Exploring Intersections:
The Language Question Again!

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Abstract

Many African countries have undertaken transitions to democratic rule since the early 1990s. While giving many people the rare opportunity to vote in competitive and pluralistic elections, there have been limits to the empowering effects of these transitions for many. The paper argues that the continued use of English, French and Portuguese in state and academic activities has minimised the empowering effects of these democratic transitions. The use of such languages contributes critically to limiting the ability of many Africans lacking fluency in them to participate in two important moments that define the possibilities and limits of democratic decision-making. First, it limits their ability to participate in discourses that determine what aspects of social realities should be subjected to democratic decision-making and what aspects should be insulated from popular participation. Second, it minimises the ability of many to contribute to discourses that define the appropriate ways of contesting whatever elements of political economies are included in the democratic space. International politico-economic institutions and external epistemic communities have had excessive influence on these two moments of decision-making. The paper argues that generations of African scholars have collaborated in this process of disempowerment by refusing to take a concerted and determined stance against the dominant role of French, English and Portuguese on the continent. Because of this role, we should regard African scholarship as a force seeking to create a space for itself within a closed discursive and practical space rather than a radical force seeking to eliminate closure of discursive and practical spaces generally.

Résumé

Beaucoup de pays africains, depuis le début des années 1990 ont entrepris la transition vers un régime démocratique. Les limites des effets d'autonomisation de beaucoup de ces transitions ont cependant été notées, malgré le fait que beaucoup de gens ont enfin l'occasion de voter dans des élections compétitives

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pluralistes, Cet article souligne que l'utilisation continue de l'anglais, du français
et du portugais dans les activités étatiques et académiques a réduit les effets
d'autonomisation de ces transitions démocratiques. L'utilisation de ces langues
limite davantage la capacité de nombreux Africains, qui ne les maîtrisent pas bien,
de participer à deux moments importants qui définissent les possibilités et les
limites du processus de prise de décision démocratique. Premièrement, cela limite
leur capacité de participer à des discours qui déterminent quels aspects de la
réalité sociale devraient être soumis à la prise de décision démocratique et quels
aspects devraient être isolés de la participation populaire. Deuxièmement, cela
réduit la capacité de beaucoup de gens de contribuer à des discours qui définissent
les moyens adéquats de contester tous les éléments d'économies politiques inclus
dans l'espace démocratique. Les institutions internationales politico-économiques
et les communautés épistémiques externes ont eu une influence excessive sur ces
deux moments de la prise de décision. L'article souligne que des générations de
chercheurs africains ont collaboré à ce processus de désautonomisation en refusant
de prendre une position concertée et déterminée contre le rôle dominant du français,
de l'anglais et du portugais sur le continent. A cause de ce rôle, nous devrions
considérer la recherche africaine comme une force visant à se créer une place dans
un espace discursif et pratique fermé, plutôt qu'une force radicale visant à éliminer
la fermeture d'espaces pratiques et discursifs en général.

Introduction

The three issues of democratisation, language policies, and academic free-
dom and responsibility in African societies have received considerable atten-
tion from many African intellectuals (Ake 1992; Wali 1963; Achebe 1975;
Mkandawire 1997; Mamdani and Diouf 1994). Much of the scholarship on
these issues has sought to bring out the emergent insights that explorations
of the intersections between these issues produce (Mamdani 1994; wa
Thiong'o 1998; Prah 1995; Mkandawire 1997). I follow in the footsteps of
these studies by reflecting on the intersections of three issues of relevance to
African societies. These are the issues of the empowerment of African masses,
the language practices of African scholars, and the location of African aca-
demics in struggles for empowerment in African societies. I undertake this
exploration of these intersections by posing a specific question. What role
have African scholars played in the struggle for more participatory, competi-
tive and autonomous politics in African societies?

Avoiding both wholesale glorification and wholesale vilification of Afri-
can scholars I suggest that African academics have been at one and the same
time both progressive and reactionary. They have simultaneously engaged in
acts of empowerment and of marginalisation. African scholars have most
often been the vanguard in struggles against the usurpation of the autonomy
of African societies by domestic political elites, international political and

economic forces and international epistemic communities. On the other hand (and at the same time), through their conduct of the overwhelming majority of scholarship and debate in English, French and Portuguese, African academics have contributed to the expropriation of the autonomy of the majority of Africans who lack fluency in these languages.

African scholars have constituted a force struggling for a niche within a *closed* [1] political space, rather than a radical force seeking to subvert the very idea and practice of enclosure of political spaces on the continent. The extroverted character of the language of African scholars has been but one facet of the general dependent and extroverted character of the political economy of African countries (Hountondji 2001: 225). The language possibilities of African scholars have been limited by this general context of dependence and extroversion. But the overwhelming use of English, French and Portuguese by African scholars and political actors generally in debating the central questions that impact the life chances of African societies was never an inevitable outcome. By refusing to take a concerted stand against the dominant nature of these languages as the only real medium of debate among academics and politicians on the continent, African scholars have contributed to disempowering the many people on the continent who are not fluent in them.

Shared Attributes in Atomised Struggles

The role of African scholars in emancipatory struggles on the African continent brings to mind histories of the usurpation of autonomy and of struggles against it in various societies. Three such recent struggles are the nationalist struggle against colonialism, the Pan-Africanist struggle against the threats posed to 'independent' African nations, and pro-democracy struggles against domestic authoritarian leaders. Efforts have been made to emphasise the common projects that anti-colonialism and Pan-Africanism represented (Nkrumah 1970). Less effort has gone into linking ongoing struggles against domestic authoritarianism with earlier nationalist and Pan-Africanist projects. The tendency to atomise these struggles has often led to a de-emphasis of the fundamental commonality that ties all of these projects together. All of these projects represent efforts by people in various African societies to establish more participatory, competitive and autonomous political spaces in their societies.

The atomisation of these struggles and the consequent de-emphasis of the common aspiration that ties them together have also led to their perversion in ways that have often left them with little emancipatory content. The nationalist struggle against colonialism often tends to slide into indigenisation and the replacement of foreign despots by indigenous ones, with little change

to the fundamental structures and practices of oppression (Mamdani 1996; wa Thiongo 1982; Armah 1986). Similarly, Pan-Africanist efforts often become attempts at creating supra-state entities to compete against the US and Western Europe with little attention to the nature of politics within each of the components of this potential union (Rathbone 2000). And as has been regularly pointed out, democratisation degenerates into multi-partyism and 'free, fair and regular' elections with little attention to whether these processes in fact alter the disempowered condition of the majority in these societies (Ake 1994; Ihonvbere 1996). The perverted versions of all of these struggles then become compatible with, and often instruments for, the further disempowerment of populations in these countries (Ake 1994). What role have African academics played in these ongoing struggles for more participatory, autonomous and competitive politics in African societies?

Locative Narratives and Counter-narratives

The dominant narrative of the location of African scholars in ongoing conflicts on the continent is that of valiant and often victimised strugglers against ruthless behemoths intent on usurping the autonomy of African societies (Mkandawire 1997; Sall 2001; HRW 1991). This locative narrative is in some senses proper. There is abundant evidence of the struggles carried on by African scholars against domestic political elites, international politico-economic institutions and external epistemic communities.

The struggle of African scholars against domestic authoritarian leaders in a sense represents a breach in familial circles. Activists who also happened to be scholars often headed many nationalist movements. Nkrumah, Nyerere, Kenyatta and Senghor are notable examples. Many of these leaders took authoritarian paths on the assumption of power. They also infringed on the autonomy of academic institutions by defining the over-arching goal of African universities as the contribution to the amelioration of the critical and pressing needs of society without allowance for debates on what constitute 'critical and pressing needs' (Mamdani 1994: 2; Mkandawire 1997: 18; Hagan 1994: 40). They attempted to exercise even more direct control through the determination of staff and faculty appointments and promotions as well as course offerings (Hagan 1994: 3). The carrot of funding and the big stick of state coercion have been the primary means of ensuring this control (Mkandawire 1997; Sall 2001). Many scholars irked by these infringements have countered domestic authoritarianism through subversive activities in classrooms and publications (Sall 2001), direct participation in opposition politics and protests through conferences and declarations on academic freedom.[2]

Beyond domestic authoritarianism many African scholars have always been conscious of the exploitative character of the international politico-economic environment within which African states are located. In the 1970 and 1980s many African scholars subscribed and contributed to Marxist world systems and dependency theories that criticised the exploitative domination of poorer third world countries by more powerful countries in the international system (Ake 1992; Amin 1977; Rodney 1972). In the 1980s and 1990s the dictatorial tendencies of international financial institutions like the IMF and World Bank have come under increasing attack from African scholars (Onimode 1989). The outrageous nature of some of the policies of these institutions,[3] the authoritarian manner of implementing these policies and the lack of positive results of most of these programmes have been rightly criticised by many African scholars (Mkandawire and Soludo 2003).

Paralleling this usurpation of the political and economic autonomy of African societies by international institutions has been the long-standing tradition of non-Africans dominating the production of knowledge on Africa (Zeleza 1997). From the early works of anthropologists, missionaries and colonial officials to efforts of contemporary Africanists, non-Africans have always dominated the study of Africa (Mkandawire 1997: 26; Anyidoho and Murunga in this volume). The act of knowledge production constitutes both exercises in representing social realities and in producing these social realities (Zeleza 1997; Mudimbe 1988). This marginalisation of Africans in the production of knowledge on Africa represents a facet of the wider politico-economic marginalisation of Africa in the world system. It has had many important consequences. First, the ways in which Africa has been perceived for centuries has always been determined by non-Africans, who for various reasons have painted overly negative pictures of the continent (Bohannan and Curtin 1984: 6; Davidson 1984: 16-17; Ki-Zerbo 1981: 2). Second, these representations have determined and justified external interventions that have often been detrimental to societies on the continent (Nkrumah 1964: 8). Third, since the space of knowledge production itself is an industry for creating and harnessing economic and political resources, the marginalisation of Africans in this space also denies African scholars economic resources and political agency (Mkandawire 1997: 26-34; Ake 1979). It is this marginalisation and its resultant harms that has provoked the so-called Africans vs. Africanists contest in the study of Africa. African scholars have pointed out this marginalisation and its resultant harms, and have sought to create greater space for Africans in the production of knowledge on Africa (Mkandawire 1997; Zeleza 1997).

A few African scholars have countered the portrait of the African scholar as a valiant struggler painted above. They have accused all (Shivji 1993) or some African scholars (Ki-Zerbo 1994: 32; Mkandawire 1997: 22) of quietism and even collusion in the face of authoritarianism. They have pointed out that African scholars have been especially willing to ignore authoritarian tendencies where such restrictions do not directly affect their academic and personal pursuits (Mamdani 1994: 248; Hagan 1994: 44).

It is with regard to debates over the language choices of African states and academics that 'the profoundly anti-democratic orientation' of the 'post-independence African intelligentsia' (Mamdani 1994: 253) has been most forcefully demonstrated. At the pain of over-simplification, and for heuristic purposes only, I will classify positions on the choice of languages in Africa societies into two. A first school has been critical of the use of the languages of former colonisers. While portraying languages like French, English and Portuguese as un-African, this school has argued that written literature is African only when it is done in African languages (Wali 1963: 333; wa Thiong'o 1986). Further it has questioned the possibility of expressing uniquely African experiences in these 'foreign' languages (Wali 1963).

The poverty of this take on the language debate has been its restrictive conception of Africanity. These scholars have written off the possibility that languages like English, French and Portuguese that have been widely spoken on the continent for generations are African (wa Thiong'o 1986; Wali 1963). This position locates Africanity outside of the lived experiences of generations of Africans, and imprisons it in *a* slice of the pre-colonial past.[4]

A second school has pointed out the significant number of Africans on the continent that have used these languages for decades, and the mixed character of language practices in many African societies (Achebe 1975; Menang 2001). They have raised in a very pointed manner the question of why languages like English, French and Portuguese are not African (Achebe 1988: 30; Menang 2001).[5] These scholars who are sympathetic to the use of these languages by African scholars have cited the ability of African scholars to weight these languages with the unique experiences of their societies (Achebe 1975) and the ability of these languages to facilitate communication among Africans from different societies (Achebe 1975: 57; Mphalele 1963: 9). They have also cited the political and economic costs of adopting one African language in societies that have multiple languages (Menang 2001).

Unfortunately this historicising of Africanity has gone along with a rather cavalier attitude towards Africans lacking the capital that fluency in languages like French, English and Portuguese *have been made into* in African countries. The inability of the majority of Africans to participate in the inte-

grated spaces that the use of these languages allows some Africans has not seemed to concern these scholars. These scholars in their own way restrict the sphere of Africanity, excluding the majority of Africans or trivialising their presence. Ngugi wa Thiong'o rightly castigates these scholars for creating 'the self-illusion of democracy by excommunicating sections of the population from the category of the people...' (1998: 92).

Two Modes of Disempowerment

What have been the modes of disempowerment that the language practices of African scholars have effected? It is when this question is posed that the overly restrictive understanding of the disempowering effects of the languages practices of African scholars seeps through even in the work of more progressive scholars like Ngugi wa Thiong'o. The dominant locative narrative of African scholars as valiant strugglers leading their societies to liberation runs deep. Traces of this narrative are present even in counter narratives like those of Shivji (1993), Mafeje (1994) and Ki-Zerbo (1994) that decry the non-organic character of African intellectuals. It is also present in Ngugi's prescription of the roles of 'scout and guide' as those that African scholars should assume (1998: 95). These critics take African scholars to task for not playing their role as guides and teachers of their societies and for not being organic intellectuals in these societies (wa Thiong'o 1998: 90; Shivji 1993; Mafeje 1994; Ki-Zerbo 1994). The mode of disempowerment effected by the language practices of African scholarship is then characterised as an *inaction*—a refusal to offer guidance and leadership, or to be socially responsible (Diouf 1994: 329). Ngugi wa Thiong'o uses the image of 'the split between mind and body in Africa' (1998: 89). The refusal of scholars (heads) to link up with the masses (bodies) is said to have created a continent of 'bodiless heads and headless bodies' (wa Thiong'o 1998: 89).

This scholarly messianism appropriates the duty of leading African societies for African scholars. It then berates them for adopting language and scholarly practices that prevent them from playing such leadership roles. This narrative fails to question whether African societies have in fact willingly given African scholars the duty to lead them and speak on their behalf.[6] More importantly, it minimises the role of African scholars in the disempowerment of African populations. By limiting this role to a refusal to offer leadership, it fails to consider the ways in which African scholars have actively contributed to the usurpation of the autonomy of many people in African societies.

Two primary modes of disempowerment that African scholars have contributed to through their language practices have little to do with the failure of scholars to provide leadership, whether organic or non-organic, to their

communities. First, African scholars have contributed to the usurpation of the rights of the majority of Africans to participate in discourses that determine what aspects of social realities are subjected to democratic contestation. Second, they have contributed to shrinking the capacity of the majority of Africans to participate in the delimitation of the legitimate ways of contesting over those aspects of social realities that are accepted as subject to democratic contestation. African scholars have collaborated in radically reducing the ability of the majority of Africans to participate in discourses that define what Said referred to as the 'narathemes that structure, package and control discussion' (2003: 5) on and about societies on the continent.

Democracy has been constructed as a process that allows the public to participate through free, fair and regular 'voting' in decision-making. Such decisions concern among other things the choice of leaders or the adoption and rejection of policies. In all countries that practice democracy in various spheres of decision-making, the democratic space is governed by two primary decisions. The first establishes what aspects of social realities are considered subject to democratic contestation. This choice sets out those aspects of social realities the public can decide on through voting and what aspects are insulated from popular decision-making.

In many cash-strapped developing countries, the World Bank, IMF and international epistemic communities with neoliberal orientations have campaigned with great success for the exclusion of macro-economic policy from democratic contestation (World Bank 1997: 152; Mkandawire and Soludo 2003). 'Insulating' macro-economic policy from popular contestation has been portrayed as a means of preventing what are seen as irresponsible publics from making distributive choices that ruin economies (World Bank 1997: 152; Naim 1985). Instead decision-making on such policies are portrayed as best left with 'technocratic' teams (whether the 'Berkeley Boys' or the 'Chicago Boys') that are better equipped to make the hard choices necessary for 'sound' macro-economic governance.[7] Thus political leaders in many developing countries make efforts to implement stabilisation and structural adjustment policies even when vast majorities in their countries are against them (Herbst and Olukoshi 1994). The message is simple. It is not within the power of such majorities to decide on these policy areas.

A second choice delimits what are considered as legitimate ways of contesting those aspects of social realities that are agreed on as being subject to democratic contestation. This choice delimits what methods—debating, voting, engaging in civil disobedience, striking and launching violent revolutions —are considered legitimate instruments in the contestation of issues. It also

establishes the proper ways of talking about issues. Further, it lays down the extent of decisions that can be made on various issues.

'Efforts at humbl[ing] the masculinities underpinning the structures that target women'[8] have become the subject of contestation in the democratic spheres of many African countries. Public debates are ongoing with regards to what rights women should be accorded in various societies. However, these debates are not entirely ungoverned in these societies. In fact there are often norms that circumscribe such discussions. In many countries it is considered reasonable and now somewhat fashionable to call for the establishment of ministries of gender, women and children affairs, and the establishment of women's wings in political parties.[9] On the other hand a glance at the make-up of cabinets in various African countries shows clearly that giving females proportional or equal representation in cabinets has not become an acceptable option in efforts at increasing gender equality in societies on the continent. Similarly, the question of the language of the state and scholarship is admitted to democratic contestation in many African countries. But calling for either the replacement or *complementing* [10] of languages like English and French with African languages is portrayed as unrealistic radicalism (Menang 2001) even though there is not much that is particularly unrealistic about these positions.

It must be noted that these choices as to what aspects of social realities to subject to democratic contestation, and how to contest those approved for democratic contestation, are not god-sent, irreversible choices that people can do nothing about. In fact both of these choices are established by people in various societies through complex debates, negotiations and often, forceful imposition. The choices made on both of these fronts do change over time. The important point to note here is that neither of these choices are the direct result of the voting patterns of the mass of people that constitute majorities in democracies. On the contrary, these choices most often limit the options available to the voting mass of people in a democracy as well as the ways in which they can pursue these available choices.

Discourses and negotiations that set limits highlighted above on democratic spaces in many African societies have for a long time been carried on almost exclusively in languages like French, Portuguese and English. The main participants in such debates have been domestic political elites, African academics, international epistemic communities and international politico-economic institutions. Majorities in these societies lack sufficient fluency in these languages to intervene 'seriously' in the debates.[11] These linguistic arrangements have suited international politico-economic institutions and international epistemic communities rather well. They have always sought,

largely successfully, to exercise a disproportionate amount of influence on such decision-making in societies on the continent.

African scholars have thoroughly denounced the marginal role that they have been allowed in these debates. African academics have regularly condemned the disproportionate influence of international epistemic communities and politico-economic institutions on such decision-making (Mkandawire 1997).[12] But scholars have been slow to appreciate *a* fundamental basis of the marginalisation of African publics in such debates—the fact that these debates are mostly held in languages in which most Africans lack sufficient fluency.

By contributing to the continuing debate on fundamental issues affecting the life chances of African societies using languages like French, English and Portuguese, many African scholars have collaborated in the usurpation of the rights of these populations to participate in discussions that affect their societies. African scholars have refused to take a concerted stance against the overwhelming use of these languages in delimiting what aspects of social realities are subjected to democratic contestation, and how selected aspects are contested. By so doing, they have colluded with the very domestic elites and international institutions and epistemic communities that they often denounce and oppose, to deprive the majority of Africans of the ability to take meaningful part in such discussions.

It is true that African scholars have not had a lot of easy alternative languages to choose from in the pursuit of their scholarly activities. Indeed the choice of English, French and Portuguese as official languages by political leaders and the dominant nature of English and French as languages of international commerce and scholarship make the alternative of scholarship in local languages extremely difficult. The difficulties faced by scholars like Ngugi wa Thiong'o who have tried the latter option are instructive (Gikandi 2000). But the use of languages in which the majority of Africans are not fluent should not in anyway be regarded as inevitable. It is conceivable that some consensus in the scholarly community could have influenced the decisions state leaders make on language choices, especially given the situation of scholars in the educational as well as political systems of countries. No such consensus exists but in places where bold moves at linguistic empowerment have taken place, like Tanzania, it was a result of the concerted effort of the Nyerere regime. Some scholars have been outrightly hostile to efforts at questioning existing language policies and practices (Mphalele 1963: 7-8; Soyinka 1963: 9). Others have regarded the current language policies and practices as the *bearable* cost of the ability of African scholars from different societies to communicate with each other (Achebe 1975: 57). Others yet

still have regarded the situation as inevitable (Achebe 1975: 62; Menang 2001). Those scholars like Wali, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Prah who have seriously questioned the language policies of scholars and states seriously tend to be portrayed as unrealistic nativists (Mafeje 1994: 61; Achebe 1988: 63; Menang 2001).

Conclusion

The marginalisation of the majority of Africans that the language practices of African scholars have partly effected represents the less rosy and less advertised legacy of the activities and policy preferences of African scholars. So while fiercely resisting the authoritarianism of domestic political leaders and international authoritarian forces, African scholars have at the same time collaborated in the exclusion of the majority of Africans by the very domestic and international forces they have been resisting. While asserting like Mkandawire that 'Natives do know, and know a lot about their conditions' (1997: 30), African scholars have circumscribed the sphere of the knowing by inscribing literacy in Portuguese, French or English as a precondition for belonging in the category of the 'knowing native'.

The new generation of African scholars must of necessity face up to and give serious thought to the disempowering effects of its language practices on majorities in various societies on the continent. While trying to reclaim our subjecthood from external forces we must give some attention to examining the ways in which our practices have (even if unintentionally) contributed to the infringement of the subjecthood of the less formally educated on the continent. Ultimately, each scholar should have the freedom to choose the languages in which s/he wishes to express his or her scholarship. This freedom should not, however, prevent us from reflection on the not-so empowering consequences that our choices have on societies on the African continent. Neither should we seek to avoid recognition of the disempowering effects of our choices through the deployment of various, 'realistic' or postmodern analyses. Reflections on the less palatable sides of our practices might help us become more visible in and relevant to the societies of which we go to great lengths to portray ourselves as insiders.

Acknowledgments

have been selective in incorporating their suggestions, I bear sole responsi-
bility for the views expressed in this essay.

Notes
1. The discursive and practical spaces within which African scholars operate are
    closed ones. As Murunga points out in this volume, and as Mkandawire
    (1997) among others have pointed out before, African scholars themselves are
    often the victims of marginalisation by foreign epistemic communities,
    international economic and political institutions like the IMF/Bank as well as
    domestic political elites.
2. See the Kampala Declaration on Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility
    and Dar-es-Salaam Declaration on Academic Freedom and Social
    Responsibility of Academics (Reproduced in Mamdani and Diouf, 1994: 349-
    363).
3. One of the more outrageous policy recommendations of the World Bank was
    the 1986 (mis)diagnosis that Africa did not need university education (Imam
    and Mama 1994: 73).
4. Languages like English, French and Portuguese, which were only introduced
    on a large scale after this period, are not considered African despite the long
    use of these languages by segments of African populations. Gilroy calls such
    essentialism 'the fantasy of frozen culture' (2000: 13). The urge to define
    Africanity in terms of what came immediately before the onslaught of colonialism
    is itself an effect of the psychological violence wreaked on African minds by
    the colonial intrusion. The move to minimise this 'epochal character of
    colonialism' (Irele 1992: 207) seen in works like those of Bayart (1993) and Ellis
    (1999) is in fact very wrong-headed.
5. This question is especially relevant when we consider the fact that many in
    places like Britain and France who are now considered 'legitimate' native
    speakers of these languages had these languages imposed on them by
    conquering royalty.
6. Democratic politics requires those that are led to offer leadership to leaders. It
    is doubtful whether African societies have offered leadership responsibilities
    to African scholars. In fact the ability of African scholars to assume leadership
    positions in these communities and speak on behalf of them is often largely
    due to the lack of fluency of the majority of Africans in English, French and
    Portuguese through which discourses about the continent are carried out.
    These language practices thus accomplish the simultaneous process of
    empowering African academics while disempowering masses lacking sufficient
    fluency in these languages. Many African academics thus also double as
    policy makers. Adeptness at these two tasks does not always coincide. In fact
    they might hinder each other in some cases.
7. The lack of positive results from decades of stabilisation and adjustment
    programmes raises questions about the soundness of the governance offered
    through these policies (Mkandawire and Solubo, 2003). For a good discussion

of the role of bureaucrats in African policy-making and implementation, see Thandika Mkandawire, 'The Spread of Economic Doctrines in Postcolonial Africa', mimeo.

8.   I am using the words of Olukoshi and Nyamnjoh here (2003: 1).

9.   Such cabinet posts go by different names. In Kenya they are termed 'Gender, sports and culture', in Sierra Leone, 'Social welfare, gender and children's affairs', and in Ghana, 'Women and children's affairs', to give just a few examples.

10. I do not mean supplementing here. I mean complementing as exists between Setswana and English in Botswana, and Swahili and English in Tanzania, for example.

11. Non-Western educated people in many African societies have carried on vibrant parallel discourses on everyday realities in their societies. But their infrequent interventions in 'high discourse' have not been looked on with favour. Their interventions have often been dismissed as 'uneducated' opinions (Yankah 1996).

12. Also see the contribution of Murunga in this volume.

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