about IDPs' level of knowledge, responsiveness to the COVID-19 pandemic, their perceptions and skills about the pandemic, and how they could best be supported to protect themselves. The study also assessed how the community could be involved in the design of tailored COVID-19 responses.

We also conducted a COVID-19 information desk review to complement the findings from our survey, for the purpose of assessing the best intervention for our population, and whether the gaps in their needs were being met. Emerging findings indicate that the current information and preventive measures may not be appropriate or even readily accessible for our IDP population residing in informal settlements, as these are largely not targeted to their specific needs.

Below we look at the key information disseminated and discuss how effective each of these messages are in the context of IDPs in Zimbabwe.

(i) *Stay at home*. Assuming that all is provided for, the message to stay at home would presumably be welcomed by many as a form of taking a break from outdoor activities or a holiday from formal work. Given that such messages are not accompanied by any supportive infrastructure to meet people's day-to-day basic needs, such an approach could be viewed by IDPs as a 'privilege' only for the rich, and not for the rank and file characterised mostly by self-employed people who have to work on a day-to-day basis to put food on the table. As our research has shown, participants acknowledged being aware of the need to observe movement restrictions as a measure to curb the spread of infection. However, almost all participants noted that they earn below US\$50 per month and, as a result, they 'cannot practice what is preached' (Mackworth-Young *et al.* 2020) as 'hustling' is the order of the day. Hustling refers to 'making a living' or 'making do' with what is available, and is often a response to economic and life austerities (Thieme 2018). This means that the stay-home message, without any 'cushionary' measures to ensure reliable access to long-term food supplies,

is inappropriate to the IDP population, for whom money and food are scarce commodities only available to those who toil on a daily basis.

(ii) *Social/physical distancing and the use of personal protective equipment (PPE)*. IDPs live in overcrowded environments that make it impossible to practise social distancing. As our research findings show, it is common to see three or four families living in one household, and/or six family members sharing one room (also see Madziva & Chikanza 2019). In addition, these communities share ablutions, water points, and other common facilities. Without individual toilets, piped water, and household-specific amenities, the inconsistencies between adhering to the pronounced social distancing regulations and the primacy of survival are not surprising (Glassman *et al.* 2020). Of particular concern, as our research further shows, is that almost half of the participants reported having pre-existing conditions, including respiratory problems, heart problems, gastro-intestinal, diabetes, joint aches and pains, and hypertension, and these are some of the health conditions known to be risk factors for COVID-19 infection and mortality. Indeed, our findings have confirmed that IDP settlements are crowded, thereby making social distancing a challenge, and poorly resourced with limited water sources, which make it difficult for this population to practise good hygiene. Also, as already noted, the informal settlement residents are people who live in abject poverty, making it difficult for them to provide the necessary basic PPE, such as face masks for their households.

(iii) *Wash hands frequently with soap and water or use hand sanitisers*. The use of alcohol-based sanitisers or washing hands with soap and running water are the recommended ways of protecting oneself and others against the virus. However, IDPs have no access to clean water let alone tap water, and frequently lack money to purchase soap and other disinfectants. Thus, families struggle to ensure that they always have water and soap to enable them to wash their hands frequently.

The foregoing shows tensions that exist between the COVID-19 prevention regulations and other pressing human needs, with IDPs being forced to prioritise securing basics such as income, food, and water over compliance to COVID-19 regulations. This predisposes the IDP communities to a further spreading of the virus, and calls for urgent appropriate solutions using locally available cost-effective interventions to enable IDPs to protect themselves from potential viral exposure (see section 4).

Language and mode of delivery

Our research has also shown that the ways in which messages are packaged and the language used are not always accessible to IDPs, most of whom have low levels of education and would prefer to have some of these messages packaged in their own

different languages, as well as the use of visual aids such as images to illustrate how particular procedures could best be carried out. In terms of delivery, our IDPs have noted that they would prefer the use of radio and community-based approaches, among other things.

Below we make a case for context-based health education approaches as opposed to heavy-handed top-down approaches that are largely insensitive to vulnerable people's lived realities. We argue that a Transformative Public Health Education (TPHE) approach is essential when working with vulnerable populations, in order to provide appropriate information and use delivery modes deemed appropriate by the communities themselves.

The need for a Transformative Public Health Education (TPHE)

In order to prevent a COVID-19 catastrophe in IDP communities, it is critical to move away from sending out generic messages to providing them with targeted information, through co-production and co-creation.

Here we propose a TPHE, premised on the recognition that IDPs possess the 'lived' experience, knowledge, and survival skills that need to be nurtured, in order to ensure success and applicability of COVID-19 interventions to support community transformation (see Facer *et al.* 2020). Taking this approach not only helps to ensure the inclusion of IDPs in the local COVID-19 health legislative policies, but is also in line with the United Nations recommendations. Indeed, the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, issued a public statement on 1 April 2020, urging governments to 'step-up their measures' to protect IDPs worldwide from the COVID-19 threat. She went further to emphasise the need for governments to include IDPs in their COVID-19 decision-making process. As Jimenez-Damary argues, 'Internally displaced persons know best the specific challenges they face. Their participation in identifying these challenges and designing tailored responses to COVID-19 is essential' (UNHCR 2020c).

Given the findings we have presented above, we have worked with IDPs to package the public health messages in a more targeted way to suit their specific needs. Specifically, we included the IDPs community in re-designing the key messages, packaging them in local language(s), and making them context specific, relevant, and age appropriate (Facer *et al.* 2020). We also took into consideration their preferred channels of communication, including radio and community-based information booths, using different illustrations and images to ensure that the messages are easily accessible. IDP community health promoters (VHPs) were trained to promote health information within the informal settlements, following adaption of the MOHCC's COVID-19 material to make the information context-appropriate..

We believe that through capacity-building, IDPs' knowledge about COVID-19 will help transform the way in which they view themselves, and inspire them to participate in COVID-19 prevention and responses.

4. Adaption of local low cost COVID-19 innovations

Vieira *et al.* (2020) observe that, as the pandemic reaches low- and middle-income countries characterised by weaker health systems and limited resources, the lower socio-economic status of especially vulnerable populations may make implementing the preventive measures more challenging. Given the challenges that IDPs face, especially in relation to staying home and social distancing as noted above, we decided to adapt some of the low-cost innovations developed by one of the project partners, Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University (ZEGU). Through its innovation hub, ZEGU has developed a number of innovations that were introduced in Zimbabwe as an immediate solution to help health facilities curb the spread of COVID-19. The project has adapted the following innovations to help IDP communities be more prepared to protect themselves from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Low-cost full-body sanitisation booths

We have adapted a full-body sanitising booth (see Figure 1), made of an aluminum structure with plastic, plexiglass, or tempered glass wall cladding. The full-body sanitising booths were placed at entrances to informal settlements (one at each informal settlement) to allow the IDP population to sanitise themselves as they leave and/or come back into the settlement. The full-body sanitising booth has sensors that detect the presence of a person and automatically release sanitiser. Before a person enters the booth, their temperature is automatically captured and displayed for the person to read.

Sanitisation dispensers and footbath pans

We installed a combined handwashing station, footbath, and manual sanitiser dispenser (see Figure 2), at sites in the informal settlements where IDPs frequently gather to fetch water. The manual hand-sanitiser dispenser was made of cheap and readily available material, in this case an empty cooking oil plastic container, connected to a string which is then attached to a foot pedal made of wood. The dispensers are operated using the foot to dispense liquid hand sanitiser. IDPs are encouraged to



Figure 1. Full-body booth (plastic).

firstly step in the footbath with sanitiser, then move on to wash their hands, followed by sanitisation, before they can touch the borehole handle as a mechanism to help prevent the transmission of the virus.

These innovations can continue to be used beyond the COVID-19 pandemic to wash hands and fight against other infections, such as diarrhoeal diseases including cholera.



Figure 2. Three in one footbath, handwashing, and sanitising station.

The whole-body sprayers can continue to be used to prevent the spread of cholera, as it has become endemic in some parts of Zimbabwe, especially in informal settlements. All the innovations are easy to repair and use locally available resources. This is ideal for low-income communities. Importantly, communities can be easily trained on how to maintain the innovations. Batteries which last a year and half are available to power innovations such as the whole-body sanitisers. The batteries are charged using solar energy.

We realise that these innovations require a sustainable supply of sanitisers. To this end, a cheaper sodium-based sanitiser has been developed (and tested for viability) for use in the informal settlements. As part of the project, the next step will be to train the IDP communities to make their own sanitisers, foot-controlled handwashing devices, and detergents/soaps.

Empowering IDPs to produce PPE for use and for income generation

In addition to supporting our IDP population to fight the pandemic through providing context-relevant COVID-19 public health education messages, and adapting low-cost locally developed COVID-19 protective products, this impact-oriented project sought to empower the community to manage the pandemic beyond the project. This was accomplished through training them so as to enable them to: continue making use of the adapted innovations; make some of the innovative products for use by their households; and start their own income-generation projects, with potential for the economic emancipation of informal settlement dwellers.

To this end, IDPs were trained to produce face masks for home use (and potentially for generating income), particularly the commonly used cloth masks made in accordance with WHO guidelines (WHO 2020b).

Conclusion

While COVID-19 is a global pandemic, different regions are experiencing the pandemic differently. Zimbabwe, like other African countries, recorded low numbers of COVID-19 in the first phase, but has seen a spike in the current and ongoing second phase, which has so far claimed the lives of many people, including four cabinet ministers and several high-ranking officials.

Although the MOHCC, in partnership with local and UN Agencies such as UNICEF, have made information on COVID-19 available to diverse communities, in this article we have tried to show how some of these messages and the related COVID-19 preventative measures are not context specific, when we look at the situation of

IDPs who reside in informal settlements. We have shown how generic messages, such as ‘stay at home’ and ‘maintain social distancing’ are almost impossible to abide by, when it comes to IDPs, given their precarious situations. IDPs are individuals who live in abject poverty, with most of them earning less than US\$50 per month, and their precarious situations force them to prioritise securing basics such as income, food, and water, over compliance with COVID-19 regulations. Moreover, some of the messages are difficult for them to understand, as they are not packaged in a way that is accessible for this population.

We have therefore argued for the adaptation of a TPHE that involves co-creation and co-production to enable public health messages to be more accessible for the IDP population. We worked with the IDP population to ensure that key messages are packaged in local language(s), and are delivered through recommended delivery modes, including radio, TV, and community information booths manned by IDP community health promoters.

We have also gone further to discuss the innovations that we adapted as local solutions using locally available cost-effective interventions to enable IDPs to protect themselves from potential viral exposure. As we have also noted, IDPs were trained to make their own PPEs including face masks. We feel that the use of local innovations can help to solve local problems in line with the mantra ‘African solutions to African problems’. Such an approach is replicable in similar contexts across Africa and beyond.

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