Journal of Higher Education in Africa

Revue de l'enseignement supérieur en Afrique

Vol. 19, No. 2, 2021

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P.O. Box 3304, Dakar, SENEGAL
Tel.: (221) 33825 98 22/23; Fax: (221) 33824 12 89
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CODESRIA would like to express its gratitude to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY), Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Open Society Foundations (OSFs), Oumou Dilly Foundation, UNESCO, Ford Foundation and the Government of Senegal for supporting its research, training and publication programmes.

Le CODESRIA exprime sa profonde gratitude à la Swedish International Development Corporation Agency (SIDA), à la Carnegie Corporation de New York (CCNY), à la fondation Andrew W. Mellon, à l'Open Society Foundations (OSFs), à la fondation Oumou Dilly, à l'UNESCO, à la Fondation Ford ainsi qu'au Gouvernement du Sénégal pour le soutien apporté aux programmes de recherche, de formation et de publication du Conseil.

ISSN: 0851-7762

Journal of Higher Education in Africa/
Revue de l'enseignement supérieur en Afrique
Vol. 19, No. 2, 2021 (ISSN 0851–7762)

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(ISSN 0851–7762)

Producing Anthropological Knowledge in and of Southern Africa: A Case Study of the *Anthropology Southern Africa* Journal

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Abstract

This article conducts an archival examination of the *Anthropology Southern Africa* journal (formerly the *South African Journal of Ethnology/Suid-Afrikaanse Tydskrif vir Etnologie*), in keeping with Allen and Jobson's (2016) call for anthropology to examine its own archives, as spaces of knowledge production which act as indexes of power. The article moves through three eras of the journal, between 1978 and 2020, showing how it evolved from being the home of *volkekunde* anthropology under apartheid, to a space for the production of anthropological knowledge by both established and nascent voices from the global South. Turning attention to the demographic minutiae of praxis within journals enables the start of a conversation about who was making anthropological knowledge at different moments in history, and what sort of knowledge was made.

Résumé

Cet article propose un examen des archives de la revue *Anthropology Southern Africa* (anciennement *South African Journal of Ethnology/Suid-Afrikaanse Tydskrif vir Etnologie*), en droite ligne de l'appel d'Allen et de Jobson (2016) à l'anthropologie d'examiner ses propres archives comme des espaces de production de connaissances qui agissent comme des index de pouvoir. L'article couvre trois périodes de la revue, entre 1978 et 2020, et montre comment elle est passée du statut de foyer de l'anthropologie *volkekunde* sous l'apartheid à un espace de production de connaissances anthropologiques par des voix, établies et naissantes, du Sud global. Porter l'attention sur les détails démographiques de la praxis dans des revues, permet d'amorcer une conversation sur ceux qui, à différentes périodes de l'histoire, produisait les connaissances anthropologiques, et du type de connaissances dont il s'agissait.

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Introduction

In their 2016 article *The Decolonizing Generation* Jafari Sinclaire Allen and Ryan Cecil Jobson stated that, even while anthropologists recognise that the archive and the canon are indexes of power and domination, 'scant efforts have been made to turn this insight back toward the archive of anthropology itself' (Allen & Jobson 2016:135). While Allen and Jobson were writing of the work done by a generation of black, Afro-American scholars and allies towards decolonising United States anthropology, similar calls have long been made from within Africa with regard to examining the politics of knowledge production in and about the region, in a context of uneven globalisation and disparities of power (Zeleza 2002; Mkandawire 1989; Mkandawire 2005). In contemporary South Africa, recent calls by students and activists to decolonise the disciplines (see Nyamnjoh 2016), as well as critiques levelled by academics against the structure of the curriculum and the university itself (Nyamnjoh 2012; Morreira 2017) have added urgency to the issue.

In this article, I heed these calls by conducting a quantitative and qualitative exploration into the archive of the peer-reviewed, South-Africa based journal *Anthropology Southern Africa*, to speak to the politics of anthropological knowledge production in the region, and its impact on wider society through regional and global flows of knowledge and resources. It is worth noting at the outset the positionality of the author: I was an editor of the journal from 2015 to 2019, and currently sit on the Editorial Board. I am also a white woman, born in South Africa, raised in Zimbabwe and currently practicing as an academic in a South African university. While my PhD was in anthropology, I am not based in an anthropology department, but rather in an inter-disciplinary education development unit. All these positionalities matter, as in many ways I am both insider – anthropologist, resident in South Africa, academic at a South African institution, ex-editor of the journal; and outsider – inter-disciplinary academic, white Zimbabwean, no longer editor. This perspective has given me access to the archive examined here, rapport with the editors interviewed, and an insider knowledge of South African universities and the contemporary workings of the journal itself. Given the histories of colonialism and apartheid, I am also deeply aware of what it means to be a white settler academic in a society which carries historical and contemporary structural racism, which as a systemic issue is variably visible or invisible in different settings, texts and contexts. The work undertaken in this paper is an attempt to surface and make visible some of the trends within anthropological knowledge production in South Africa, which has and does occur against the backdrop of these wider societal hierarchies. The work of unsettling the hierarchies we have inherited and continue to work within has historically fallen on the shoulders of black academics, but must also be undertaken reflexively by white academics who can work within their spheres of influence to disrupt and challenge contemporary power relations, and unearth the ways in which historical power relations have underpinned knowledge production in the disciplines.

The decision to undertake this analysis was made between all the co-editors of the journal at the time it was initially written in 2018 (and updated in 2021) as one among many ways in which the journal was deliberately and reflexively thinking through its role in knowledge production in the region. The paper thus uses the journal as a case study through which to think about the 'local' production of anthropological knowledge in the region, bearing in mind the racialised history both of South and southern Africa, and of the discipline itself, and how this may have impacted upon what was written, who wrote it about whom, and where they published it. The paper draws on a quantitative examination of authors' and editors' geographical and academic positioning to speak to demographic trends over time; as well as some brief qualitative examinations of the journal's shifting aims and scope over time to speak to what was considered 'good' anthropological knowledge from this perspective (and thus what other sorts of knowledges may have been excluded). Finally, the paper draws on interview data with editors past and present to examine the socio-political history of the journal and its relation to southern and South African anthropology. Throughout, I work with an underlying historical understanding of anthropology as an academic discipline that existed and was enacted within capitalist modernity, which created particular epistemic hierarchies within which African knowledge was undervalued (Morreira 2017). This was as true in anthropology, even with its liberal tradition of cultural relativism, as it was elsewhere. Harry Garuba has argued that racialisation was a core project of modernity, which was 'embedded in a machinery of knowledge production that defined ways of knowing, ways of seeing and apprehending social reality and the world' (Garuba 2008:1642). Anthropology and other social sciences form part of this machinery; as such, this article provides a factual overview of one journal's production of knowledge over time, taking into account the impact of racialisation on knowledge production as it unfolded in South Africa.

In what follows, I compare three points in the journal's history:

- 1978–2001, when the journal was published as the *South African Journal of Ethnology/Suid-Afrikaanse Tydskrif vir Etnologie*;
- 2002–2013, when *Anthropology Southern Africa* was self-published by the Anthropology Southern Africa Association;
- and 2014–2020, when *Anthropology Southern Africa* was co-published by international publishers Taylor & Francis and South African publishers NISC.

Each era shows particular trends, and each reflects the wider politics of the time. Due to space constraints the paper focuses mostly on the period up to 2014, but does also end with a brief consideration of the demographic and conceptual shifts in the contemporary era.

Inda and Rosaldo (2002:4) have noted of globalisation that it results in complex and uneven mobilities, such that 'not every person and every place participates equally in the circuits of interconnection that travel the globe'. Uneven globalisation, disparities in economies within the region, and the politics of racialisation all affect 'who produces what knowledge, about whom, and for whom' (Anyidoho 2008:25), both within Africa and beyond it; in this paper I consider one example of knowledge production in the southern African social sciences.

Background

Knowledge, as we know, is not apolitical; and academics and intellectuals, the producers of knowledge, do not stand outside of the power relations of the universities or research centres in which we work, and the broader societies – both national and global – in which we operate. In Zeleza's words: 'Politics, indeed, affects all our lives, our social relations and practices, as citizens and as academics, as creators and consumers of cultures and commodities[1], as the producers, practitioners, and prey of power, as objects and subjects of knowledge.' (Zeleza 2002:9). Zeleza's 2002 article on the politics of historical and social science research in Africa gives a thorough analysis of some of the factors at play in producing knowledge in and about Africa, particularly the ways in which research agendas have been 'tied to the vagaries of state politics and policies, the shifting missions and mandates of international donor agencies, and the unpredictable demands and dislocations of civil society' (ibid); not to mention the internal politics of universities and independent research centres themselves. In South Africa, Gordon and Spiegel (1993) have made the point that anthropological knowledge production was for a very long time subsumed within the machinery of apartheid and the struggle against that machinery, such that apartheid 'discourse perniciously dictat(ed) what should be written both by its supporters and, significantly, its opponents' (Gordon & Spiegel 1993:86). It is worth noting at the outset that many of the key debates about and critiques of South African anthropology (such as the works of Archie Mafeje and Bernard Magubane, for example) were published elsewhere, not in the journal being examined here: an examination of the archive thus reveals important absences as well as presences. In 1998, Archie Mafeje argued that post-independence anthropology in Africa had been re-organised rather than deconstructed, such that the underlying logics of colonial anthropology – epistemological, theoretical, methodological – were reproduced in slightly altered form rather than disbanded. Despite Mafeje's call to African anthropologists to 'call it an end of an era and start experimenting with new forms of knowledge' (1998:39), anthropology has remained a strong presence within South African social science; it thus seems worth examining the historical and contemporary shape of that presence. Knowledge does not get created in a vacuum, particularly in the social sciences where academic work is deliberately positioned in response to societal challenges and inequalities. Local and global politics matter to research and therefore to the sorts of knowledges that are produced.

Connell (2014:526) has argued:

> The global economy doesn't produce a simple dichotomy. It does produce massive structures of centrality and marginality, whose main axis is a metropole/periphery, North-South relationship.

In southern Africa, South Africa at times acts as the regional metropole of knowledge production, in that South African universities are often better resourced than others; globally, however, the dynamics are still massively skewed such that most of the published work about southern Africa comes from the global North. Hassan (2008), for example, has shown that only 1 per cent of publications in international peer reviewed journals emanate from southern Africa, whereas a massive 30 per cent come from the United States alone.

The disparity in the geo-politics of publication cuts across academic disciplines, including within African Studies: Briggs and Weathers' (2016) study of two top-tier African Studies journals,[2] for example, found that the percentage of papers published by Africa-based authors has declined over time, despite an increase in the numbers of Africa-based scholars at universities and research institutes, due to increased rejection rates. Furthermore, even where papers from Africa-based authors were published, Briggs and Weathers show that Africa-based authors are systematically cited less than authors from the North.

Scholars in the global South are also not immune to the cultural capital imbued in intellectual work from the global North, and continue to rely on northern theories in their work, such that Hountondji (1997:2) refers to the phenomenon of 'theoretical extroversion' in the global South, which extroversion Zeleza defines as 'the feverish importation of paradigms, problematics, and perspectives…from the intellectual establishments of the North' (Zeleza 2002:21). Connell (2007) has argued that while most of the world does produce theory, in many genres and styles, only work from certain parts of the world is *perceived as* theoretical. Connell (2007:ix) thus notes that 'Hountondji describes a pattern in colonial science, carried forward to the postcolonial world, where data-gathering and application happen in the colony, while theorising happens in the metropole. Most social science still follows this pattern'. As such, within the academy, the North remains the space from which theory emanates, while the South is seen as a source of data (Connell 2007). Furthermore, there are certain expectations that scholars from the global South, (or scholars from underrepresented communities and nations who are based in the global North) should do research on the global South, such that the gaze of social science continues to be directed towards the developing world. As recently as 2020, then, Ron Kassimir of the Social Science Research Council could state that there is an unspoken idea within social science that 'scholars from the developing world should study their own' (quoted in Nordling 2020; cf. Morreira 2012), which unspoken idea drives whether an application for a research grant is successful or not. In producing such knowledge about 'our own', scholars from the global South also continue to publish in global languages that carry greater social capital than African languages, which, while increasing the impact of the research, runs the risk of divorcing African knowledge workers from the people among whom we live and work, and who we write about (cf. wa Thiong'o 2005).

Writing in 2002, Zeleza said 'the challenge for Africa's intellectuals, leaders and assorted friends is to map out modes of integration into the unfolding global system that will maximise, not further marginalise, the interests of the continent's peoples and polities, economies and environments, societies and cultures' (Zeleza 2002:10). Nearly twenty years later, this diagnosis still stands. Pierre (2020) has argued that more than any other discipline, anthropology has contributed to particular ways of what she terms 'apprehending African society' (Pierre 2020:223). Pierre argues that during the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, anthropology provided the intellectual drive behind colonial representations of Africa and Africans, which were shaped by a racialising logic. It is within the context of anthropological and other knowledge production in and about the global South, as outlined above, that this paper situates itself, in order to argue that practicing reflexivity is essential for those of us who are in the business of knowledge production in and about Africa. In what follows, this paper begins such acts of reflexivity with regard to an archival examination of the *Anthropology Southern Africa* journal.

Case Study: *Anthropology Southern Africa*

The *Anthropology Southern Africa* journal is the journal of the Anthropology Southern Africa Association (ASnA), a professional association for anthropologists living and working in or on southern Africa. While its current remit is regional, for much of its history the association and journal have mostly been South African-centric. The history of the association, and of the journal, is telling of both the history of anthropological knowledge-making in South Africa, and the history of South Africa more generally. Mamdani (2001) notes that racialised ideology is institutional as well as ideological, such that it is embedded in the work of institutions like universities and their mechanisms of publication. For the purposes of analysis, I have compared three points in the journal's history: 1978–2001, when the journal was self-published by the the Association of Afrikaans Ethnologists/*die Veereniging van Afrikaanse Volkekundiges* as the *South African Journal of Ethnology/Suid-Afrikaanse Tydskrif vir Etnologie*; 2002–2013, when *Anthropology Southern Africa* was self-published by ASnA and 2014–2020 when *Anthropology Southern Africa* was co-published by Taylor & Francis and NISC. I deal with each in turn as a means of exploring the power dynamics, possibilities and limitations of producing particular kinds of knowledge about southern Africa at particular points in time.

Eras of the Journal

The *South African Journal of Ethnology/ Suid-Afrikaanse Tydskrif vir Etnologie (1978–2001)*

In its first incarnation, the journal that became *Anthropology Southern Africa* was the self-published journal of the Association of Afrikaans Ethnologists/ *Veereniging van Afrikaanse Volkekundiges*, and published articles in Afrikaans and English. Since early in the twentieth century, but becoming most apparent once apartheid had taken hold in the 1940s, anthropology in South Africa was ideologically divided between the two camps of 'ethnology' and 'sociocultural anthropology' (Spiegel & Becker 2015). Authors in both these camps, however, were largely white, whether settlers or sojourners, and Mafeje and Magubane have argued that despite the differences between them, both intellectual traditions drew on a colonial epistemology in their work (Webster 2018). The sociocultural anthropology branch drew from, and contributed to, British anthropological thought following Radcliffe-Brown, who established the first anthropology department at the English-medium University of Cape Town; while the ethnology branch, locally termed *volkekunde*, drew on a pre-World War 2 German tradition of anthropology (Spiegel & Becker 2015). Despite their colonial underpinnings, the two approaches differed in their understanding of colonial society, and the role of anthropology as a discipline within that society. Where the English-speaking sociocultural anthropology camp tended to view colonial nation states as a single system, the *volkekunde* tradition gave intellectual and scientific support to the apartheid ideology of separate development.

The journal in its first iteration fell into this intellectual camp. *Volkekunde* analyses worked with the idea of 'ethnos', in which essentialised cultures were seen as neatly mapping onto the ethnic groups as identified by the apartheid state. Most of the *volkekunde* practitioners were based at Afrikaans-medium 'historically white universities' (HWUs) in South Africa, and at under-resourced historically black (often rural) universities (HBUs).[3] The sociocultural anthropologists were at English-medium HWUs in South Africa and in the wider southern African region as well (see Morreira 2016). Neither *volkekunde* nor sociocultural anthropology were apolitical. Spiegel and Becker note of the British/English speaking tradition that:

> …many social anthropologists demonstrated their rejection of segregationist policies in published work and public interventions. Due to the discipline's assigned field of expertise and particularly its concern with the concept of 'culture' (and 'cultures'), social anthropology leaned toward concepts of pluralism with which to engage the state from a liberal position (Spiegel & Becker 2015:755).

Kuper (2005) has argued that volkekunde scholarship fed directly into apartheid ideology. Moreover, both traditions were immersed in the racialised epistemologies of the time: Mafeje for example has argued that the very categories of analysis used in this era of anthropology, whether liberal or volkekunde, reflected colonial epistemology (Mafeje 1970; Nyoka 2012).

The analysis that follows is based on a quantitative and qualitative examination of 342 of the papers from this era, when the journal was entitled the Suid Afrikaanse Tydskrif vir Etnologie or, in English, the South African Journal of Ethnology. The papers are drawn from 68 issues of the journal over 22 years, and are archived online, and in hard copy at the University of Cape Town African Studies Library.[4]

A qualitative reading of this archive shows that the ideological and epistemological positioning of the journal within the *volkekunde* tradition was clear from the very start. The journal was launched with a paper entitled '*Volkekunde*' by a white male author, R.D. Coertze (who was also editor of the journal for 11 years) which outlined the theory of culture as espoused by *volkekunde* ethnologists. As the journal shifted from its *Volkekunde* roots to a more liberal tradition, Coertze was later involved in many vehement debates with colleagues, in which he defended *volkekunde* as a legitimate form of knowledge-making. In its instructions to authors, however, the journal did not overtly state that it was concerned with a particular kind of knowledge-making; instead, in this period, it merely guided authors with an all-encompassing directive that 'original work in all branches of anthropology and ethnology are published in the journal' (Volume 1, 1978).

Quantitative data on language and the affiliations of authors who published in the journal are also of interest:

Table 1: Language of Publication, 1978–2001

Articles in Afrikaans	217	63%
Articles in English	125	37%

Table 2: Geographical Location of Authors, 1978–2001

South Africa	298	92.8%
Other Africa	1	0.003%
Other International (excluding Africa)	22	6.85%

At this stage in its history, the journal was a space in which mainly South African researchers publish sole-authored pieces, predominantly but not exclusively writing in Afrikaans. During the apartheid era, Afrikaans was largely associated with the ruling nationalist party and apartheid government.[5] The preponderance of articles in Afrikaans thus tells a particular story about the positioning of knowledge, and who the articles were written for: a largely local, South African audience. Despite this, 22 per cent of authors came from the wider globe beyond South Africa – although, interestingly enough, not from Africa but from further afield. Only one paper in this entire period was published by an author affiliated to an African institution outside of South Africa, a study by an academic at the University of Malawi.

A breakdown of authors' affiliations to different categories of South African universities in play at the time is also interesting:

Table 3: Affiliation of South Africa-based authors, 1978–2001

Historically 'White'[6] University (HWU), Afrikaans-medium	241	80.8%
Historically 'White' University (HWU), English-medium	6	2.01%
Historically 'Black' University (HBU)	18	6.04%
Government	33	11.07%

Under the apartheid dispensation, HWUs were limited to white students, while HBUs referred to South African universities historically designated as 'black'. HWUs were also populated by white academics. For the purposes of analysis, HWUs were split by language in terms of English and Afrikaans, and Afrikaans-speaking departments largely followed the *volkekunde* tradition. It can be seen above that only 2 per cent of the papers over this period were published by authors affiliated to English-speaking HWUs, while 80.8 per cent came from Afrikaans speaking HWUs. Anthropologists from the socio-cultural anthropology tradition in South Africa, then, did not submit their work to the journal, but published elsewhere. This reflects the ideological split between the *volkekunde* ethnology and socio-cultural anthropology traditions. A further 11 per cent of papers were published by authors affiliated with the apartheid government in some way: as staff in state museums, or in state departments, for example the Department of Plural Relations and Development (previously the Department of Bantu Affairs). A mere 6 per cent of papers emanated from Black universities.

The topics during this period were almost entirely of the *Volkekunde* school. There was a fixed idea of culture at play in most papers, such that cultural attributes were mapped onto tribal affiliation and, importantly for the policies of separate development, homeland and place. The journal up to the 1990s was thus fully immersed in the apartheid project: knowledge is not apolitical, although in the papers sampled for qualitative analysis from the journal it is largely presented as such, with political context entirely missing from most analyses. In ethnology/*volkekunde*, culture as a concept overrode the political economies of colonial capital within which people existed and enacted their ways of being. Colonialism's role in creating and maintaining racial and 'tribal' categories was largely elided, as were many of the contemporary debates occurring elsewhere about the nature of Africa and anthropological knowledge in a postcolonial world (eg. Mafeje 1970; Asad 1973). The kind of anthropological knowledge that was considered legitimate thus excluded the ways in which a racialised political economy affected daily life, and excluded African intellectuals from outside South

Africa, as well as those from within South Africa whose views did not fit with *volkekunde* understandings.

In 1994, South Africa underwent a transition from apartheid to majority rule. The move between political systems in South Africa, and the impact it had on all spheres of public life in South Africa, could obviously not fail to have an effect on the journal, but it was nonetheless a slow one. In 1993, R.D. Coertze, who had always vehemently defended the *Volkekunde* tradition, stepped down as editor, and J.D. Kriel (another white male academic) took over. While content remained mostly the same under Kriel, through 1994's new dispensation into the late 1990s, qualitatively we begin to see some alternative positions creep in from 1994 onward – some from within *Volkekunde* itself, and others from the English-speaking socio-cultural anthropology tradition. In 1995 Emile Sharp and John Boonzaier (at the time both based at UCT, a historically white university) published 'Sieners in die Suburbs' which suggested that white South Africans should be a unit of study as a means of understanding political transformation. Sharp and Boonzaier argued: 'How white people make sense – or fail to make sense – of this changing world is a subject that needs to be added to the anthropological agenda in South Africa.' (Sharp & Boonzaier 1995:64). Rather than focus on 'native life' and 'tribal culture' then, this article shifted the unit of analysis to political transition and the role of whiteness in maintaining inequality in South African society. Also in 1995, O.B. Lawuyi, from the (historically black) University of Transkei published 'Who is the African South African?', which also focused on race and an overarching pan-African identity, rather than ethnicity, as a means of thinking through citizenship. In 1997, P.X. Shilubane published an article entitled 'Towards the indigenisation of anthropology'. These few examples of titles give a sense of the qualitative shifts that occurred in the 1990s.

Beginning in the early 1990s, then, the 'English' camp of anthropologists and the 'Afrikaans' camp of ethnologists began to interact more on a professional level than they had previously done; however, it was only in 2000 that the Anthropology Southern Africa Association came into being which brought the two camps together into one professional association for the first time. In 2002, the journal was relaunched as *Anthropology Southern Africa*. This move was foreshadowed by a series of debates in the journal which pitted the two (white, at least in Mafeje's reading) intellectual traditions against one another. In 2000, John Sharp published 'One Nation: Two Anthropologies' in the journal. From the mid-1990s, articles written in English became more common and, tellingly, from 1994 onwards, there were no more articles from authors affiliated to the government. From

2000 onward, the journal shifted in focus strongly away from *Volkekunde* publications. With sociopolitical shifts in wider South Africa, then, came shifts in local anthropological knowledge production.

Anthropology Southern Africa (2002–2013)

From Volume 25 onwards, the journal was published as *Anthropology Southern Africa*. I present a quantitative analysis here of the papers from this era which were published between 2002 and 2013. I also draw on a qualitative, thematic analysis of the content of those papers; and interview data with one of the editors of the journal from this period.

The journal was in transition in the early 2000s, shifting from being the journal of the *Vereniging van Afrikaanse Volkekundiges* to that of the Anthropology Southern Africa Association. In the words of one of the editors from this era, Stephne Herselman:

> While I was editor, I felt very strongly that the journal should become a mouthpiece as it were, for all southern African anthropologists and for scholars in related disciplines. Up to that stage, scholars from different institutions published in different journals. The merger between the two associations in the early 2000s was a milestone in the development of anthropology as a discipline in South Africa and we believed that the journal constituted an additional instrument to further bridge the gap in southern African anthropology that had resulted from the existence of separate associations with different philosophies/traditions.[7]

The aim was for previously separated authors and departments to publish in the same journal and thus (presumably) to read one another's work. (The journal was distributed among members of the new Anthropology Southern Africa Association, most, but not all, of whom were based in South Africa.) It is worth noting, however, that despite the differences in the ways in which anthropological knowledge was made by *volkekunde* anthropologists and the liberal tradition, both Bernard Magubane and Archie Mafeje rejected the sharp distinction that was drawn between them by their practitioners (Webster 2018), seeing them instead as 'two complementary constituents of the same tradition of settler colonial anthropology' (Webster 2018:400). The journal failed to attract authorship from 'all' southern African anthropologists, as Herselmen was aiming for, and the black radical voice in South African anthropology continued to publish elsewhere.

The instructions to authors remained general, merely noting that 'Articles in English containing original research, review articles, short communications, and commentaries on articles already published in the journal, from any field of anthropology, ethnology, or archaeology are published in the journal.' (Volume 25, 2002). From the beginning of this period, however, the move away from *Volkekunde* was immediate. As per the instructions to authors, a rapid language shift also occurred: aside from two articles published in the very beginning of this time frame, the move to English was almost absolute. The location of authors also shifted slightly, as seen in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4: Geographical Location of Authors,[8] ASnA 2002–2013

South Africa	183	83.9%
Other Africa	4	1.8%
Other International (excluding Africa)	31	14.22%

At this point in its history, the journal was still primarily a space of publication for South African authors, although there is a slight drop in the percentage of authors from South Africa as compared to the previous period when the journal was published as *South African Journal of Ethnology*. This drop is accompanied by a very slight increase to 1.8 per cent in the percentage of authors based elsewhere in Africa compared to the previous period; and a larger increase to 14.2 per cent in international authors beyond Africa.

A breakdown of the majority South African authors shows that once again the majority are from HWUs.[9] However, there are some changes in the categories which need to be used, due to shifts within the South African higher education landscape. In 2001, South Africa released a National Plan for Higher Education which saw the mergers of several institutions as a means of unifying a sector fragmented and differentially resourced under apartheid. Under the new model, public universities were divided into three categories: traditional universities, which offer theoretical degrees; technikons, which offer vocational education; and comprehensive universities, which offer both. Anthropology and degrees in related disciplines are offered only in traditional and comprehensive universities. The mergers were implemented by 2004, and in some instances the mergers brought together universities formerly designated for white students with those formerly designated for black students. The categories of HWUs and HBUs as used in the previous section for the purposes of analysis of the journal during its apartheid and early post-apartheid years, then, are less clear cut in this era. In addition, most universities became (at least partly, but at times entirely) English-medium in this era: it was thus a time of considerable change for previously *volkekunde* anthropology departments.

Given that most authors in this era were still from South Africa and given that the shape of the higher education landscape in that country had quite significantly changed, a description of where authors are situated within this new system is useful. Table 5 uses the categories of HBU and HWU where authors came from a university that did not take part in a merger (eg in the Western Cape, the University of Cape Town is a HWU, and the University of the Western Cape a HBU), and merged university to show instances where authors came from newly merged universities formed in 2004 (eg. the University of KwaZulu-Natal and the University of Johannesburg).

Table 5: Affiliation of South African-based authors, 2002–2013

Historically 'White' University (HWU)	108	59%
Historically 'Black' University (HBU)	24	13.1%
Merged University	51	27.8%
Government	0	0%

While 59 per cent of South African-based authors were based at HWUs, the percentage of publications from HBUs rose from 6 per cent to 13.1 per cent (in real numbers however this is only a shift from 18 to 24 authors, although it is over a shorter time period). There were no longer any submissions from government departments, showing anthropological knowledge-making in the post-apartheid period to be separate from the state in a way in which it was not during apartheid. Merged universities, whose merging had taken place as part of a state policy aiming to shift inequalities within the sector, contributed 27.8 per cent. This ratio of work emanating from authors based at HWUs, HBUs and merged universities is in keeping with university rankings, which consistently show HWUs as the highest ranked in the country, followed by merged universities, and with HBUs at the lower end of ranking scales. In this period of the journal's history, then, we still see that only a minority of anthropological knowledge making in and about southern Africa is being done by academics at HBUs, or by academics elsewhere in southern Africa, with HWUs and merged universities providing the bulk of published anthropological research.

Most anthropological knowledge-making thus continued to come from academics based at historically white universities or based internationally in Europe or America. In 2009, this reality led to a debate within the journal about the inequalities that existed between different South African universities. The journal published a debate section led by two academics from Nelson Mandela University, Theodore Petrus and David Bogopa, in which the authors considered the relationship between anthropology departments and anthropological traditions in South Africa, and argued that the journal should play a supportive role in allowing for the emergence of new knowledges, particularly those that emerge from historically under-resourced universities, and in giving a space and voice to new academics by bringing their work to publication (Petrus et al. 2009). There was thus an overtly stated awareness of the geo-politics at play in anthropological knowledge making in the region.

A qualitative reading of papers in this era shows that the topics published shifted away from a *volkekunde* focus on 'culture' towards political economy and exposé anthropology, which aimed to highlight the inequities of the apartheid and post-apartheid system (see Spiegel 2005), followed by what Speigel (2005) has referred to as anthropology based on an ethics of care, which also had at heart a focus on the effects of a racialised political economy on meaning-making and daily life. A qualitative reading also shows engagement with pressing issues in the making of anthropological knowledge in southern Africa. This was the intention of the editor at the time; in Herselman's words again:

> I hoped to make the journal a forum where scholars from different/opposing theoretical perspectives could critically examine each other's work to foster meaningful anthropological debate in Southern Africa.

Despite the absence of radical black voices, such as Magubane or Mafeje, an increase in theoretical debate can clearly be seen in the work published in the journal in the later stages of this era. For instance, in 2007, Volume 30 of the journal presented a special section entitled 'Debating Southern African Anthropology' which contained papers critiquing essentialism and the existence of 'quoting cliques' within intellectual traditions in the country; on the relevance of anthropology in the region, and the rise of the citizen anthropologist; and on the racialisation and deracialisation of anthropological work, among others. All papers in this special section on southern African anthropology, however, were written by authors based at South African universities or in the global North, even where they wrote about the wider southern African region. Wider African voices were still largely absent. Many papers, however, published work *on* the wider southern African region, but by the authors who were affiliated to South African universities. As Zeleza (2002) notes, however, post-apartheid South Africa became a hub for southern Africa research. Authors thus may well have been based in South African universities, but not necessarily originally from there.

Regional and national policies of course play a part in this; knowledge production is partly driven by the internal dynamics of disciplines and associations, but it is also reliant upon external issues. Zeleza (2002), for example, notes that in much of southern Africa, the state has not supported intellectuals in their research agendas, particularly where those agendas might be in contrast to those of the state itself. Drawing on Moja, Zeleza notes that many southern African researchers and research centres are reliant upon donor funding, which comes with a particular remit such that, 'support to research in Africa has been mainly for applied research that addressed issues of concern to society. Africa has not been a significant contributor or beneficiary of the knowledge revolution' (Moja in Zeleza 2002:13). The *Anthropology Southern Africa* journal would not necessarily have been seen as a useful forum for such work by southern African authors who were based in their home countries. In contrast, the South African state funded (and still funds) research papers if they were published in journals accredited by its Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). There was thus a greater incentive for South African-based academics to publish in the journal than there was for academics from elsewhere on the continent. South African state policies thus also contribute to the geopolitics of knowledge production about southern Africa from South Africa.

This is of significance given that anthropology in South Africa during this timeframe was still very much driven by a focus on the lasting effects of apartheid's racialisation of the political economy (Speigel 2005), with a focus on exposing the effects of the historical and contemporary socio-economic exclusions of Black South Africans on the ways in which life was lived. Such a focus resulted in an anthropology that explored the lives of black South Africans far more than it did those of white South Africans (although not exclusively) and focused on the lifeworlds of those who were oppressed rather than on the lifeworlds and embedded racialised ideologies that allowed such oppression to continue into the post-apartheid world – although again, not exclusively (Nyamnjoh 2012). On taking up a post at the University of Cape Town, Professor Francis Nyamnjoh responded to the intellectual climate of South African anthropology by writing the (controversial at the time it was published in 2012) paper 'Blinded by Sight: Diving the Future of Anthropology in South Africa' – which he did not publish in *Anthropology Southern Africa*, but in *Africa Spectrum*. One of the core themes of the paper was how intellectual traditions produce particular ways of seeing and knowing, that can create blind spots. Nyamnjoh tackled this firstly with regard to how knowledge was produced, arguing that anthropological work was still often published as an individual endeavour, despite the fact that all anthropological knowledge during fieldwork is co-produced through dialogues with key local intermediaries. I will return to this element of anthropological knowledge-making below, in my discussion of the final iteration of the journal. Secondly, however, Nyamnjoh's critique of knowledge-making in South Africa focused on what anthropologists study and what they do not study, arguing that whiteness as a category of social life was under-researched in South African anthropology, despite the fact that 'far from being determined by race, place, class, gender and/or age, whites in Africa determine race, place, class, gender and age for themselves and for others' (Nyamnjoh 2012:71).[10] This critique, coming from a black anthropologist who at the time of writing was recently arrived in South Africa, serves to show the ways in which the racialisation of anthropology remained part of the processes of knowledge production well into the post-apartheid era.

ASnA in its Present Guise: Internationalisation from 2014 to 2020

By 2011, the journal found itself in crisis. In the words of the incoming editor of the time, Heike Becker:

> At the ASnA[11] conference 2011 in Stellenbosch it became clear that the journal was in a deep crisis… the journal was close to faltering and being disaccredited by the DHET since it received hardly any submissions. By the time of the conference in mid September there was no issue published for the 2011 volume. During the conference there were very concerned discussions about the future of the journal. After I was appointed editor, in a really marvellous collaborative rescue mission we made it and saved the journal from threats of disaccreditation. The relationship between the journal and the Association was intensive in that rescue phase and afterwards.

The journal was pulled back from the brink; a new editorial board was created, drawing on established local scholars and, significantly, a much larger cohort of international scholars than ever before. At the annual ASnA conference in 2012, following an independent analysis of the journal by a publishing consultant, ASnA members voted to sign a contract with international academic publisher Taylor & Francis, which came into play from Volume 37 of the journal, in 2014. The journal's aims and scope was extended beyond a brief 'Note to Authors' to state that:

> The journal aims to promote anthropology in Southern Africa, to support ethnographic and theoretical research, and to provide voices to public debates. ASnA is committed to contemporary perspectives in social and cultural anthropology and in relevant interdisciplinary scholarship. It looks at the current conditions in Southern Africa, African, and global societies, taking into consideration varied challenges such as the politics of difference, or poverty and dignity.

The emphasis above on the politics of difference or poverty echoes back to the (post)colonial positioning of an ethics of care and exposé discussed in the previous section: however, in this iteration of the journal a move is made to extend the focus beyond south(ern) Africa to take a wider lens, allowing for the development of theorising from the South about the South and elsewhere, rather than importing theories from the North to analyse the South (cf. Connell 2007). Moves towards interdisciplinary scholarship also allow for a recognition of the key role played by interdisciplinary fields such as critical race studies and African Studies in differently unpacking the social dynamics that had once been seen as exclusively the realm of anthropology.

A quantitative breakdown of author demographics from this period, as has been done for the earlier two periods of the journal, shows the following:

Table 6: Geographical Location of Authors,[12] ASnA under Taylor & Francis 2014–2020

South Africa	137	64.9%
Other Africa	17	8%
Other International (excluding Africa)	57	27%

While most authors are still based in South Africa, the percentage of South Africa-based authors significantly dropped: from 92.8 per cent and 83.9 per cent during the previous two eras of the journal, to only 64.9 per cent in the present era. The number of authors from elsewhere in Africa rose, from 0.003 per cent and 1.8 per cent in the previous two eras, to 8 per cent in the present era. The number of international authors from elsewhere than Africa also rose, from 6.85 per cent and 14.22 per cent in the previous two eras, to 27 per cent in the present era. The present phase could thus be categorised as one of internationalisation for the journal.

South Africa-based authors do, however, still make up the bulk of the authors who publish in the journal. A breakdown of their affiliations also shows some changes, however:

Table 7: Affiliation of South African-based authors, 2014–2020

Historically 'White' University (HWU)	93	67.8%
Historically 'Black' University (HBU)	25	18.2%
Merged University	15	10.9%
Post-apartheid University	1	0.72%
Independent Researcher	3	2.18%

What is telling in the present is that authors from HWUs published 67.8 per cent of the papers in the journal, those from merged universities published 10.9 per cent, while those from HBUs published only 18.2 per cent of papers from authors based in South Africa. There is thus still a large discrepancy between differently resourced universities in terms of who makes new anthropological knowledge about the region. This speaks perhaps to a new role for the wider Anthropology Southern Africa Association to play in facilitating new conversations and new forms of knowledge making across South Africa and the region.

Unlike in previous eras, records kept by the journal since 2014[13] have also indicated the gender; stage of career; and race (in terms of South African categories) of authors, as follows:[14]

Table 8: Stage of career, race and gender of authors, 2014–2020

	Established	Early Career	White	Black	Male	Female
2014	18	16	23	11	15	19
2015	22	17	32	7	22	17
2016	28	16	37	7	25	19
2017	24	15	28	11	18	21
2018	27	23	23	27	20	30
2019	18	19	22	15	19	18
2020	19	10	20	9	20	9
Total 2014–2019	156	116	185	87	139	133
	57.3%	42.7%	68%	32%	51.1%	48.9%

This data shows that a high 42.7 per cent of the authors who publish are early career academics. This is not accidental, as the journal editors since 2014 have been clear that one role of the journal should be a developmental one, that allows for new voices to emerge in the academy. To that end, the journal editors have run workshops with aspiring authors in South Africa and Botswana; and have, together with ASnA,[15] introduced the Monica Wilson and the Elaine Salo prizes for Masters, Doctoral and Honours students, which lead younger scholars towards potential publication in the journal. The editors have also carefully and deliberately taken on a developmental role towards work that comes to the journal from new scholars, particularly from under-resourced institutions, such that submissions can be re-worked carefully with authors several times, until they are publishable. The journal has also introduced book review and photo essay sections, which allow for a different kind of ethnographic expression. Such mentorship and shifts in content come at a moment where the more established forms of South African anthropological knowledge-making have been critiqued by students during the #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall student protests.

#RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall in South Africa also focused on transformation within institutions and disciplines with regard to race and gender. The journal's demographic data shows that only 32 per cent of authors who published in this time frame are black: it is likely that this is a higher percentage than in previous eras for which we do not have data, but it is still telling of the state of the academy. The journal has also collated data on whether authors emanated from Northern institutions or institutions in the global South: this data shows that 74.9 per cent of all authors who have published in the journal in this period are from the global South, with 25.1 per cent coming from Northern institutions. The journal is thus providing a space for anthropological knowledge making from the South:[16] but the demographic data on country of origin and race shows that this southern voice is still mainly a South African one (with some growth in the inclusion of wider regional voices) and is still mainly (but by no means entirely) white. With regards to gender, authorship is fairly evenly split, with 51.1 per cent authorship by men, and 48.9 per cent by women.

Moving away from author demographics towards an examination of the work that is being produced shows that over this period, the journal has seen a move toward more co-authored papers; and guest-edited special issues have become a feature, thus removing authority somewhat from the editors themselves. As mentioned above, photo essays have also been included, and one ethnographic article in the style of a graphic novel/cartoon has also been published. Articles cover a wide range of topics, but have in common that most are ethnographic in method, relying on detailed qualitative and immersive methodology. While many continue the focus on the ways in which daily lives unfold in relation to wider political economies that characterised the previous era of the journal, there is evidence of conceptual shifts within this focus: for example, where concepts from the South are used to develop a theoretical analysis of the political economy of daily life, rather than simply using the South as a space for ethnographic data (eg. Radebe 2019). There is also work on the ethics of doing insider fieldwork as an African anthropologist (eg. Setlhabi 2019; Mutaru 2018); on local cosmologies as seen through human/plant relations (Gibson and Ellis 2018); and, as in the previous era, considerable work on the complexities of postcolonial African identities. An interesting shift that can also be seen is the rise of papers which have informants/respondents as co-authors to an academic author/professional anthropologist, (eg. Pauli & Dawids 2017) such that anthropological authority does not only lie with academics but is also granted to the local experts from whom anthropologists gain much of their knowledge. There is thus evidence of moves towards the co-production of knowledge as advocated by Nyamnjoh (2012). A rise in papers from independent researchers or researchers affiliated to spaces outside of the university also reflects shifts within the knowledge economy. Finally, at least one paper in this era has also shifted the gaze from an anthropology of southern Africa, to an anthropology from a southern-based journal that examines life in the global North (Rapport 2020).

Editorial Demographics

Thus far we have focused on the demographics of authors writing in the journal: the makers of anthropological knowledge. But there is of course also an important role played in knowledge-making by the gate-keepers of legitimate knowledge: in this instance, the editors of the journal. Like authorial demographics, the demographics of editors have changed over time, but nonetheless reflect strong patterns of race and gender. The *South African Journal of Ethnology* was edited by four white men, from HWUs within South Africa. *Anthropology Southern Africa* in its iteration between 2002 to 2013 was edited by two white women, both based in South Africa, one at a merged university and one at a HBU. *Anthropology Southern Africa* from 2014 to 2020 has been edited by five white women, based in South Africa at HWUs and an HBU; one black man based at a South African HWU; two black women based at universities in southern Africa; and one white woman based at a university in Europe. There has thus been quite a large shift in editorial demographics in the last iteration of the journal, with editors remaining in place for a shorter tenure, and with the inclusion of black academics and academics from elsewhere in southern Africa and Europe for the first time. The journal in this iteration has also brought in multiple guest editors of special issues, in a deliberate bid to spread editorial authority and decision-making across institutions and individuals. It is also worth noting that through the journal's post-apartheid phase, editorial work has mainly been done by women, many of whom are fairly early in their careers.

Closing Comments

This paper has provided an examination of the archive of the *Anthropology Southern Africa* journal, in terms of content and in terms of authorial and editorial affiliation. The article has moved through three eras of the journal, showing how it has moved from being the home of *volkekunde* anthropology under apartheid, to a space for the production of anthropological knowledge by both established and nascent voices from the global South. Throughout the journal's history it is clear that anthropological knowledge-making (along with other social sciences) does not just report on social categories but forms part of the machinery of knowledge production through which such categories are created, debated, maintained or overturned. Whilst there has not been room in this paper for an exhaustive analysis of the shifting discourses within South African anthropology as evidenced in the journal over time, turning our attention to the demographic minutiae of praxis within journals enables the start of a conversation about who was making anthropological knowledge at different moments in history, and what sort of knowledge was made.

Acknowledgments

With thanks to current and previous editors of *Anthropology Southern Africa*; to Caroline Jeannerat, editorial assistant of the journal; to audiences at CODESRIA's General Assembly' in Dakar in 2018 and at the ASnA Annual Conference in Botswana in 2018; and to the anonymous peer-reviewers who helped me a great deal in recognising what was implicit in the paper about the South African context, enabling me to make it explicit.

Notes

1. And, while Zeleza does not focus on this point, it is worth noting that academic knowledge is, of course, a commodity, on which the careers and livelihoods of academic practitioners rest; we are not disinterested parties in knowledge production.
2. The journals in question were *African Affairs and the Journal of Modern African Studies*.
3. Universities were racialised under colonialism and apartheid, as were other institutions, such that HWUs were populated by predominantly white staff and students. As late as the 1960s, the Mafeje Affair at the HWU University of Cape Town saw black anthropologist Archie Mafeje unable to take up an academic post he had been offered, after the university rescinded the job offer due to his race. Using HWUs and HBUs as categories of analysis thus provides something of a shorthand for recognising which categories of persons were making knowledge: in South African anthropology for much of its history, most practitioners were white. The rich intellectual traditions of black social scientists such as Mafeje, Livingstone Mqotsi, ZK Matthews, and Bernard Magubane thus were largely situated outside of South African anthropology and most certainly outside of the journal being discussed here in this era.
4. The archival work for this section of the paper was done in the African Studies Library at UCT in 2018. It is possible that the hard copies from this era were lost in the fire that burnt down much of the African Studies Library in 2021.

5. For example, the Soweto uprising of 1976 was ignited by protests against Afrikaans-medium instruction at schools.
6. The *University Education Act* in 1959 proposed to have separate universities for black students and white students in South Africa.
7. Interview with Stephne Herselman, June 2018.
8. Of original articles, excluding book reviews.
9. Unlike in the apartheid era, the post-apartheid HWUs were not entirely staffed by white academics, but, as has been noted even in contemporary critiques of South African higher education, the proportion of academics remained skewed towards a white professoriate (Nyamnjoh 2015).
10. A similar critique was made by Mafeje in 1998, when he argued that 'white South African anthropologists are at best neo-colonial liberals. This is not meant only in the political and economic sense but more fundamentally in the sense of a social and intellectual inability to transcend the problem of alterity. Are the white South Africans African? If so, what is their anthropology and who are its subjects?' (Mafeje 1998:21).
11. ASnA refers to the Anthropology Southern Africa Association
12. Of original articles, excluding book reviews.
13. With many thanks to Caroline Jeannerat for compiling this data for the journal, and to the editorial team for sharing it for use in this paper.
14. This data includes the authors of all articles in the journal, including book reviews and obituaries, whereas the previous data sets have only looked at the authors of original research articles.
15. Zeleza has argued that one route to a shifting politics of knowledge production in the region is through 'vibrant and integrated intellectual associations, groups and communities, on national, regional and continental levels' (Zeleza 2002:16). The relationship between the journal and the wider association is thus important going forward, particularly given that ASnA is in the process of renewing and strengthening its links across southern Africa, such that the 2017 ASnA conference was held at Chancellor College, Malawi; and the 2018 conference at the University of Botswana, and the 2021 Conference will be held at the University of Namibia.
16. It is also worth noting that between 2014 and 2018, the impact factor of the journal rose from 0.071 to 0.714.

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JHEA/RESA Vol. 19, No. 2, 2021, pp. 27-55

(ISSN 0851–7762)

Beyond Academic Imperialism in Comparative Studies of the Global South: Methodological Reflections

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Abstract

Contemporary debates on decolonisation have reluctantly forced social scientists to engage with neglected debates on race and epistemology. This article recasts these debates through methodological reflections that compare South African and Brazilian social policies by centring the interpellations of racial capitalism, poverty, inequality, and social exclusion. I conducted forty-five in-depth interviews with beneficiaries of social assistance programmes such as social grants and Bolsa Familia and with policymakers in South Africa and Brazil. Both countries offer compelling cases for comparison because they share important characteristics. How does the generation of knowledge in comparative public policy aid in advancing methodological perspectives that lead towards an imagination of a more democratic global social science? I offer a methodological reflexivity that challenges academic imperialism and underscores the importance of how local questions have global relevance in advancing an agenda for knowledge decolonisation. I achieve this by critiquing the positivist tradition in comparative sociology.

Résumé

Les débats contemporains sur la décolonisation ont poussé les chercheurs en sciences sociales à s'intéresser, à contrecoeur, aux débats négligés sur la race et l'épistémologie. Cet article reformule ces débats à travers des réflexions méthodologiques qui comparent les politiques sociales sud-africaines et brésiliennes en centrant les interpellations de capitalisme racial, de la pauvreté, de l'inégalités et de l'exclusion sociale. Nous avons mené quarante-cinq entretiens approfondis avec des bénéficiaires de programmes d'aide sociale tels que les allocations sociales et la Bolsa Familia, ainsi qu'avec des décideurs politiques en Afrique du Sud et au Brésil. Les deux pays offrent des cas de

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comparaison car ils partagent des caractéristiques importantes. Comment la production de connaissances en matière de politiques publiques comparées contribue-t-elle à faire avancer les perspectives méthodologiques qui mènent à l'imagination d'une science sociale mondiale plus démocratique ? Pour faire avancer un programme de décolonisation des connaissances, nous proposons une réflexivité méthodologique qui remet en question l'impérialisme académique et souligne l'importance de la pertinence mondiale des questions locales. Nous y parvenons en procédant à l'analyse critique de la tradition positiviste de la sociologie comparative.

Introduction

The production of knowledge in the social sciences is a global enterprise shaped by asymmetrical power relations entrenched through academic imperialism which valorises knowledge from the metropole. The relationship between racism and epistemology has been more pronounced since the onset of colonial modernity and epistemic racism, achieved through a discourse of alterity and 'Othering' (Mafeje 1991, 1992; Said 1978, 1993, 1994; Hall 2019; Alatas 2000, 2003; Amin 2009 [1989]; Smith 2012 [1999]; Gordon 2019, 2014; Mamdani 2013, 2021). Global comparative public policy studies are indicted as entrenching academic imperialism by positioning the global South as a 'zone of data collection', not able to offer any methodological and theoretical extrapolations (Alatas 2000, 2003, 2006). My doctoral project compared South African and Brazilian social policies by locating them in the two countries' social architectures. I collected data from 45 in-depth interviews with beneficiaries of social assistance programmes (Social Grants and *Bolsa Familia*,) as well as with policymakers in South Africa and Brazil. However, this article posits: how does the generation of knowledge in comparative public policy studies aid in advancing scholarship that leads toward the imagination of a more democratic global social science? South Africa and Brazil offer compelling cases for comparison because they share important characteristics: histories of colonial domination, slavery, and anti-black racism, all of which have provided grounds for what today are highly unequal societies (Marx 1998; Horne 2007; Telles 2004; Phiri 2020a, 2020b, 2017).

Drawing on my interlocutors and longitudinal public datasets on income, wealth, and social inequality, the doctoral study concluded that the commodification of social provisioning in an era of a hierarchical racialised neoliberal social policymaking threatens the imagination of a new social contract (Phiri 2020a, 2017). Neither country is a prototypical example of twenty-first-century progressive social policies of the global South. While progressive in design, the two countries' social policies are residual, failing to challenge the institutional legacies of anti-Black racism and Black genocide which are foundational to citizenship in both South Africa and Brazil (Magubane 1979; Phiri 2017, 2020a, 2020b; Nyoka 2016; Mamdani 2021). This article, however, problematises and critiques the colonially constructed paradigm that for knowledge to be considered 'true knowledge' it should be Western (Mignolo 2009, 2011). At various stages of my doctoral career, it was common for academic colleagues, both Western and African, in several conferences at which I was a presenter (in Africa and across the world) to ask: 'Why should an African, a Malawian for that matter, be fit to conduct a comparative study of South Africa and Brazil?' One would be excused for believing that such a question is neutral and therefore does not raise what are deemed dated debates on colonial legacies that have defined global geographical classifications and the hierarchisation of knowledge ecologies.

Global academia is presented as a neutral space that champions a democratic sharing of knowledge and ideas as separate from the racialised hierarchies it has perpetuated for centuries. It goes without saying that emerging scholars enmeshed in a Eurocentric canon of producing knowledge do not face similar levels of scrutiny. This point was subtly made clear in the 2006 Hollywood blockbuster, *The Last King of Scotland*, which documented the rise and fall of the Ugandan despot Idi Amin. The film portrays the fictional character of a young Scottish medical student, Nicholas Garrigan, who has dull prospects at home and decides to seek adventure abroad by working at a Ugandan missionary clinic. He stumbles on his newfound purpose by tossing a coin that falls on the map of Uganda, which becomes his preferred destination to explore a career in medicine. The young medical student's desires and ambitions are not subject to any scrutiny. Uganda becomes for him *terra nullius*, providing a sense of wonder, adventure, and sexual experimentations with a hyper-sexualised female Native. The relationship between race and epistemology is highlighted because Garrigan's ambitions are not questioned, affirming the privileged position that 'Whiteness' and 'White Supremacy' exerts in defining global expériences, spaces, tastes and inadvertently the knowledge production ecology.

That knowledge was colonised, hierarchical, Eurocentric and therefore racialised is not a new phenomenon. As Mamdani (1996:4) points out, Hegel's *Philosophy of History* mythologised 'Africa proper' as the land of childhood. However, Radical Black theorists never viewed the European canon as a theoretical and intellectual cul-de-sac; rather they agitated for emancipatory knowledge ecologies for erstwhile oppressed people of

African descent (Fanon 1963; Cesaire 1972; Nkrumah 1973; Diop 1981; Mudimbe 1988; Mafeje 1992; Hall 2019 [1992]; Nyoka 2019). In Fanon's words the process of political and epistemic decolonisation sets out to change the order of the world, a programme of complete disorder. It is a meeting of two forces, opposed to each other by their very nature, which in fact owe their originality to that sort of substantification which results from and is nourished by the situation in the colonies (1963:27-28). Contrast this with what the Eurocentric mind conceptualised: 'Africans were no ordinary children. They were destined to be so perpetually – in the words of Christopher Fyfe, Peter Pan children who can never grow up, a child race' (Mamdani 1996:4).

This article problematises the comparative method by reifying the work of global Southern theorists, using their observations to make sense of empirical comparative studies. In contemporary times the South African and global academy have become sites of renewed struggles toward knowledge decolonisation propelled by 'fallist' movements such as the #RhodesMustFall, #FeesMustFall, and the #BlackLivesMatter movement across the Atlantic. Such approaches have problematised the hegemonic Eurocentric traditions of syllabuses which are premised on sovereign epistemologies that are deeply ingrained in the university's pedagogical approaches. While this wave is noble and should be applauded, some scholarly responses border on the hagiographic and charlatan intellectualism. They do not tap into a rich African intellectual archive that has historically been positioned to withstand academic imperialism and the Eurocentric nature of the university.

This article brings to the fore the researcher's ability to navigate social artefacts such as language, gender, and geography as pivotal to advancing knowledge decolonisation. Both South Africa and Brazil continue to exist in the 'metaphysical empires' that have been cemented since the inception of colonial modernity. Simultaneously, the article challenges the assumption that local questions should be localised. Local questions invoke universal applications and vice versa. For decades, research about societies in the global South has been advanced by scholarship located in the global North (Alatas 2000, 2006, 2003). While this asymmetrical research relationship has yielded substantial theoretical approaches to understanding poverty, inequality, social change, and political developments, local lead researchers are often side-lined and marginalised, and not seen as knowledge producers. Through the lenses of thinking with theory and methods, the article contributes to critical debates on race and epistemology by centring the perspectives of the formerly colonised and oppressed peoples of the world (Smith 2012 [1999]; Sandoval 2000; Bonilla-Silva & Zuberi 2008; Chilisa 2012).

Academic Imperialism and Comparative Public Policy Studies: South Africa and Brazil through the Lenses of the Comparative Method

The epistemological foundations of comparative sociology encompass asymmetrical knowledge production relations between the global North and South. Between the 1960s and 1980s there emerged several approaches to comparative theorisations (Rokkan 1966; Verba 1967; Sartori 1970; Skocpol 1979; Skocpol & Somers 1980) which have advanced 'comparative studies and 'knowledge' about the evolution of Western state formation as well as the global South. Ragin (1981) argues that it is impossible to think without comparison. Although some perspectives suggest that virtually all social scientific methods are comparative in the broad sense, for Ragin, in sociology, the term comparative method usually refers to the comparison of whole societies. Comparative sociology cannot be abstracted from the colonial and imperial machinations that have perpetuated epistemic racism for decades. Most key theorists that have advanced 'Comparative Studies' have theorised about 'society' or 'societies' from privileged polarised positions where knowledge had been defined through the lenses of imperialism and White supremacy. Implicit in the ideational composition of most comparative studies is an 'academic imperialism' that is founded on the political, economic, social, and cultural imperialism forged since the inception of Euro/American colonial modernity. Alatas suggests the following:

> Today, academic imperialism is more indirect than direct…. In the postcolonial period what we have is academic neo-imperialism or academic neo-colonialism as the West's monopolistic control and influence over the nature and flows of social scientific knowledge remain intact even though political independence has been achieved (2003:601–602).

Throughout the twentieth century, academic imperialism was achieved through a narcissistic and divisive thirst for geo-political dominance – the agenda of an insecure United States empire, which birthed American Studies and Area Studies. Burden-Stelly (2018:78) notes: 'The American studies project was conceived to describe, construct – and later critique – a particular American culture and civilisation (i.e. national self-determination) vis-à-vis other "great" civilisations in order to provide a scholarly basis for American empire'. In the same breath, Area Studies overtly and covertly championed the gathering of 'knowledge' of erstwhile colonies in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The United States was enmeshed in a rivalry with the Soviet Union, justifying the State

Department's funding of a global project of knowledge domination. Paul Zeleza critiques this approach, highlighting the polarising effects this had in the global knowledge ecology. He argues:

> ….The social science and humanities disciplines strutting into the American academy remained resolutely ethnocentric. They concocted from sanitised American and European experiences universal models and theories that blissfully ignored the reality and diversity of global histories and geographies, cultures and societies, polities, and economies. The area studies project enabled the disciplines both to retain their epistemic superiority and acquire new testing sites for the affirmation of their supposedly eternal theoretical probity (2019:8).

The West as a concept created an avatar of its civilisation, through classification, comparison, and criteria of evaluation, thereby consolidating ideas that cemented the perpetual asymmetrical location of knowledge from the global South knowledge as inferior. But what exactly is the West? Stuart Hall (2019) contested the idea of the West as located in a rigid trans-geographical location. Rather he suggested, 'the West' is a historical, not a geographical construct. Hall avers:

> [B]y "Western" we mean the type of society that is developed, industrialised, urbanised, capitalist, secular, and modern. Such societies arose at a particular historical period – roughly, during the sixteenth century, after the Middle Ages and the breakup of feudalism (2019:142).

The amalgamation of ideas, practices, symbol formation, values, and institutions since the inception of colonial modernity produced the West as a concept. Hall (2019) identifies four traits that solidified the West as a concept. First the West, 'allows us to characterise and classify societies into different categories – i.e., "Western",' "non-Western." It is a tool to think with. It sets a certain structure of thought and knowledge in motion' (Hall 2019:142). Second, 'it is an image, or set of images. It condenses a number of different characteristics into one picture' (Hall 2019:143). Third, it provides a standard or model of comparison. It allows us to compare to what extent different societies resemble, or differ from, one another. Non-Western societies can accordingly be said to be 'close to' or 'far away from' or 'catching up with' the West. It helps to explain difference (Hall 2019:143). Fourth, it provides criteria of evaluation against which other societies are ranked and around which powerful positive and negative feelings cluster (Hall 2019:143).

Academic imperialism is evident in public policy discourses which have canonised the policy experiences of Western industrial democracies, and in the quantification of policy contours through statistical modelling.

By suggesting this, I am not advocating against the usage of statistical modelling in the social sciences. I am arguing that the global South and North are not homogenous research entities. Rather, academics must consider the importance of racism and epistemology in public policy studies. In several explanatory studies of comparative public policy, the global South is deemed not to contain rigorous statistical, theoretical, and methodological contributions that warrant theorisation. Bonilla-Silva and Zuberi (2008) provide a comprehensive account of how statistical modelling was inextricably linked to the numerical analysis of human difference. They argue that 'eugenic ideas were at the heart of the development of statistical logic. Statistical logic, as well as the regression-type models that they employed, is the foundation on which modern statistical analysis is based' (Bonilla-Silva & Zuberi 2008:8).

Several comprehensive volumes on public policy and methodology published between 2000 and 2020 either erase the public policy experiences of the global South or engage in a colonially informed lexicography that perpetuates alterity (Fischer et al. 2007; Lunn 2013; Moran et al. 2018). The line of argument pursued in these handbooks is that policy decisions combine sophisticated technical knowledge with complex social and political realities that defining public policy itself has confronted various problems. The global South is condemned to an anachronistic period divorced from the 'canon of thinking' and 'belonging', and therefore excluded from the normative teleological goals of Western public policy.

Opposition to the project of colonial modernity has preoccupied African scholars and global critical theorists whose experiences have been profoundly scarred by colonial modes of being and consciousness (Said 1978, 1993, 1994; Mudimbe 1988, 1994; Hall 2019 [1992]; Chakrabarty 2000; Mamdani 2004, 2013, 2020; Mkandawire 2005; Gordon 2014, 2019). Since the inception of public policy, the discipline envisioned a multidisciplinary enterprise capable of guiding political decision processes of post-Second World War industrial societies (Fischer et. al 2007; Lodge 2007; Moran et al. 2018). This vision of public policy was to cut across various specialisations, including contributions from political science, sociology, anthropology, psychology, statistics, and mathematics, and even the physical and natural sciences in some cases (Lodge 2007). Most societies of the global South existed as colonial appendages; and could therefore not bring novel contributions to the evolution of the field. The asymmetrical power relations produced a policy discourse where Western democratic experiences matured and therefore warrant being studied, whereas the global South exists outside policy experiences. While some policy scholars and practitioners in the West abandoned this narrow view of public policy, societies in the global South were deemed not to have not reached the teleological goal of comprehending trends worth studying. Even Esping-Andersen's 'Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism' (1990) which cemented the conceptualisation of the Welfare Regime Approach (WRA) only focused on industrial democracies in the global North.

Other than the neglect of public policy conceptualizations in the global South, a major point of departure was the WRA's failure to account for the transformations that had taken place in South-east Asia. Holliday (2000) suggested the productivist approach to welfare, which he deemed a fourth dimension of welfare to be added to Esping-Andersen's WRA. Holliday (2000) argued that Esping-Andersen's arbitrary restriction ruled out the examination of capitalist states that do engage in social policy, while also subordinating it to other policy objectives. He concluded that there is no reason why states like South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore should be excluded, especially because the reason they are omitted in Esping-Andersen's WRA is their subordination to other policy objectives – which in this case can be used as a fourth criterion for identifying worlds within the universe of welfare capitalism (Holliday 2000:708). While the productivist approach offered a 'novel' understanding of the sociological theorisations of the South-east Asian welfare state, it reinforced the positions of epistemic posturing and exceptionalism; and was not a major departure from Esping-Andersen's (1990) WRA. Further, Mkandawire and Yi (2014) note that although this strand of explanation highlights the linkage between social policy and economic policy

> …it does not identify the diverse forms and nature of the subordination of social policy; whether it was solely productivist or if it also reduced poverty; whether it provided protection or was redistributive; during which phases of the process of industrialisation it was implemented; and which relative weights were attached to the objectives over the different phases of industrialisation" (Mkandawire & Yi 2014:3).

In the so-called global South, countries that are taken seriously are Latin American and Asian countries such as Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Argentina, China, and India. According to a Eurocentric approach to public policy these 'exceptional' countries in the global South, oscillate between normative democratic institutions as found in 'industrial democracies' and pathologies observed across 'developing societies'.

My doctoral study attempted to transcend academic imperialism by comparing two societies in the global South, carved out of imperial, colonial, and racist capitalisms. South Africa's public policies predate the post-democratic settlement, rooted in the polarising redistributive mechanisms of British colonial institutions and apartheid's segregated social provisioning. Brazil's rediscovery of social policy has been presented as a model for the global South through policy transfer to effect social transformation. However, when abstracted from the pernicious histories of racist capitalisms and social stratification, these arguments are demystified (Phiri 2020a, 2017). The qualitative dimension of my doctoral study was divided into two sectors: beneficiaries of social assistance (amounting to thirty-eight interviewees) and seven policy makers; across race, class, gender, and geography of the interlocutors. In total, forty-five qualitative interviews were conducted in both South Africa and Brazil that focused on the lived experiences of poverty and inequality and the policy perspectives from social policy experts in both countries. The thirty-five in-depth interviews targeted beneficiaries of welfare programmes in both South Africa and Brazil. The seven key informant interviews were conducted with policymakers and academics with expert knowledge on the ideas and designs of South Africa and Brazil's social policy architectures.

Key informant interviews were administered to assess the technical and comprehensive articulations of policy contestations in both South Africa and Brazil. In South Africa, beneficiaries of social grants were interviewed in Mangalase, Chiawelo and Lawley in Soweto in Gauteng Province, and two villages in Ntshuxi and Bungeni in Limpopo Province between August and October 2015. Policy perspectives were provided by social policy experts and government officials from the Department of Social Development (DSD) and the Presidency in the City of Tshwane between September 2015 and October 2015. One key informant interview from South Africa was conducted in February 2016 after the researcher had returned from Brazil.

In Brazil, beneficiaries of *Bolsa Familia* and other social assistance programmes were interviewed in urban peripheries: Casa Forte in Recife, state of Pernambuco, and Osasco and Vila Nova de Juguaro in the city and state of São Paulo between November and December 2015. Policy perspectives were provided by social policy experts and government officials from Brazil's Ministry of Social Development (MSD) in Brasilia and São Paulo in the same period. Table 1 illustrates the contours of composition of South Africa's and Brazil's social policy architectures as well as the social and political artefacts that have shaped public policy approaches in both countries.

Table 1: Institutional Legacies and Politics in South Africa and Brazil's Social Policy Architectures

Case	Historical Institutional Legacies and Demographics	Typology of Social Policy Architecture	Political System	Coverage of Social Assistance and % of Country's GDP
South Africa	Settler colonialism (Dutch, British colonial and imperial institutions)	Liberal to conservative	Constitutional democracy	Social grants (child support grant, old age pension, disability grant)
	Slavery, colonialism, indentured labour, apartheid 1500 to 1994	Quasi-universal	Quasi federal state	
	Multi-racial/ethnic, multilingual, Black African (80%), White European (8%), Coloured (9%), Indian/Asian (3%)	Targeted programmes with no conditions	Dominant one party since democratic transition in 1994	20 million recipients
	Racial capitalism discourse that cemented fragmented nation(s)	Social wage (no-fee paying school, expanded public works, public housing for the poor, healthcare, school feeding schemes)	ANC Electoral dominance between 2000 and 2016	3.5% of South Africa's US$343 billion GDP
Brazil	Settler colony (mainly Portuguese albeit other European influences)	Conservative	Constitutional democracy	*Bolsa Familia*, City Income, National Minimum Wage
	Slavery, colonialism, coerced labour, patrimonialism until 1888	Universal access	Decentralised federative republic	20 million recipients
	Multi-ethnic White European (48%), Pardo (43%), Black (8%), Asian (1%), Indigenous (0.4%), mono-lingual	Means-tested targeted programmes with conditions	Fragmented coalition politics since democratic transition in 1988	0.5% of Brazil's US$2 trillion GDP
	Racial democracy discourse that cemented a one-nation narrative.	Social wage (Quasi-universal access to healthcare, limited public housing, no-fee paying school, school feeding schemes)	Worker's Party coalition governance between 2003 and 2016	

Source: Author, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World Factbook.

Several studies have explained the nature of durable poverty and inequality in South Africa and Brazil (Seidman 2010; Huchzermeyer 2004, 2002; Barrientos 2013; Van der Westhuizen 2013, 2012; Leubolt 2015, 2014, 2013). Fewer studies, however, have pivoted race and racial formations in the two countries' social policy architectures. In both countries, social policy architectures oscillate between liberal and conservative regimes. There is a dearth of comparative public policy in the global South for the purpose of theory-building and the interrogation of thorough sociological explanations of the persistence of poverty, inequality, and social exclusion. If the methodological developments are present, they lack the methodological groundings for further theorisations. As early as the 1970s, Porter suggested that 'despite a strong emphasis on the comparative tradition, a rigorous comparative methodology had not emerged. The reason for this lack had to do with great difficulties that a rigorous comparative methodology would impose' (1970:144). By centring my research reflexivity on the thirty-eight beneficiaries of social assistance programmes, I hope to contribute to methodological reflections that fortify comparative public policy studies from the global South for global relevance.

Comparative Reflexivity in Conducting Research in South Africa and Brazil

South Africa

The in-depth interviews were conducted over a three-month period between July and September 2015 in the South African context. The participants in the South African cohort were below an income threshold which the state categorises as poor. The research had to overcome the discourse of studying poverty that is ubiquitous in international humanitarian discourse, in which poverty is a 'social zoo'. In these approaches, interlocutors are constantly probed to speak about the experiential perspectives of marginalisation and exclusion in a democratic polity such as South Africa. While these strategies have yielded substantial data to inform policy decisions at national and international levels, the research process itself can be dehumanising to respondents. The poor areas of the township are associated with inertia, pathologies and impossibilities that characterise the post-apartheid democratic settlement. At the point of interaction with the researcher, the interviewees did not describe themselves as poor. This does not mean, however, that some areas in the townships are not poor. However, the use of confessional technologies that trap the poor to plead poverty strips people of their agency and perpetuates the discourse of development as a 'White Man's burden'. Nguyen's argument to understand Human Immunodeficiency

Virus Infection and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/Aids) messages in the developing world provides a crucial intervention. She avers:

> The increasing scope of humanitarian intervention in today's world has drawn attention to how the humanitarian industry constructs a logic of intervention that displaces local politics and contributes to the fashioning of new identities, a process that has been described as 'mobile sovereignty'. The humanitarian 'apparatus', blending military and biomedical intervention, is a specialised and highly structured crystallisation of broader, more diffuse transnational processes wherein a diversity of groups, often referred to as nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), involved in a plethora of activities ranging from advocacy to service delivery, coalesce across different settings around specific issues. Humanitarian issues are most sharply expressed as health issues – threats to the lives and well-being of populations, as in the case of famines, war, and epidemics, are those that call forth the deployment of humanitarian apparatuses and the need for timely intervention (2005:125–126).

In all the interviews, the researcher was explicit that the contents of the in-depth interviews would not immediately lead to a radical shift in the perceived policies that keep marginalised citizens in conditions of indigence. Poor and marginalised citizens live with a sense of expectation and optimism that, somehow, their situations will change. In this instance, the in-depth interview guide prescribed a neutrality for the interviewer. Empathy to victims of structural poverty has in recent times been highlighted as crucial to informing a novel discourse on understanding power asymmetries that are embedded in research practices. The World Bank series titled *Voices of the Poor* (2000), at the turn of the century, incorporated primary research using Participatory Poverty Assessments (PAR) aimed at shifting polarising discourses that had defined poverty research for decades. While this approach was noble, as it incorporated the interactions of the poor, and multi-level analyses of how the poor interact with institutions of power, the present study, from the onset, aimed to balance the ethical bankruptcy of confessional technologies with the realities of how the poor see their lives being lived in a politically dynamic context.

The aim of the in-depth interview was to theorise with the beneficiaries of social grants as interlocutors. The questions were designed thematically to ensure that social assistance beneficiaries could relate their lived experiences to a politically dynamic research constituency. This was evident in South Africa's urban and rural areas. The researcher had initially planned one-on-one interviews that would be conducted with willing participants; yet the fieldwork experience, in some instances, was contrary. In South Africa, some of my interlocutors decided to invite their friends to listen to their perspectives of living in a society that administers social assistance to them. This meant the in-depth interview could be used in multiple ways to gain insights into the normative understanding of complex emergencies in the researched area.

For example, one beneficiary who the researcher interviewed in Limpopo had been previously married to a man who was then deceased but had practised polygamy. The first wife agreed to be interviewed, yet she also insisted that the second wife who had been previously married to the deceased be part of the interview. After the interview was concluded, my interlocutors insisted that the script should be recorded and transcribed as one voice, as the views expressed by both reflected what they deemed to be important in relation to the social assistance received. It is crucial to see the effectiveness of using the instrument as only one method of obtaining data. Several scholars caution against the use of Focus Groups, 'to the exclusion of other methods, citing the potential for the silencing of voices, especially when group members have ongoing social relations. Because of small-group dynamics, minority opinions can be silenced, or group members with less power may be less willing to present their views' (Mitchell 1999).

The design of the in-depth interview catered for individually focused interviews, yet the experiences in the field deviated from the original design. The same trend was noted in Chiawelo, where residents decided to listen-in on the interviews. The researcher was confronted with instances in both Chiawelo and Ntshuxi where interviewees living in a particular household decided to be interviewed all at once. There are key differences in the group and individual emphasis of the nature of these interviews. Short 'has suggested that, with focus groups, the unit of analysis is the group not the individual. Participants respond directly to a moderator's questions and to comments made by other members of the group' (2006:107). Yet the researcher did not depart from the original intent of the research design which was to administer in-depth interviews with selected interlocutors by maintaining their individuality. There was a deviation in Chiawelo, whereby some of the beneficiaries decided to talk about private expenditure patterns of social assistance benefits in the lives of their friends/neighbours. At times, other beneficiaries told their friends to include information that they thought was being omitted by them. This, however, was not a form of interference.

The silence that was observed in participants even when gently probed to answer the questions can be explained on multiple levels. Firstly, the in-depth interviews were conducted in areas where the researcher would establish relations with local key informants and leading administrative figures such as chiefs. Gaining this trust with local administrators did not mean respondents would be amenable to the contents of the questions. Some respondents felt that they could not discuss these issues as they suspected that the government was gathering information so that social assistance could be rescinded. Secondly, the silence also explains some of the hidden power relations in the history of research, related to South Africa's social milieu such as history, language, and gender dimensions. How can a non-South African understand the lived experiences of poverty, marginalisation, and social exclusion? Simultaneously, how can a male researcher ask questions about the experiences of poverty and inequality as they relate to race, class and gender? A comprehension of the bifurcated knowledge production of colonial modernity however, points to a different theorisation of gender stratification in the global value chain. Oyewùmí (2002) suggests that

> a hallmark of the modern era is the expansion of Europe and the establishment of Euro/American cultural hegemony throughout the world. Nowhere is this more profound than in the production of knowledge about human behaviour, history, societies, and cultures. One effect of this *Eurocentrism* is the racialization of knowledge: Europe is represented as the source of knowledge and Europeans as knowers. Thus, male gender privilege as an essential part of European ethos is enshrined in the culture of modernity (2002:1).

South Africa is enmeshed in a complex web of social and power relations shaped by a history of imperial domination, racial capitalism, gender inequalities and the production of racialised knowledge. These complexities cannot be overcome by administering an in-depth interview guide and simply stating that the foundational premises of all the bourgeois social sciences are Eurocentric. Insofar as these categories exist, for outsiders the task of doing research in the South African context is fraught with managing these complex social relations. The answers that were given by respondents are relevant to explaining what they perceived to be important. The researcher is not in a position to manipulate the discussions of the respondents so that they are conformed to the findings of the research. The researcher is always in constant dialogue so that the imperial practices may not be replicated. Smith cautions that 'research through "imperial eyes" describes an approach which assumes that Western ideas about the most fundamental things are the only ideas possible to hold, certainly the only rational ideas, and the only ideas which can make sense of the world, of reality, of social life and of human beings' (2012:58). In the same breath, the researcher's physical endowments come with their own limitations and baggage, whether it is being male (gender), educated (class) and Malawian (nationality). The most important attribute of any research, however, is that the empirical data should either validate or subvert a theory.

Brazil

The interviews in Brazil were administered over a three-month period between October and December 2015. The researcher was aware of the power dynamics that have shaped practices of research on the underprivileged in the Brazilian context. A heightened sensitivity to the depiction and framing of poverty as something that is associated with the Brazilian *favelas* needed to be demystified. In the initial site of research, Recife's Casa Forte, the power and social relations were evident from the onset. The researcher was introduced to a community organiser and a representative of the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT) – (Worker's Party), who facilitated a meeting with interviewees in Casa Forte. All the interviews in Casa Forte, except for one, were conducted inside the homes of beneficiaries of social assistance. Contrary to the framing of Brazil's race relations through the lenses of a 'racial democracy' (which has been challenged in recent times in Brazil's complicated socio-historical context) all the respondents mentioned their delineated racialised categories. The in-depth interview stressed the importance of identifying the categories of location, age, race and gender.

The ten interviewees in Casa Forte initially showed reluctance to categorise themselves in the vast classifications in which Brazil defines race. The in-depth interview questionnaire did not make a distinction between the conceptualisation of race and racialisation in Brazil's social context. For example, one respondent had to rethink her racial identification and categorisation more than twice. The category 'race' does not warrant a straightforward answer in the Brazilian context. For most of the respondents, racial categorisations speak directly to phenotype, how Brazil have understood processes of racialised classes. Some scholars reified the historical importance of *branciamento* (whitening), relating it to nation-building (Hasenbalg & Huntington 1982; Andrews 1996; Telles 2004), yet in contemporary times the quotidian experiences of Black genocide, negation and necropolitics have been highlighted by critical Black scholars (Alves 2018, 2014a, 2014b; Alves & Vargas 2020). Traditionally this contrasts with histories of legislated racialised discrimination that are more explicit in the processes that cemented racialised classes in South Africa and the United States for example. While the researcher was acquainted with the Brazilian history of racial democracy prior to the beginning of the project, the instrument was fraught with limitations in identifying racial classifications that have been produced by this colonial architecture that are uniquely Brazilian.

In the same breath that these racial categorisations could not be clearly identified, the instrument also demonstrated a level of dynamism. Given the fact that race, class and gender were a crucial component to framing the entry point of the questions, respondents were afforded the opportunity to answer questions through the critical lens of a discourse that they are not used to in Brazilian society. While the comparative instrument may not meet all the equivalent racial categories on both sides, there are commonalities of shared histories of anti-black racism, Black and Native genocide, exclusion, and marginalisation that can be captured in the narration. Shrank suggests that 'while the case study is by no means the appropriate research design for each social scientific problem and is indeed ill suited to traditional, probabilistic causal analysis, it is anything but useless' (Shrank 2006:176). A populated in-depth interview guide proved effective in bringing out the complicated histories of race, slavery and social marginalisation that are sometimes less salient in Brazilian society and scholarship in general. Discussing race, class and gender and social exclusion may not be the point of entry when Brazilians engage in a social discourse. In contemporary times, theorists rooted in the Black Radical tradition have continued to challenge the overt erasures and silences of race and methodologies in Brazilian studies (Alves 2018, 2014a, 2014b; Alves & Vargas 2020).

While race remained a point of departure in the Brazilian context, the household as a social artefact was also an important category. There are undisrupted kinship ties that cannot be easily captured in the in-depth interview. For example, one respondent in Casa Forte mentioned that the categories 'household' and 'eating from one pot' were not something that they could identify with in Brazil. Firstly, a household in the Brazilian *favela* goes beyond the expanded definitions of a nuclear family. Some respondents indicated that they were more accustomed to solidarity practices that are beyond the definition of income being shared in one household. The household consists of kinship networks that are outside the confines of intimate spaces into which the researcher was welcomed. In the Brazilian context it includes *vizihno* (neighbours), who become central to the decisions that are made in this specific household. Secondly, the notion of 'eating from one pot' denotes indigence that is unfathomable in the Brazilian context. This may even be culturally offensive for some respondents, as agency constitutes an important dimension to overcome indigence even under hegemonic conditions of capitalist oppression. These nuances cannot solely be captured in an in-depth interview guide. This does not mean that questions need to be tweaked to get amenable responses; however, they should enable the narration of the data in such a way that allows that history and context are observed to make sense of complex social realities.

The Brazilian context generated lengthy responses compared to the South African interviews. The scheduled participants of *Bolsa Familia* recipients in Salvador de Bahia refused to be interviewed, as they feared that their benefits would be rescinded. This is a form of silencing that derives from the identification of the social policy tools with the political project rather than with citizenship demands. The administration of the in-depth interview was further complicated by the researcher's positionality in the discourse of framing poverty. For example, most respondents in Casa Forte questioned why an African was asking questions about poverty and inequality in Brazil. The interlocutors were not questioning the integrity of the interview process, or the in-depth interview guides themselves, rather the sensibilities of the principal investigator's position in the hierarchisation of the nation-states themselves. Unfortunately, the in-depth interview guide did not anticipate these levels of theorisations. There are problematic motifs informed by colonial representations, lexicography and Brazil's place globally. A view of poverty as pervasive in Africa is framed by a polarising narrative that has been cemented as part of the Manichean processes of knowledge-gathering and processing.

Interviews were conducted in Brazil's south-eastern city of São Paolo and Osasco between November and December 2015. The administration of the in-depth interview was firstly conducted at a place where *Bolsa Familia* recipients were being trained to access benefits. The researcher had been introduced to municipal workers responsible for ensuring that these social assistance benefits are accessed by citizens. *Bolsa Familia* recipients preferred to speak through a local interlocutor who could explain to them the colloquial equivalents of concepts that had been crafted as part of the interview. The biggest challenge encountered was when respondents were asked about social assistance, social rights and democracy in Brazil. Brazil is not like South Africa, where the end of apartheid signified a radical shift in its social contract. Beneficiaries preferred to respond to the question, 'When did you start accessing the benefits of *Bolsa Familia*?' than when the researcher enquired more about democracy. The researcher also avoided using the 1988 Brazilian transition to democracy as a crucial date. The in-depth questionnaire had to accommodate this element, as the conceptualisation of democracy and social citizenship in Brazil is not directly correlated to a demise of a colonial order. The realisation of social assistance in Brazil is equated to the triumph of the PT in 2002; and this is what most beneficiaries could remember.

The proposition that data needed to be manipulated to find exact equivalents with South Africa does not hold in principle. Neither is the Brazilian context being interpreted through the lenses of South African experimentation with the in-depth questionnaire. Brazil is a uniquely different society, but not exceptional, which warranted that the in-depth questionnaire should make sense of its social context. The threshold that was used to assess expenditure on consumer goods and service affordability is not the same across all Brazilian cities. This is much more acute in the comparative responses provided by residents in Casa Forte and São Paulo. São Paulo and Osasco are urban metropolises, where poor inhabitants are constrained by the expensive costs of transportation, food, clothing, electricity, and the on-going diabolical and pernicious effects of gentrification. The same is not true of Casa Forte, where poor inhabitants are shielded from the relatively low-cost marginal living given Recife's position as a smaller urban metropolis. The in-depth interview guide had to adjust cost of living given these differentiations. The instrument itself did not change, rather it had to consider geographical and cultural specificities in this vast territory.

As was previously noted in the South African context, gender barriers proved to be a limitation to interviewing respondents. On one hand, the researcher benefited from the narrative of an African interlocutor conducting research in Brazil. There was a sense of curiosity and anticipation that respondents demonstrated, with the study offering an alternative entry point to understanding social assistance. However, given the fact that all the interlocutors that I interviewed were women, the asymmetrical power relations between male and female were difficult with the result that cultural depth and nuances may not be incorporated in the greater scope of the research.

Immersion, Geography and Language in South Africa and Brazil

This research from the onset was confronted with issues of geography, language and the researcher's position in the division of labour in the global knowledge ecology. Sociology itself as a discipline has largely been defined by the Northern metropole, where conceptual and methodological tools have been advanced, even to make sense of comparative studies in the global South (Alatas 2003, 2006; Nyoka 2013, 2019; Adésínà 2006, 2008). African researchers and doctoral candidates, to be more specific, continue to exhibit strong tendencies of what Hountodji (1990) called 'theoretical extroversion', the feverish importation of paradigms, problematics and perspectives, and the search for legitimation and respectability from the intellectual establishments of the North. If the division of labour has for many centuries labelled the global South as a 'zone of data collection' and the North as a 'zone of knowing' (Said 1993, 1994; Zeleza 2019, 2002; Akpan 2011), then this asymmetrical power relationship is informed by the imperial and colonial imagination of geography and knowledge (Said 1978, 1993, 1994; Mamdani 2021, 2013). Said argued 'that just as none of us is outside or beyond geography, none of us is completely free from the struggle over geography. That struggle is complex and interesting because it is not only about soldiers and cannons but also about ideas, about forms, about images and imaginings' (1993:7). The real problem is Eurocentric ideas that birthed the concepts of Whites as 'sovereign' and the 'Other' as 'non-sovereigns' which have perpetuated a dualism of experiences and methodologies thereby inferiorising knowledge generated from the global South (Said 1993, 1994; Alatas 2000 2006; Zeleza 2019, 2002; Akpan 2011). Making sense of these shifting social realities in the global South requires researchers to navigate the 'metaphysical empires' bequeathed to both South Africa and Brazil, where worlds that are linguistically not converged are yet enmeshed within histories of colonial domination and racialisation.

Comparative studies – at least those that pertain to 'whole societies' as defined before – have been advanced by the West's monopolistic control and domination of norms and values of engagement and interactions particularly within the realms of the nation-state which under Westphalia norms promotes tolerance, neutrality and equality. Yet as Mamdani has shown us, 'the birth of the modern state amid ethnic cleansing and overseas domination teaches us a difficult lesson about what political modernity is: less an engine of tolerance than of conquest' (2021: 2). In the same breath, the British Marxist scholar Benedict Anderson (1983) suggested that contemporary nation-statehoods are 'imagined communities' whereby nationality, or as one might prefer to put it nation-ness, and nationalism are cultural artefacts of a particular kind which need to be understood through the lenses of their historical evolution. Research experience and hierarchy have tended to follow similar patterns. Historically, Euro/American modernity positioned itself at the centre of global history and as a totalising human project through colonial genocides and the *mission civilisatrice*. Contemporary sociology and social sciences have mimicked this through a discourse that further entrenches the 'North'/'South' divide.

Through the centring of tastes, classifications, judgements and social Darwinism, the West cemented ideologies of racism and epistemology. The West became a self-referential civilisation where 'knowledge' and 'knowing' were equated to the teleological goal of a homogenous modernity which has led to bifurcated forms of producing knowledge, a reality still felt in contemporary social sciences (Said 1978, 1993, 1994; Mamdani 2021, 2013; Zeleza 2002, 2019; Alatas 2003, 2006). A contemporary challenge to these knowledge production asymmetries is to champion 'inter-disciplinarity'. However, for the African context, Nyoka's (2019) thorough examination of Mafeje's works jettisons narrow theorisations of overcoming Eurocentrism across the social sciences by invoking Mafeje's conceptualisation of 'non-disciplinarity'. Nyoka observes the following:

> …. One wonders, however, whether there have not been any rigorous studies conducted and written from interdisciplinary perspectives. Perhaps a more valid reason to transcend inter/disciplinarity is ideological rather than methodological. The reason would be to transcend the social sciences because of Eurocentrism and imperialism, rather than intractable methodological demands. At any rate, Mafeje's proposed methodological approach is 'the discursive method' (Mafeje 1991, 1996, 2001). What he wants to do is to learn from African societies themselves, rather than approaching fieldwork with a predetermined theory or epistemology (Mafeje 1991).

The entry point in engaging with the terms and conditions of the Western canon of knowledge production is that researchers must emulate its ways and seek to preserve the status quo. This is not to say that scientific practices of producing knowledge should not be followed. Rather, as Said (1993:48) has argued, for the contemporary social scientist centuries later, the coincidence or similarity between one vision of a world system and the other, between geography and literary history, seems interesting but problematic. The contemporary global setting of overlapping territories and intertwined histories was already prefigured and inscribed in the coincidences and convergences among geography, culture, and history that were so important to the pioneers of comparative literature (in this case comparative studies) (Said 1993, 1994). The task that Said set for the next generation of social scientists was to make sense of the 'social question' from the position of the subaltern, given the historical precedent that the subaltern was never allowed to be included in the global canon of 'knowing'.

There is no reason why knowledge ecologies from the global South should not be prioritised, if boundaries and binaries produced by colonial modernity continue to conceal patterns of knowledge domination and exclusion. Zeleza's (2002) strident rebuke suggested that if the binary of producing knowledge continues to exist in the Western canon, then the international intellectual division of labour will continue to be reinforced. In this division of labour, African universities and social scientists import appropriate packages of 'universal' theory and, at best, export empirical data to researchers conducted in the universities of the North. Contemporary approaches to knowledge production entrench Nativism, where the Native only exists to explain localised realities like magical realism, rituals, and witchcraft. For the scholar who is geographically located in the global South, research realities cannot transcend their geography. In the case of this research, the Malawian 'Native' is condemned to a 'zone of erasure', as his transnational research encounters, upbringing and dexterity across Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa, seeking to understand Africa's position, are deemed unsatisfactory to provide a worthy explanation in global dynamics.

Sociology as a discipline neither transcends this 'Nativist' bias nor provides an epistemological break, as its foundational conceptualisations were to understand the growing concerns of a metropolitan Europe (Alatas 2003, 2006). On an anecdotal level 'Africanists' are engaged in hagiographical presentations of the continent and at times the entire global South, explaining its historical, social, and political evolutions. While such scholarship may have yielded some methodological and theoretical theorisations, it is trapped in its own time where local interlocutors are often missing or, in other disciplines like political science, reinforced through a contextually distant statistical modelling. Recent attempts to challenge the epistemological inequalities and racism of knowledge production by Connell (2007) and Comaroff and Comaroff (2012) in sociology and anthropology in general further suffer from an ontological dislocation. Both texts are informed by a lengthy repository of references of pioneering work by other scholars in the global South and thus seek to appropriate it. It is as if for 'knowledge in the global South' to be 'true knowledge' it must be appropriated first by the Western-centric or Africanist approaches, and then speak on behalf of the subaltern.

Cognisant of these limitations, the researcher approached these issues as an 'outsider and insider'. The biases that are entrenched in the world of research are to a large extent informed by the bifurcated construction of knowledge and geography predicated on Euro/American modernity. As Said (1994) has observed, all of us live in a society and are members of a nationality with its own language, tradition, and historical situation. As Said (1994) also noted, the question posed from the onset, while conceptualising the research instruments, was: to what extent are researchers and intellectuals' servants of these actualities and to what extent enemies? The researcher recognised that geographical and knowledge limitations existed from the onset of the research. The researcher relied on an approach of 'being an insider and outsider' simultaneously for the interviewed cohort to reflect on their experiences in their context.

In the South African context, the researcher entered the research field, aiming to transcend the linguistic isolations that exist. The researcher was an outsider by a *de facto* category of being a 'Black African'. Here the researcher was immersed in the specific communities for research in solidarity with the weak and the oppressed. At the very same time in both South Africa and Brazil, the researched themselves have been weakened by the vagaries of marketisation of public policies and distorted histories which led to perceptions that the in-depth interview guides were intrusive, leading to the researcher's label as that of a 'government spy'. In light of these realities, the positions of insider and outsider (as a subaltern) were crucial in achieving the stated goals spelled out in the research instruments. The researcher's immersion confirmed what had been suggested by Said (1994) that the real or true intellectual is always an outsider, living in self-imposed exile, and on the margins of society. He or she speaks to, as well as for, a public, necessarily in public, and is properly on the side of the dispossessed, the un-represented and the forgotten.

The immersion of being an 'outsider and insider' attempts to transcend what Zeleza (2002) calls a 'culture of imported scientific consumerism'. Zeleza (2002:9–10) argues that African social scientists have been caught in the bind of addressing African realities in borrowed languages and paradigms, conversing with each other through publications and media controlled by foreign academic communities, and producing prescriptive knowledge for what Mkandawire (2005) calls the unfinished historical and humanistic tasks of African nationalism: decolonisation, development, democracy, and nation-building. At the same time, the interactions with the research cohort attempt to forge a 'new universalism', by raising local questions that are globally relevant, as Said (1994) has suggested.

The asymmetrical power relations in the global knowledge ecology have made it possible that 'Whiteness' and research predicated on 'White supremacy' can easily access the subaltern so that the Western canon itself becomes the mouthpiece of struggle, alienation and social stratification. While such studies have yielded some methodological and theoretical perspectives, a universalism that advances a discourse framing the global South as a 'zone of pathology' is sustained. Akpan (2011) suggested that this approach can be termed a 'conspiracy of empathy' where local knowledge is deemed a target of 'caring' thought and a subject of quiet disdain. Local knowledge is typically described in terms that acknowledge the 'worth of indigenous and local communities', and in terms that recognise it as the 'information base of society'. In the South African context, the researcher's bargaining point of entry made it difficult as he was introduced as a 'doctoral student from Malawi', studying social assistance in the various districts where research was carried out. In the Brazilian context, the researcher was introduced as a 'South African' with an interest in comparative perspectives of social assistance in South Africa and Brazil. Both places still reinforced the power asymmetries that tie themselves to the Western canon that the 'African' is globally positioned not to 'know' or explain social phenomena. Alatas (2003) identifies the global division of labour by highlighting 'the division between other country studies and own country studies'.

In South Africa, some of my interlocutors asked: 'how it was possible that a "Malawian doctoral student" could study South Africa's social phenomena as Malawi itself was associated with pathology'. In similar vein, some respondents in Brazil raised questions as to how an 'African researcher' seeks to understand the lived experiences of social assistance, as opposed to being in 'Africa' where there is already so much pathology. These research idiosyncrasies cannot be divorced from the design of studies that are standard practices in Western universities, civil society, and international organisations, enabled by the 'empowering the poor' discourse. While the World Bank adopted PAR as a framework for participatory action research in order to transcend knowledge hierarchisation , a poverty of ideas is ubiquitous in the world of policy and academe, thereby reinforcing a social imagination that reflects the triumph of a Euro/American colonial discourse that does not seek to see the 'local' as part of a 'global discourse'. Akpan suggests the following:

> the discourse of empowerment is not necessarily the same thing as bringing down the artificial walls that separate the 'local' from the 'global'; rather it seems in practice to be more about demanding of the poor to retain the 'local' if necessary, but to assimilate the 'global' by all means. In the global knowledge power play, therefore, the relationship between 'global' and 'local' is not unlike that of master and servant (2011:118).

In my research 'local' people were positioned as interlocutors of their own narratives to give back power to the researched and not reinforce the asymmetrical relationship of producing knowledge. While that is the case, the research also recognises that the biological category of being a 'man' may have interfered with answers that might have given adequate reflections of the cohort of women that were interviewed. In the South African context, this was made difficult by translators who may not adequately have explained social concepts in the vernacular, and social relations where the male/female category is clearly demarcated. In Sao Paulo, the local informants were Brazilians in the category of 'brancos', and the interviewed subaltern 'parda', 'morena' and 'negra' were not able to adequately expand on their social experiences.

The research aimed at finding common themes that arrived at a sociology of the 'normal' and not 'pathology'. Akpan (2010) suggests that there cannot be a permanent epistemic thrill in sociology when there is a ubiquitous conceptualisation of social dysfunction, discord, pathologies, and pessimism. This research attempted to transcend the struggles of the subaltern by framing its methodological orientation in the world of the living with 'sociations that are defined by cohesion, cooperation, actualisation, fulfilment, progress and hope' (Akpan 2010). This can only be achieved when local interlocutors are central to the processes of narrating their lived experiences to challenge existing epistemologies.

Conclusion

This article aimed to recast age-old debates that have defined the relationship between race and epistemology. Social scientific research is imbued with in-built asymmetrical knowledge that influences 'what' or 'who' is the progenitor of 'a knowledge'. Public policy research has been defined by epistemic racism and power asymmetries as the global South is relegated to the 'zone of collecting data' and therefore incapable of generating theoretical excavations. The article problematised the positivist methodological approaches by delineating gender, language and geography as key artefacts that need to be navigated to bring about a more democratic social science to make sense of the conditions that lead to further stratification in both South Africa and Brazil. While studies in comparative public policy have yielded substantial methodological and theoretical theorisations, local interlocutors in the process are at times absent. This practice is informed by a discourse of Euro/America colonial modernity and disciplines that have been at the centre of defining knowledge, thereby side-lining the quest for a more democratic social science. The position in this article recasts the importance of thinking with global South critical theorists to aid in dismantling problematic relations and asymmetrical power relations in research, where the global South exists as a 'zone of data collection' and the global North as a 'zone of theory'.

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JHEA/RESA Vol. 19, No. 2, 2021, pp. 57-75

(ISSN 0851–7762)

Towards a New Conceptual Framework of Student Activism in South Africa

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Abstract

While the phenomenon of student activism is not new in South Africa, it has escalated recently and has taken on new forms. The literature expounds the emergence of a new modality of student activism in the form of protest movements employing social media as mobilisation tools. While such activism traditionally manifested itself in student representation in university governance structures and student demonstrations, protest movements and social media have emerged as its modern manifestation in South Africa. This article systematically analyses extant theories and conceptual frameworks to assess their relevance to these new modalities. After closely analysing key conceptual frameworks including Stakeholder Theory, the Ideal-type Regime of Governance Model and the Activist Leadership Model, it demonstrates their limitations for describing the emerging trends of student activism in South Africa, the paper proposes a new and robust conceptual model called Unbounded Student Activism.

Keywords: Student activism, student movements, university governance, Unbounded Student Activism Model, South Africa

Résumé

Si le phénomène de l'activisme des étudiants n'est pas nouveau en Afrique du Sud, il s'est récemment intensifié et a pris de nouvelles formes. La littérature expose l'émergence d'une nouvelle modalité d'activisme des étudiants sous la forme de mouvements de protestation utilisant les médias sociaux comme outils de mobilisation. Alors que ce type d'activisme se manifestait traditionnellement par la représentation des étudiants dans

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les structures de gouvernance des universités par les manifestations des étudiants, les mouvements de protestation et les médias sociaux sont apparus comme sa manifestation moderne en Afrique du Sud. Cet article analyse systématiquement les théories et les cadres conceptuels existants pour évaluer leur pertinence par rapport à ces nouvelles modalités. Après avoir analysé de près les cadres conceptuels clés notamment la Théorie des Parties Prenantes, le Modèle de Régime de Gouvernance de Type Idéal et le Modèle de l'Activisme de Leadership, il démontre leurs limites pour décrire les tendances émergentes de l'activisme des étudiants en Afrique du Sud. L'article propose un nouveau modèle conceptuel robuste appelé Activisme Illimité des Étudiants.

Mots-clés : Activisme des étudiants, mouvements des étudiants, gouvernance universitaire, Modèle de l'Activisme Illimité des Étudiants, Afrique du Sud

Introduction

According to Altbach (1984), student activism refers to the mechanisms that students use to express political discontent in their environments. He further notes that, while it affects academic institutions, it can also have disruptive implications for political systems. According to Cele (2008), although students enrol at higher education institutions to obtain qualifications and acquire knowledge and skills, they are also inclined to participate in activism to make a significant contribution to societal development. He adds that student activists act on what Altbach (1998) refers to as their 'conscience' to advance the development of society and the nation at large. Altbach likens student activism to a 'canary in a coal mine in that it may signal a social explosion to come or a potential political crisis' (1999:57). Teferra & Altbach (2004) note that student activists have been vocal on the African continent to protect their interests and benefits, and protest against various alleged injustices in the social, economic, political, cultural and other spheres.

Student activism in South Africa is, to an increasing extent, not constrained by the policies, guidelines and norms that seek to govern student activism. While formal activism continues to entail student involvement in formal university governance processes, informal activism includes collective mobilisation in the form of protest action using social media to galvanise support. Existing theories and models are not able to fully describe this complex phenomenon.

This article begins by examining the value of extant theories and conceptual frameworks used to describe student activism. Having highlighted the shortcomings of existing models and frameworks for describing the current situation in South Africa, the article proposes a robust new model called 'Unbounded' which seeks to more accurately describe new and emerging forms of student activism in contemporary South Africa. The term 'Unbounded' refers to student activism being increasingly unconstrained by the existing policies, guidelines and norms governing student activism.

The article is presented in four sections. The first section provides a literature review on the manifestation of student activism in post-apartheid South Africa with an emphasis on social media. Section two examines existing theoretical and conceptual frameworks and highlights their limitations in describing student activism in contemporary South Africa. The third section presents a new conceptual model that encapsulates all forms of student activism in the country. This model provides a new lens to understand the manifestation of student activism in all its forms – bounded and unbounded. The final section provides a conclusion.

Manifestations of Student Activism in Post-Apartheid South Africa

Student activism in post-apartheid South Africa has taken different forms including student representation in university decision-making structures and student protests (Koen, Cele & Libhaber 2006; Cele 2008; Luescher 2008). Koen et al. (2006) study on the drivers of student protests in 20 South African universities found that the majority centred on academic and financial exclusion and inadequate student housing. It revealed that institutional issues topped the list of triggers of such protests and that student grievances and concerns involved fees, access, and financial aid as well as racism in South African higher education institutions. Koen et al. (2006) concluded that, while universities have been open to negotiations with students, taking to the streets has been generally perceived as an effective tactic to bring about reforms.

Various scholars note that student activists tend to employ a variety of strategies and tactics that range from cooperative and constructive forms to antagonistic and oppositional ones (Cele 2008; Klemenčič, Luescher & Mugume 2016; Luescher 2005). However, they normally try to address their problems constructively first before resorting to protest action (Cele 2008). Klemenčič et al. (2016) concur and note that student activism has taken different forms that are influenced by the way in which students organise. They identify two forms of student activism – formal and informal. While the formal form, what we refer to as 'bounded', entails institutionalised student representation in the form of student representative councils (SRCs) to articulate and intermediate student interests, the informal form involves mobilisation where students use protest as a collective effort to demonstrate their power to bring about reform (Klemenčič et al. 2016).

Klemenčič et al. (2016) add that some students regard representation such as sitting on various committees and forums as opportunities for learning, self-articulation and a way of rubbing shoulders with policy makers. However, some activists hold a different view. Taft and Gordon (2013) assert that student activists want more than simply having a voice in decision making; for them, students are organised to make a difference in the world through collective effort. Brookes, Byford and Sela (2016) are of the view that the legitimacy of student representation and representative organisation is merely a tactic to co-opt student leaders or 'tame' dissent, and that protest movements provide a real opportunity to express student power.

Klemenčič et al. (2016) note the inherent tension between student representation to carve a suitable place for themselves in a status quo and student protest movements to change the status quo. However, Luescher (2008) observes that student activists involved in decision making forums may subversively require activist support from their constituencies in order to defend and possibly extend the gains made by previous generations, whether or not they are legally recognised. Furthermore, Klemenčič et al. (2016) state that, where formal mechanisms are absent, student activists have a tendency to ventilate issues and voice their grievances through protests and other forms of activism. Equally, Cele (2014) notes that formal and informal expressions are indicators of the effectiveness of different forms of activism and the responsiveness of the dominant policy maker to the student voice.

Student Activism: Recent Phenomena

During 2015 and 2016, violent protests erupted at most South African universities as student activism targeted free education and the decolonisation of the curriculum. Issues raised included fees, accommodation, and instructional languages as symbols of colonisation (Fomunyam & Teferra 2017; Langa 2017; Oxlund 2016). The combination of these issues produced a tense atmosphere of conflict and insurgence reminiscent of student demonstrations during the struggle against apartheid in the 1960s and 1970s (Oxlund 2016). Student activists engaged in new modalities of activism in the form of protest movements that employed social networks to mobilise and galvanise support (Luescher & Klemenčič 2017; Oxlund 2016).

The 2015 and 2016 student agitations began in historically white institutions (HWIs), namely the University of Cape Town (UCT) and University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). However, this was not a new phenomenon in post-apartheid South Africa as the historically black institutions (HBIs) had previously experienced typically violent protests.

The colonial legacy has been cited as a reason for violent tactics, where black students in HWIs demand to be treated with respect and dignity (Langa 2017). Oxlund's analysis of recent activism revealed three trends. First, the violent protests associated with the institutional life of HBIs are becoming a common feature in HWIs. Second, digital networks are being used to galvanise support within institutions and beyond. Third, these new modalities have taken student activism beyond student representative bodies to strike a chord with the student masses looking for change (Oxlund 2016).

Social Media

Social media has brought about substantial reforms to all spheres of social life, particularly social movements (Chapman 2016). The literature shows that social media has contributed to political participation, civic engagement and governance processes in the twenty-first century. Digital infrastructures such as e-government, on-line politics and others have been adopted to stimulate the involvement of citizens in democratic processes such as e-voting (Bannister and Connolly 2012). Similarly, the global environmental movement that addresses 'green' issues, the 'Arab Spring' in north Africa, 'Indignados' in Madrid, 'Occupy Wall Street' in the United States, and rebellions in Europe to oppose austerity measures and cuts in social assistance, are existing forms of civic action (Della Porta & Diani 2006; Romero 2013; Van de Donk et al. 2004). These social movements present unique types of activism to mobilise for participation in the cause. They all use new digital platforms, such as digital campaigns, chat-rooms and virtual mobilisation through Facebook (now Meta) and Twitter. These are digital tools that culminate in the rediscovery of social activism (Gladwell 2010). Furthermore, these tools are important to reach a large number of members and supporters of these social movements as they might be in different parts of the world while they engage in a political action at the same time around the world (Agre 2002).

A host of devices and resources are employed in all sorts of activism. Mobile devices used by these social movements offer high speed for communication and mobilisation. This enables a more rapid coordination and organisation, and hence the term "mobil(e)isation" (Hands 2011). Digital technologies create opportunities for individuals to become members of pressure groups, join organisations, contribute funds, receive and respond to emails, make proposals to authorities, intervene in 'online' discussions, circulate electronic petitions, exchange views, circulate announcements or activities, and call for demonstrations (Romero 2013). For instance, Castells concluded that the Zapatistas (in Mexico), which he described as 'the first informational guerrilla movement' effectively used new technologies to instantly diffuse information throughout the world and to develop a network of support groups whose efforts crystallised in a movement of international public opinion (Castells 2015). Similarly, new technologies enabled hashtag movements such as #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall movements in South Africa to galvanise support across the country and beyond (Luescher & Klemenčič 2017; Ntuli & Teferra 2017). New social media platforms such as Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook/ Meta offer unforeseen possibilities for the exchange of information on ongoing activism or campaigns (Christensen 2011; Phillimore & McCabe 2015; Ntuli & Teferra 2017).

The phenomenon of social media and political engagement is not without its critics. Social media is accused of causing the so called 'slacktivism' and that even if the internet can trigger activism, it may be pointless since the activism triggered may not have any impact on political outcomes in real terms (Morozov 2011; Cabrera, Matias & Montoya 2017). Chapman (2016) notes that the socio-economic inequalities could result in digital divides as the have-nots may lack adequate access to digital technologies and devices. Notwithstanding these critiques, social media tools and platforms are extensively utilised in social movements and have become significant conduits through which student issues can be mediated (Jungherr 2015; Mutsvairo 2016).

Proponents of social media show that these platforms assist in mobilizing the participation of large number of people including those who were not previously active and recent studies are generally more positive about the use of digital technologies (Jungherr 2015; Mutsvairo 2016; Ntuli & Teferra 2017; Phillimore & McCabe 2015). Furthermore, these studies show that the positive impact for effective mobilisation can increase over time. Thus, it can be concluded that there is no evidence to suggest that digital activism is replacing traditional political participation. Rather, it helps to mobilise citizens by increasing awareness of contemporary issues (Christensen 2011; Ntuli & Teferra 2017; Phillimore & McCabe 2015).

Student Activism and Social Networks

Castells conceptualises social movements and their mobilisation tactics using social networks as internet-age networked movements. This offers a new perspective to comprehend the hashtag movement in South Africa (Luescher and Klemenčič 2017). #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall are examples (Luescher, Loader & Mugume 2017). These movements originally emerged at two English HWIs, namely UCT and Wits respectively.

The #RhodesMustFall campaign emerged as a result of the notion that there has been insufficient debate on the colonial history of South Africa and the associated symbols. The campaign resulted in students across the country being actively involved in a struggle to dismantle colonial and apartheid symbols. The campaign reverberated in other countries such as the United States, and raised the question: 'if at UCT it was the Rhodes statue that had to fall, what "must fall" in their respective contexts' (Luescher & Klemenčič 2017).

Booysen (2016) notes that the #FeesMustFall movement took the form of a national uprising with its epicentre at Wits and that the united front formed by students assisted in forging changes in fees and improving access to higher education.

Castells observes that the student movements in South Africa are digitally driven and employed for galvanisation, coordination and communication (2015). Luescher et al. (2017) concur and note that student movements utilise platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Youtube and others. These platforms enabled the #FeesMustFall movement to secure a no-fee increase for the 2016 academic year, representing the largest and most effective victory by students since the inception of democracy in 1994 (Cloete 2015).

Castells, Fernandez-Ardevol, Qiu & Sey (2009:4) aver that internet-age social movements tend to be 'interactive and horizontal'. This is in accordance with the views of Badat (2016) who observed that during the #FeesMustFall movement at some universities, protesting students interrogated the stance assumed by SRCs, which are formally elected bodies to represent students' interests. They also questioned how well the SRCs represented student interests. Allusions have also been made to the protest movements being 'leaderless' or represented by ad hoc committees that are informally formed (Badat 2016:95). These views have implications for negotiations by student movements with the government or university administrators as they perceive SRCs as somewhat ineffective and SRCs not being their representatives (Luescher et al. 2017). Luescher & Klemenčič (2017) note that this has resulted in the emergence of informal activists who operate parallel to institutionalised student activism in the form of SRCs.

Badat (1999) makes a clear distinction between informally and formally constituted representative student associations. He posits that while both may serve as platforms to collectively organise and shape student activism, they have distinct characteristics. Formal student organisations are 'membership organizations', while student movements are 'broader entities, typically consisting of individual persons and several organizations with no formal individual membership' (Badat 1999:22).

Theoretical and Conceptual Lenses

This section examines key theoretical lenses and conceptual frameworks, including the Stakeholder Theory (Freeman 1984), the University Governance (Luescher 2008) and Activist Leadership models (Altbach 1989; Lipset & Altbach 1966). These frameworks provide the foundation for the development of a new conceptual model to reflect the contemporary characteristics of student activism in the higher education sector in South Africa.

Freeman's Stakeholder Theory

The stakeholder theory refers to 'any group or individual that affects or is affected by the achievement of organisational objectives' (Freeman 1984:21). However, Donaldson & Prestone's (1995) conceptualisation rests on three aspects of a stakeholder theory, namely descriptive, instrumental and normative.

Descriptive Stakeholder Theory

Donaldson and Prestone (1995) state that the descriptive stakeholder theory is concerned with the actions of managers and stakeholders in terms of how they behave and the manner in which they perceive their actions and roles in an organisation. They add that this aspect of a stakeholder theory presents a model that describes how the organisation is structured and what it stands for. It also examines the organisation as a constellation of cooperative and competitive interests with simultaneous intrinsic value.

Instrumental Stakeholder Theory

The principal focus of interest in this aspect of a stakeholder theory is the proposition that organisations practising stakeholder management will, all other factors being equal, be relatively successful in conventional performance terms, i.e., productivity, stability and growth (Donaldson & Prestone 1995). Furthermore, the instrumentality of the stakeholder theory is centred on how managers should act if they want to achieve the organisational goal of maximising profit and productivity. Donaldson and Prestone (1995) argue that if managers treat stakeholders in accordance with the stakeholder concept, the organisation will be successful in the long term.

Normative Stakeholder Theory

This aspect of stakeholder theory assumes that stakeholders are groups with legitimate interests in procedural and/or substantive aspects of organisational activity. It also suggests that all internal and external stakeholders' interests should be considered as equally important in collective decision making. Furthermore, the normative stakeholder theory assumes that stakeholders are defined by their own legitimate interest in the organisation rather than simply by the organisational interest in them. However, it does not necessarily assume that management is the only lawful locus of institutional control and governance and does not imply that all stakeholders should be equally involved in all processes and decisions (Donaldson & Prestone 1995).

Other studies on organisation that adopt the stakeholder theory reveal that organisations that are devoted to the tenets of the stakeholder approach achieve high levels of organisational effectiveness that enable them to achieve their goals more readily than other approaches (Kotter & Heskett 1992). Figure 1 presents a diagrammatical representation of the stakeholder theory (Freeman 1984).

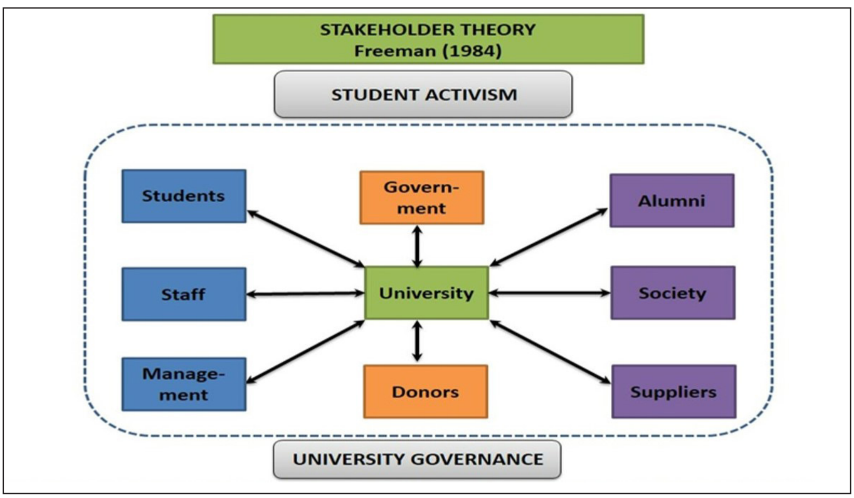

Figure 1: The Stakeholder Theory as applied to student activism and its interaction with university governance structures in South Africa

Luescher's University Governance Model

This model identifies four ideal types of university governance that can be adopted depending on the institution's vision. These are the Community of Scholars University, Stakeholder University, Prestigious University and Market-oriented University. Figure 2 diagrammatically represents Luescher's (2008) model.

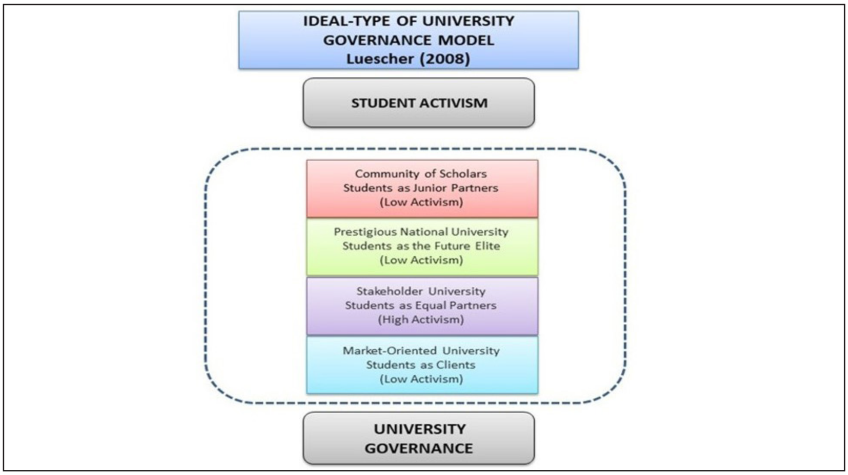

Figure 2: The University Governance Model as applied to student activism and its interaction with university governance structures in South Africa

The first ideal type, the 'community of scholars', refers to a donnish regime of university governance that regards students as 'minors' and 'junior members of the academic community'. It promotes professional self-regulation and academic self-rule by the professoriate by virtue of its expertise. Furthermore, it advocates for academic and scholarly freedom and autonomy, with the academic authority regarded as the foremost rule of legitimation (Moodie 1996; Luescher 2008).

The stakeholder university is the second ideal type of university governance. It supports representative democracy to promote representation of all stakeholders in decision-making, including students, academics and workers. Stakeholders participate in decision-making that is characterised by negotiations (Luescher 2008; Olsens 2007). However, Morrow (1998) notes that the first problem that emerges is who qualifies to be a stakeholder; this could be a source of continual suspicion and distrust between different groups who seek to be the dominant voice. This approach recognises students as a key constituent of the institution and they are involved in almost every university committee as equal partners. As the executive branch of this democracy, the university executive is accountable to students, amongst others (Luescher 2008).

Thirdly, the prestigious national university ideal type of governance is based on the premise that a university is an instrument of a nation that is governed in accordance with the dominant political culture. It presents students as beneficiaries and the future elite of the nation who have trust in the political elders and act in compliance with external directives. Student activists are likely to be co-opted to a limited number of decision-making committees. However, the real decisions are made elsewhere and students' inclusion aims to socialise them on how they should do things. This approach to university governance is characterised by strong paternalistic tendencies, with the university providing oversight through a student adffairs department using the in *loco parentis* rule where elders nurture students for their future role in the nation (Luescher 2008).

Fourth and finally, Luescher (2008) notes that the market-oriented ideal type of university governance adopts a managerial-professional approach. Students are viewed as 'clients' and 'users' of the higher education institution from a neo-liberal and consumerist perspective. In addition, the university is assumed to be a service provider that has identified a niche area and provides services competitively to meet the needs of that niche. Managerial leadership was adopted in universities to support more competitive and entrepreneurial activities that focus on value for money in respect of the product offered and are agile and effective in relation to market demands. Student activism is lacking and students are generally politically apathetic (Luescher 2008).

Altbach's Activist Leadership Model

The activist leadership model is based on the assumption that students become involved in activism at different levels. It is conceptualised by three rings of activism known as core leadership, active followers, and sympathisers. Uninvolved students fall outside these three rings (Altbach 1989). The core leadership is the smallest inner ring which comprises a tiny minority of student activists who are more radical than most other participants (Lipset & Altbach 1966). They are also more politically aware, tend to be ideologically oriented, and were members of political organisations prior to their involvement in student activism. They tend to be politically engaged during periods when no action is taking place on campus and in most instances, are part of an existing political community (Altbach 1989).

Active followers comprise the larger middle ring. They are well aware of issues at hand, committed to the goals of the movement, and keen to be actively involved to achieve the goals of the struggle (Altbach 1989). The third and largest ring is made up of sympathisers with the broad goals of the movement. However, they are somewhat unclear about issues and are rarely, if at all, directly involved (Altbach 1989). Finally, the model assumes that the largest group of students that is located outside the three rings of student activism are uninvolved students. It further assumes that uninvolved students are generally apathetic and not interested in engaging in student activism (Altbach 1989).

Figure 3 presents the Activist Leadership Model (Altbach 1989; Lipset & Altbach 1966).

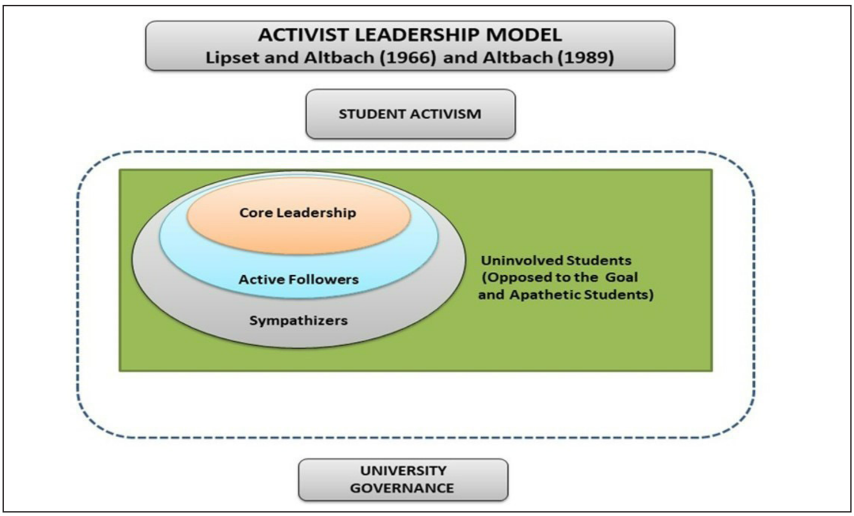

Figure 3: The Active Leadership Model as applied to student activism and its interaction with university governance structures in South Africa

A New Conceptual Model

Recent student activism in South Africa has been characterised by new forms of protest movements, where activists use social networks to galvanise student support (Langa 2017; Oxlund 2016). These new modalities in the digital age are aligned to what Castells called internet-age movements. Novel methods of participating in student activism culminated in the emergence of new groups, issues and events which cannot be readily understood within the framework of existing theories and models, calling for their reassessment.

This article examined the 1) Stakeholder Theory (Freeman 1984), 2) Ideal-Type Regime of University Governance Model (Luescher 2008) and 3) Activist Leadership Model (Altbach 1989; Lipset & Altbach 1966).

The stakeholder theory offers an understanding of the formal participation of students as a stakeholder group in university governance. It demonstrates that students have a stake in university governance and thus participate in decisions that affect them, though they remain small as a constituency in university bodies such as the Senate (Cele 2002). However, the analysis points that the stakeholder theory is confined to describing the formal activism of students.

Second, the paper examined the University Governance Model which consists of the four ideal-types of university governance, i.e., community of scholars, stakeholder university, prestigious university, and market-oriented university. However, the analysis of this model also demonstrates that it is limited to formal engagements of students in university decision making processes within university governance protocols.

Third, the review of the Activist Leadership Model (Altbach 1989; Lipset & Altbach 1966) demonstrates the three rings of activism as core leadership in the centre ring, derived from formal structures of students such as SRCs with their active followers in the middle ring, and sympathisers in the outer ring. Outside the three rings lie uninvolved students who are described as uninterested in the cause. However, a review of the literature on recent protest movements in South Africa indicates that the widespread protests were not only led by formal leadership in the core ring, as demonstrated in this model, but also other student activists who were not formally elected. For instance, the #FeesMustFall movement had no formally designated leadership and any activist who took an avid interest in the issue became part of the core leadership, thereby occupying the centre ring. This shows a key deficiency of the model as it currently stands.

It is on the account of these limitations and gaps of extant models and conceptual frameworks, that we are introducing a new conceptual model we call the 'Unbounded Student Activism Model' (Figure 4). This model tries to bring a holistic picture of all dynamic forms and manifestations of student activism in contemporary South Africa, both formal and informal, into its thinking.

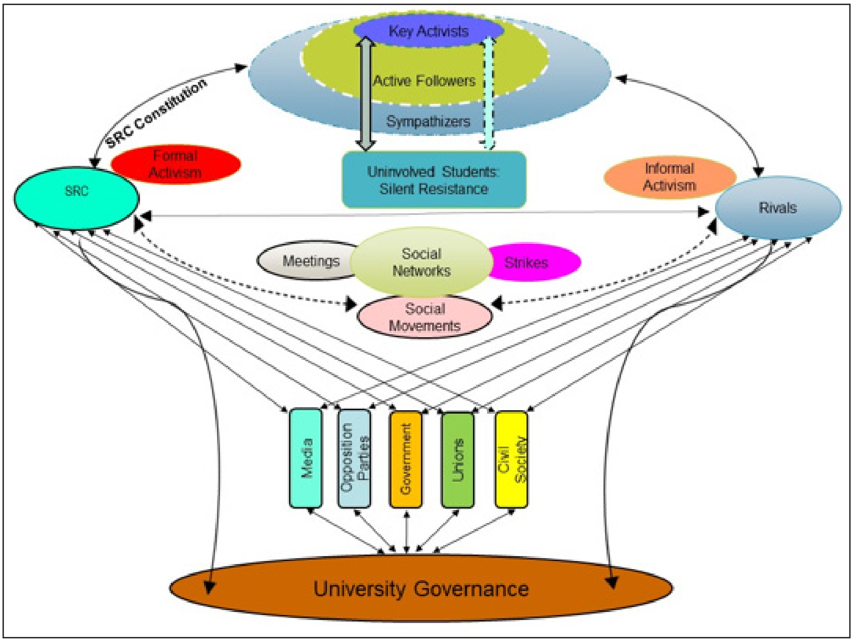

Figure 4: Unbounded Student Activism Model by Ntuli and Teferra

The model depicts the existence of a variety of stakeholders, both internal and external, with vested interests in the university governance. Within the framework of university governance arrangements, students stand as one of the stakeholders in university decision-making processes. University governance is conceptualised as a constellation of both cooperative and competitive interests with both internal and external stakeholders considered to be important in collective decision making.

In the formal camp of activism, elected student representatives articulate and represent interests of students as a constituency group in the university decision making processes per the applicable SRC constitution. Their activities are institutionalised and regulated in terms of the Higher Education Act, 1997. However, members of the SRCs may also opt to form alliances and lobby with other like-minded stakeholders – in an (informal) arrangement – should they find that their ability to secure certain concessions through formal university decision-making processes does not achieve the desired results.

Another set of students, dubbed as 'rivals', with alternative, and possibly contrary agendas and philosophies to those pursued by the formal camp, runs in parallel to the formal camp is presented on the extreme right of the model. This rival group may pursue alternative, if not contradictory, agendas through informal engagements that counter prevailing narratives in the formal camp. However, the intention is broader – to gain visibility and popularity to 1) position itself for formal SRC leadership positions; or 2) to establish itself as an alternative – a parallel – 'extra-parliamentary' force in an informal structure that seeks to influence decisions. These groupings may mobilise other stakeholders in university governance structures to advance their cause. We dubbed this form of competing activism that projects alternative, if not opposing, narratives, within an informal setting as 'rival activism'. It is important to note that a rival camp may be composed of or even led by students from the formal camp who lost a power struggle or whose term of office came to an end. Similarly, the formal camp may trace its history to the rival camp.

At the centre of the model lies the social movements that involve individual students, different student organisations, rival activists, SRCs and other stakeholders that drive and draw students in and out of the formal (SRC) and informal (rival camp) settings. Both settings are susceptible to the dynamics of social and political upheavals that may shake both camps indicating the fluidity – and unboundedness – of student activism. The two-way traffic is depicted using broken arrows to indicates the movement of ideas, narratives and positions to and from both camps in and out of the crucible of a multitude of popular and marginal discourses driving social movements. The #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall movements, catalysed by social media, are cases in point. It should be noted that once movements have pursued their causes to the point where their goal is attained, they may return to their original roles or states.

The model lays out three rings of activism to demonstrate the degree of activists' participation and engagements: namely 'key activists', 'active followers' and 'sympathisers'. The formal setting, as in SRCs, operate within the soft boundaries of these categories in a more 'fluid' and interactive manner with direct and indirect interaction with the communities outside of the shell that encompasses uninvolved and 'silent' students. In recognition of the formal and informal steering of activism, we opted for 'key activists' than 'core leadership' as the latter appears to imply formality. The model caters to the dynamics of movement to and from each category (ring) towards another in recognition of the 'waning and waxing' of latency (dormancy) and/ or action (passion) of roles and engagements. For instance, if 'uninvolved students' began to participate actively, this could turn them into sympathisers and then active members and eventually into key activists. The inverse is also possible as active members may become less active over time and go dormant.

It is worth noting the potential of apparently 'uninvolved students' to engage in silent resistance or to participate anonymously through the now ubiquitous social media channels. Apparently 'uninvolved students' may not be unconcerned or disengaged after all, they may simply be operating under the radar.

This article argues that student activism has recently shifted from formal student representation in university governance and traditionally organised strikes to new forms of protest movements orchestrated by informal leadership, using digital technologies to galvanise students and the broader society. This new emerging trend of student activism is robustly captured in this unbounded model that recognises the multitude of stakeholders, the complex nature of their engagements, as well as the 'mutable' communication platforms.

Conclusion

Student activism in the South African higher education context has been charac1terised by multiple forms of student representation and protest action. Existing models that seek to describe these phenomena seem to fall short in capturing the essence of these developments. For instance, the two prominent examples, the #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall movements, employed digital technologies to communicate with and mobilise a wider constituency of stakeholders around issues of fees and symbols of colonisation, respectively. In the process, they revealed the shortcomings of established models describing student activism.

This article argues that existing models and theories of student activism tend to be inadequate to describe the phenomenon of contemporary student activism in South Africa. On the basis of this analysis, we formulated a new conceptual framework of student activism, called the Unbounded Student Activism Model, to embrace the emerging phenomena, mechanisms, processes and tools governing student activism which are increasingly difficult to adequately describe using bounded models of student involvement in the governance of universities in South Africa.

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JHEA/RESA Vol. 19, No. 2, 2021, pp. 77-89

(ISSN 0851–7762)

Mediation between Linguistic Hegemony and Periphery Languages in the Nobel Prize for Literature

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Abstract

This article explores the Nobel Prize for Literature as an embodiment of Western hegemony, despite its universal disposition. It demonstrates that the award is prestigious and canonises selected literary works as quintessential, as well as offering social and economic benefits to authors. However, the article contends that there are ideological and geopolitical considerations apart from quality that are addressed by the Swedish Academy to identify the winner every year, chief among them being the language of writing. The article demonstrates that literary works that are apt to win are generally those that are written in the dominant languages of the metropolis, especially English. It further cast doubts on the chances of winning for writers who use marginal languages, for example, African national languages, considering that even translations tend to misrepresent texts in the source language. The article avers that the Nobel Prize epitomises hegemony, language being a key component. Using postcolonial theory, the article further lays bare how writers use marginal languages to mediate with linguistic hegemony through appropriation, abrogation and evolution of argots. The article asserts that the Swedish Academy needs to rethink the question of language in awarding the Nobel Prize for Literature or else it can become displaced and parochialised as users of minor languages negotiate with it.

Résumé

Cet article étudie le prix Nobel de littérature comme une incarnation de l'hégémonie occidentale, malgré sa dimension universelle. Il démontre que le prix est prestigieux et canonise des œuvres littéraires sélectionnées comme quintessence, tout en offrant des avantages sociaux et économiques

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aux auteurs. Cependant, l'article soutient qu'en dehors de la qualité, des considérations idéologiques et géopolitiques sont, chaque année, prises en compte par l'Académie suédoise pour désigner le gagnant, le critère principal étant la langue d'écriture. L'article démontre que les œuvres littéraires susceptibles de gagner sont généralement celles écrites dans les langues dominantes des métropoles, notamment l'anglais. Cette situation a, en outre, jeté le doute sur les chances de gagner d'écrivains qui utilisent des langues marginales, par exemple les langues nationales africaines, étant donné que même les traductions ont tendance à déformer les textes de la langue source. L'article affirme que le prix Nobel incarne l'hégémonie, la langue constituant un élément-clé. S'appuyant sur la théorie postcoloniale, l'article démontre comment les écrivains utilisent les langues marginales pour faire face à l'hégémonie linguistique par l'appropriation, l'abrogation et l'évolution des argots. L'article affirme que l'Académie suédoise doit repenser la question de la langue lors de l'attribution du prix Nobel de littérature, au risque d'être supplantée et cloisonnée lorsque les utilisateurs de langues mineures négocient avec elle.

Introduction

The composition of literature occurs among a wide range of communities in different geographical regions of the world. Literary art is composed in a variety of tongues reflecting the approximately 7,000 languages in the world (Jager 2010). But the languages in question are not equal: they operate in stratification. A number of European languages such as English, German, Swedish and French are hegemonic, while many African languages such as Kiswahili, Amharic, Xhosa and Yoruba are not. Then there are languages which appear powerless in this hierarchy, and which are used by small communities in different countries. In East Africa, such languages would include Meru, Kisii, Suba, Alur, Acholi, Lango, Nyamwezi, Chaga and Iramba, to name just a few. There is abundance of literature in these languages, their tiered status notwithstanding.

Literary pieces are not always of the same quality: some may border on excellence, while others could be found wanting. A number of literary prizes have been initiated to recognise writers who produce pieces of exceptional quality when compared with other composers. Marc (2003) states that there are several factors that are considered when deciding which works are superior to others. These include reviews in literary journals, the opinions of experts in the literary field and academic journals, and the author's prestige; which all end up coming up with a canon that defines what makes a piece of literature high quality.

One of the most prestigious intellectual awards in the contemporary world is the Nobel Prize In Literature (Urde & Geyser 2014), awarded annually by the Swedish Academy in line with the will of the Swedish philanthropist Alfred Nobel, who invented dynamite. Rollason (2016) says that the award is issued to literary pieces that are 'the most outstanding in an ideal direction'. Other Nobel Prizes are in the fields of Physics, Medicine, Chemistry, Economics and Peace.

A literary award presupposes that there is universality or globality of literature. It can be deduced that there is a barometer used across the globe to distinguish top-notch pieces of literature from those that are not as good. However, looking at the distribution of the Nobel Prizes for Literature in the last few decades, there are countries that appear to have an edge over others. European and American authors have been awarded the prize many more times than authors in the rest of the world. According to Statista (2019) the top ten countries in the world with the most Nobel Prizes for Literature are as follows: France – 15; United States and United Kingdom – 12, Germany and Sweden – 8; Italy and Spain – 6. Others are Poland, Ireland and Russia, all with four winners.

Geographic regions aside, it is apparent that the award has mainly been won by writers who write in the hegemonic languages of the world. These are languages that have been foisted on the world as Very Important Languages (VILs), as opposed to marginal tongues. Writers from outside Europe and America who have won the prize either wrote in the dominant languages or had their literary works translated into them. This article contends that winning the Nobel Prize for Literature may not necessarily be informed by the compelling nature of the work, but rather by as a result of ideological and geopolitical factors, language choice being paramount.

Busting the Lustre of the Nobel

Literary prizes are prestigious and many writers yearn for them. An award legitimises a literary production, while those who miss out are deemed not worthy of recognition. Awards are covered widely in the media and some authors have their works identified as school setworks. The awards are recognised in the author's country, and all over the globe. Poyner (2009:1) for example, argues that the literary prizes won by J.M. Coetzee, including the Nobel, made him one of the most important writers of his time.

In addition, an award can boost the author's book sales internationally. Authors are also likely to earn prestigious invitations as keynote speakers in conferences or be appointed as adjunct lecturers. They also receive wide acclaim in terms of academic dissertations and critiques of their works as seen in Gokalp (2010). Publishers and literati search out award-winning authors, sometimes with contracts to sign.

Kiguru (2016) asserts that winners receive large sums of money, manifesting the economic return on creative writing. The prize money attests to the fact that writing can be lucrative, contrary to claims in African countries that the arts – including literature – do not bring reward. (This is more so when artists have to contend with piracy).

He says that when authors win awards for their literary works, they are legitimised as the best in the strata of writers. Their genius is validated and acknowledged as quintessential. Kiguru (2016:27) further argues that:

> The award body, therefore, becomes an institution that confers a mark of excellence on a literary text and in the process, it influences not only the consumption of literature but its production as well. Writers compete for that stamp of approval and acknowledgement that prizes bring. In this way, the award industry becomes an important agent of literary canonization.

Other writers, and upcoming writers, regard award-winners as role models, and some try to emulate them in their writing. However, what such writers fail to understand is that the winners may not necessarily receive awards owing to their fecundity in creativity or skill in writing, but simply because they fitted the parameters of the awarding bodies. The parameters could include the language used to write, geographic locations and political interests. Such considerations may have little to do with the quality of the work, but simply indicate the author's acquiescence to the demands of the awarding institution. Ponzanesi (2014:129) states:

> Literary awards help to exponentially increase the visibility and the sales of nominated authors, magically equip them with unprecedented publicity which their predecessors could only have dreamed of, and maybe provide them a place in the short-term canon. The question remains whether this canon is not contaminated by the old imperial regime evaluation. In between there is the whole publishing industry, with its annexed complicity with the literary award system. This has to deal with the limits of translation, the exact criteria for eligibility and the composition of the juries for awarding prizes. The readers, reviewers and academics receive what could be an ephemeral and at times purely provocative selection to what the literary awards world offers.

The criterion for selecting literary prize winners is shrouded in mystery. Marc (2003:1) is concerned that the parameters for measuring the best literary works are void:

> In the field of literary studies, the notion of classification by quality is not only one of the most frequently applied notions; it is generally also one of the least explicated. Some authors are considered more important than others, but it is left unexplained on what grounds this hierarchy is based. Many literary

> scholars claim to objectively investigate and establish the literary quality of an author, while describing, interpreting, and evaluating his or her texts.

The author further claims that there exists no explicit standard to measure aesthetics and quality, a matter that renders measurability of such artistic works methodologically shaky.

While the lack of a methodological criterion for measuring avant-garde literary works is a serious matter of concern, the fact that the awarding juries could be articulating hegemonic causes is disturbing. The verdict that they issue on winning literary works could be fraught with dubious undercurrents that have nothing much to do with the quality of the piece. Referring to a literary seminar that she once attended, Kiguru (2016:1) demonstrates that the literary awards may not always be looking for excellence, but for parameters that perpetuate the hegemony of some cultures and languages:

> The aspiring writers were guided in creating a literature that would fit into the market demands: writing stories that would appeal to different literary magazines and prizes. For example, the stories had to be in English and the length remained between 3,000 and 15,000 words. The facilitator also guided us in writing stories that represented 'African sensibilities.'

The quotation demonstrates that the shortlisting and awarding of literary prizes may not be necessarily guided by the quality of the work, but by the political and cultural demands of the awarding institution. Gokalp (2010:172) holds that when Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2006, the Turkish public and media reacted with both love and anger. Many people were convinced that the author had instigated a global crusade against Turkey for the sake of the award, and that he won the prize for belittling his motherland. But there were those who celebrated his award as an honour bestowed on the nation of Turkey.

Klein (2016) demonstrates how Mo Yan's 2012 Nobel Prize was received with condemnation especially in Europe and America. He was condemned for defending the Chinese Communist Party and the ruling regime in one of his novels. However, in his home country, he was revered as a hero who had ensured that China earned the elusive Nobel for literature. Klein goes on to say that some of those who cast stones at the book had never read it, saying that Western scholars condemned Mo Yan owing to their 'West-centric' positions, and not because his Chinese novels were wanting. The awarding of 2016's Nobel Prize for Literature to Bob Dylan was also controversial because it was argued that the author was a songwriter, and the award should have been won by 'real' writers (Rollason 2016). These criticisms of the Literature Nobel Prize, whether justified or not, show that the awarding body is influenced by dogmas, and not necessarily by ingredients of quality.

Linguistic Hegemony in the Literature Nobel Prize

The art of literature is produced and practised by people the world over. The art is used to inspire people, for self-expression, for identity-making, to celebrate, mourn, teach and entertain. It is composed in written or oral form. Various forms of art use various raw materials. For example, wood is key to a sculptor, a pen is fundamental to an artist, colours are prerequisites for painting, while soil is key to pottery. The chief raw material for the art of literature is language (wa Thiong'o 1986; Wellek &Warren 1984). It is language that is moulded and manipulated by the composer of a literary artefact to realise the artistic product.

Carlucci (2013) asserts that language is not a single object but a culture and philosophy. Similar observations are made by Ngũgĩ (1997), who argues that language is a carrier of a people's culture. Suffice to state that every community in the world has a language through which to craft and practise its literature. Considering that there are about 7,000 languages in the world (Worldatlas 2017), one can presume that there are literary works composed in a similar number of languages all over the world. Not all quality pieces may end up receiving attention from the Nobel Prize jurists since they could be authored in constrained languages. The jurists do also consider literary works that have been translated, but as Klein (2016) argues, translation can cause misrepresentation of the language as it stands in the source text. He cites Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* which was mistranslated in Arabic and related languages. Klein further asserts that Mo Yan was castigated by the metropolis, but his Chinese works were knowingly or unknowingly misrepresented in English translations.

It has already been mentioned that the awarding institutions are not always driven by objectivity in the quality of work when identifying winners. As Ives (2004) argues, other considerations play a part. Among these are the language used to write. For example, English has been privileged from the time of colonialism, while the languages of the people in the colonies were marginalised (Ashcroft et al. 1989:3).

By focusing on the life of Gramsci, Ives (2004) argues that language is a potent tool that can be used to galvanise and sway populations, especially by the elite. It has been used to consolidate or fragment populations in all spheres of life. A good example is language standardisation which can be used to consolidate people into a nation state. Language policies are also expected to realise a standard in education, politics, health, social, cultural and in the economic spheres (Ives 2004:15). The people behind language policies and standardisations are normally the ruling elite who have goals which may not necessarily be in the interest of the masses, who are coerced or consent to the goals of the elite. However, as Ives (2004) points out, consent is in most cases suspect, taking into consideration that the masses do not have options when it comes to the policies of the ruling class, and are therefore left to begrudgingly accept them. For example, some people may not want to use languages that have been chosen for standardisation because they are still attached to their mother tongue and dialects. In addition, the populace may be averse to the question of foreign languages being declared national or official, instead of their own mother tongues. In the final analysis, they accept the standards of the elite, which are simply hegemonic, while their own voices and interests are swept under the carpet. The ruling class is wont to claim that they rule through the consent of the people, but the end result is the organisation of society in terms of hierarchy by the elite.

The Nobel Prize for Literature suggests that there is universality in literature, from which the canon is judged. Despite the globality of literature, Ahluwalia (2001), postulates that where there is globalisation, there is localisation. Taking our cue from the standardisation of languages and the enactment of language policies by states, we can deduce a language hegemony that is nurtured and perpetuated by the Nobel Prize for Literature. The choice of language for candidates for the Nobel Prize for Literature is hegemonic since it divides writers in hierarchies. Ives (2004) opines that language status can either be vertical or horizontal. The horizontal axis implies that language varieties coexist and help people to transact their obligations on a daily basis. However, the vertical plane assumes that some languages are more prestigious than others, resulting in social stratification. In respect to the Swedish Academy, the language status inclines to the vertical axis. This corroborates Mazrui and Mazrui (1998), Phillipson (1992) and Bisong's (1995) assertion that there are dominant and minor languages in the world. Thus, there are preponderant languages which are the preference of the elite, and minor languages which are mainly used by the marginalised.

From Gramsci's standpoint, as captured by Carlucci (2013), hegemony indicates how literary writers in constrained regions elect to adhere to the standards of the Swedish Academy, and by extension to Eurocentrism, to write literary works which could win the Nobel Prize. They are not coerced to undertake the exercise but do it for prestige and for socio-economic and political power. Yet, going by the history of the awarding jurists, one gets the impression that those who are likely to win the Nobel Prize for Literature are authors who write mainly in European languages, especially in English. Others who stand to win are those who write in their national languages, but have their works translated into the hegemonic languages.

There is a cohort of writers whose choice is to write in their national languages, including their mother tongues. The Swedish Academy is categorical that such authors can submit literary materials in any language since they have experts to review works in all languages (Chinaculture 2017). Washbourne (2016:57) contradicts the above postulation by asserting that only two members of the five-member committee have proficiency in non-European languages at any given time. The Nobel Committee advises the 18-member Swedish Academy, who are proficient in as many as 13 languages. Washbourne quotes Parks and Wastberg (2011), who say that when the five members of the Nobel Committee have a hunch about a literary genius in an unknown language, they solicit the services of expert translators and oath-sworn specialists to offer advice. But one can surmise that the Committee's lack of competence in many world languages compromises the outcome of the Nobel Prize for Literature. Washbourne (2016:58) argues that:

> The reliance on expert informants for their qualitative valuations can very easily devolve into campaigning and logrolling that compromise any objective measures of literary qualification.

Washbourne further argues that while the Academy can source for expertise from gurus in languages in which they are not conversant, there is a question as to whether such works can ever be privileged in relation to the dominant languages which the five-member Nobel Committee understands. It is also not clear whether the Committee would pass the bias test by privileging a work that does conform to the canon because it is in languages such as Kiswahili, Luganda, Yoruba, Maasai, Luo, Kikuyu, Nyamwezi, and so forth.

It is argued that nobody is forced to write according to particular parameters in order to win the Nobel Prize for Literature, but instead, that people do it out of their own volition. But one cannot ignore the fact that the Swedish Academy has strong economic muscle, while many writers in the periphery may have little financial power. Because the award is prestigious, creative writers in the periphery are bound to the requirements of the Nobel, whether they deem it hegemonic or not. They know that by winning the prize, they stand to gain a fortune and global recognition. Bangha (2010:60) argues that the Nobel Prize can catapult an author from obscurity to instant fame. He says that Rabindranath Tagore, the 1913 Nobel Prize Winner, was an unknown poet for such a long time that when the award suddenly shot him into fame, the first treatises on him misspelt his name, misrepresented his age and even mistook him for a musician. He says that for the first time the European discourse acknowledged that the Orient had a living culture.

The choice to use dominant languages in the hope of winning the Nobel Prize for Literature may be driven by good intentions, and may appear innocuous. However, as Ives (2004:60) argues, the move could prove injurious to marginal consciousness and freedom. This is because the ruling classes are apt to levy their world vision and philosophies to the periphery groups. In addition as Kiguru (2016:62) argues:

> International awards industries rating as gatekeepers of knowledge in African literature, continue to canonize works by Anglophones and diasporic writers at the expense of local writers publishing in African and other European languages.

Literary works written in other languages suffer neglect. This further leads to language exclusion, which impinges on the right to language as captured in different countries' constitutions and charters. The situation is decried by Bamgbose (1999:1), who argues that linguistic exclusion resonates with the Biblical tale of Shibboleth (Judges 12:4-6), involving the Gileadites who could pronounce /sh/, and the Ephraimites who could only pronounce the sound as /s/. Those who had challenges in pronouncing the sound were killed, while those who could pronounce it were spared.

Mediation with Linguistic Hegemony

Using postcolonial theory as espoused by Ashcroft et al (1989), it is important to analyse how literary authors of the periphery have dealt with linguistic hegemony in their writing as far as literary prizes are concerned. The tenets of the theory include appropriation, abrogation and evolution of variants. Appropriation is a situation where writers in the periphery use the language of the Centre (such as English) to articulate their otherness. In so doing, they do not have to use the Centre's English, but they can resort to englishes lower case english is used to indicate variants other than standard English (Ashcroft 1989:77). This implies adulteration of English to ensure that the language serves the interest of writers and readers in the periphery. A good example is Gabriel Okara, who used Ijaw syntax and lexical codes akin to English in his novel *The Voice*. Chinua Achebe (1989) argues that this entails taking on board the dominant language and adulterating it to serve a purpose in the local situation. The move causes a hybrid where both the metropolis language and the variant find space together.

It is not clear to what extent the Swedish Academy is ready to entertain appropriation of English. The institution is founded on the leverage of the Centre, so there is concern as to whether it is ready to accommodate other variants of English as used to pen literary works in the periphery. Additionally, taking into account that there is already the asymmetry between the standard 'correct' English and 'incorrect' non-standard English as Pardoe (2000) would argue, the Swedish Academy may be averse to literary works that have been written in 'incorrect' English. It should not be forgotten that the standard English that is used in sections of Britain is different from the English that is used in countries like United States, Kenya, Canada, or Jamaica (Ashcroft 1989:8). It is within the ambit of the Swedish Academy to decide whether to open the contestation space for the Nobel Literature Prize by including variants such as english or to continue to buttress the Centre by considering works that are written in hegemonic languages.

Abrogation is another way by which people in the periphery continue to negotiate with linguistic hegemony as perpetuated by the Nobel Literature Prize. According to Ashcroft et al. (1989), abrogation entails the refusal to accept the dominance of one language, especially that of the Centre, over another language of the periphery. It also negates the metropole's hegemonic culture, which is articulated through language. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o has been at the forefront of this abrogation since he made a shift from writing in English to Gikuyu, his mother tongue. He explains the departure as an effort in decolonisation (wa Thiong'o 1986).

The question of abrogation, specifically where writers stop writing in dominant languages to write in any of the 7,000 languages in the world, poses a challenge to the Swedish Academy. While the committee is clear that it has enough experts to review works in different languages, it would be far from the truth to claim that it has experts in even one-tenth of all world languages in which literary pieces are likely to be written. In addition to the challenges of ensuring correct translations, waiting until masterpieces in minor languages are translated is a travesty since there is evidence that some authors have died before translation of their works has been completed (Washbourne 2016). Yet, limiting the number of languages that could be acceptable to the committee is counter-productive since it will create a limited canon, while the Nobel ought to be egalitarian if it is to be an award with global status.

Linguistic hegemony is also tackled through evolution. It was earlier mentioned that there is English of the Centre and there are variants of english (Ashcroft 1989). Ashcroft argues that the development of English happens in two ways: new vocabularies are introduced forming regional English or the variants produce local and regional manifestations that are different from English, thereby resulting in a new language. Considering that the hegemonic language may be beyond the reach of a good segment of the population, it pays off to borrow from it and evolve an alternative patois. Such a version could be informed by local languages. This is exactly what has happened among the youth in Kenya who evolved Sheng (Swahili and English) and Engsh (English and Swahili) from the two main languages that are widely used in the country (Nabea 2009). Joseph Makokha, a Kenyan writer used Sheng to write poetry. Nigerian Pidgin and Creole in the Caribbean are similar. There's a strong possibility that the Swedish Academy has never heard of Makokha's poetry in Sheng, not necessarily because of inaccessibility, but simply because of the use of the argot, whose experts are only found among the youth in East Africa, and which does not fit in the Swedish Academy's canon. Yet, continuing to ignore english and patois that are evolving may end up leaving out brilliant pieces of literature, which may have won the Nobel Prize had they been crafted in any of the dominant languages.

Concluding Remarks

This article has focused on the Nobel Prize for Literature as an exemplification of Western hegemony. It has argued that the award earns winners prestige and economic benefits, but it is discriminatory since it privileges the languages of the metropolis, while denigrating the languages used by writers in the periphery. It has shown that postcolonial theory explored how capitalistic hierarchies were created with a view to presenting some authors from particular geographical locations as better writers than those from other landscapes, where marginal languages are used. To do this, the article has subverted the Centre by privileging ethnocentrism, the voice of the voiceless, undermining the universalist claim to literature, acknowledging and celebrating new literatures from the so-called less privileged regions, and reasserting the voices of the subjugated. The article has demonstrated that Nobel's linguistic hegemony is contested by underprivileged languages through appropriation, abrogation and evolution. It offers a prognosis that the Nobel Prize for Literature stands to get displaced and further parochialised, if the Swedish Committee fails to reflect on ways to consider works written in different languages of the world on equal footing.

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CODESRIA JHEA/RESA Vol. 19, No. 2, 2021, pp. 91-106

(ISSN 0851–7762)

Recherche féministe et de genre à l'Université de Yaoundé II : examiner l'impact sur la transformation sociale

Vanessa Aboudi*

Résumé

Depuis les années 1980-1990, les études féministes et de genre font leur chemin dans les universités africaines, même si on note encore quelques résistances notamment dans les pays francophones. Concernant le Cameroun, la réflexion, l'enseignement et la recherche féministes et sur le genre sont encore restreints, tant au niveau de la production que de la consommation des connaissances. Les universités d'État tardent à introduire ou à développer cette problématique dans les curricula d'études. Ce qui n'est pas sans conséquence sur la maturation de cette discipline scientifique et l'usage des savoirs institués du monde universitaire en termes de genre au profit de la transformation sociale et du développement durable. Le présent article étudie le cas de l'Université de Yaoundé II, et s'inscrit dans une dynamique militante, afin de permettre à cette science sociale de se constituer en secteur autonome, tout en assumant sa transversalité. Pour construire cette recherche, nous nous sommes essentiellement appuyée sur l'épistémologie féministe et sur les techniques de collecte de données communes aux sciences sociales, afin de mieux appréhender la place des études de genre dans le contexte universitaire de Yaoundé II, et au-delà, leur impact sur les rapports sociaux de sexe.

Mots-clés : Recherche féministe, Études de genre, université, marginalisation, transformation sociale.

Abstract

Since the 1980s–1990s, feminist and gender studies have made their way into African universities, although there is still some resistance, particularly in French-speaking countries. In Cameroon, feminist and gender reflection,

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teaching and research are still limited, both in terms of knowledge production and consumption. State universities are slow to introduce or develop this issue in their curricula. This is not without consequences on the maturation of this scientific discipline and the use of the instituted knowledge of the academic world in terms of gender for the benefit of social transformation and sustainable development.This article studies the case of the University of Yaoundé II, and is part of a militant dynamic, to enable this social science to establish itself as an autonomous sector, while assuming its transversality. To build this research, we mainly relied on feminist epistemology and data collection techniques common to the social sciences, to better understand the place of gender studies in the university context of Yaoundé II, and beyond, their impact on gender relations.

Keywords: Gender studies, feminism, feminist research, university, marginalisation, social transformation.

Si les études féministes et de genre se sont développées et se maintiennent de manière plus ou moins organisée dans la plupart des universités occidentales (cours, programmes, centres de recherche féministes, instituts et professionnalisation), en Afrique, notamment francophone, l'enseignement et la recherche féministe connaissent encore des conditions de relative marginalisation pédagogique et administrative au sein des universités (Sow 2009:25). L'émergence d'un domaine de recherche et d'enseignement qui intègre et légitime le diptyque « femme » et « genre », reste encore très problématique dans la mesure où ces questions touchent aux fondements mêmes des sociétés patriarcales africaines. En tant que pôles de production de savoirs et d'analyse scientifique des faits sociaux, les universités sont apparues, dès leur création, comme des moteurs essentiels de la transformation et du changement social. Mais ici comme ailleurs, ces institutions restent plus ou moins fermées à la critique dans la mesure où elles établissent une forme de hiérarchisation entre les disciplines et les questions scientifiques qu'elles abordent.

Dans son livre, *L'Orientalisme*, Edward Saïd opposait déjà ce qui est familier (l'Europe, l'Occident, « nous », le masculin) à ce qui est étranger (l'Orient, « eux », le féminin) (Saïd 1989:210). Parce que les études féministes et de genre ont été moulées dans cette catégorisation, elles ont hérité d'un statut subalterne dans les programmes universitaires, alors que l'histoire, la sociologie, l'anthropologie, les relations internationales et d'autres disciplines comme l'économie ont été considérées dès le départ comme des sciences normales ou conventionnelles. En effet, la récupération universitaire de leurs objets d'études n'avait fait l'objet ni d'une négociation ni d'une résistance comme ça a été observé avec les études féministes/de genre/ou sur les femmes ainsi que le démontre cette brève revue de la littérature.

Étudiant le contexte québécois, Huguette Dagenais montre ainsi que si l'institutionnalisation du féminisme a été difficile au sein de l'État, la situation a été plus compliquée au niveau des universités avec 30 ans d'opposition multiforme. Même si l'auteure reconnaît aujourd'hui une nette amélioration, elle précise que la situation des études féministes au sein des universités francophones québécoises demeure précaire, à la merci des circonstances. Cependant, elle affirme que cette institutionnalisation bien que « fragile » et « partielle », a eu un impact avéré non seulement sur le plan scientifique, mais aussi politique (Dagenais 2002:27).

Dans le contexte européen, Harriet Silius analyse le processus d'institutionnalisation des études féministes dans les universités de neuf pays. Elle identifie quatre étapes dudit processus, à savoir le militantisme, l'institutionnalisation, la professionnalisation et l'autonomie des études féministes. Malgré quelques points communs observés entre ces États notamment au niveau des facteurs qui ont favorisé l'émergence de ces études, l'auteure argue que partout, celles-ci se sont heurtées à la rigidité des structures disciplinaires, à l'autonomisation restreinte des universités et enfin, à la résistance masculine (Silius 2002:20-21).

Du côté du Sénégal, Fatou Sow montre comment les tentatives d'institutionnalisation de la recherche féministe à travers l'enseignement ont connu d'énormes difficultés dans les Universités de Saint-Louis et Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar. Dans la première, il existe un programme sur les femmes et la famille dont les activités restent réduites, et dans la seconde, un projet de création d'enseignement d'un programme de recherche sur les femmes est en veilleuse dans le département de sociologie. Par ailleurs, l'auteure affirme que son cours, qui portait sur l'analyse des rapports sociaux de sexe dans les sociétés africaines s'est vu escamoté à maintes reprises par ses collègues (Sow 2002:39-40).

Dans le contexte algérien, Souad Khodja (2002:51) montre qu'il est « difficile de parler d'études féministes en Algérie, tant la condition des femmes est encore soumise à de fortes pressions » sociales et traditionnelles, ce qui impacte leur statut sociopolitique. Pour finir, en étudiant le cas du Burkina Faso, Fatoumata Kinda (2009) montre que les études féministes au sein des universités de cet État sont marginalisées, tant au niveau de l'enseignement que dans la recherche féministe. Le principal facteur étant l'absence de structures institutionnelles de recherche féministe, et de moyens financiers pour subventionner une telle entreprise. Ce qui continue d'alimenter les inégalités sociales.

Concernant le Cameroun, la reconnaissance universitaire d'une discipline axée sur l'analyse des rapports sociaux de sexe n'a pas fait l'objet de débats, malgré un statut marginal au sein des universités francophones. Parmi les huit universités d'État, celles d'obédience anglo-saxonne ont des départements de Women and Gender Studies, à savoir les Universités de Buea et Bamenda ; les six autres universités sont bilingues ou francophones, mais dans les deux cas avec un fort prisme francophone, et n'intègrent pas ou ne développent pas suffisamment les études féministes et/ou de genre dans leurs programmes. Dans cette grande zone francophone, seules les Universités de Yaoundé I[1] et Yaoundé II ont une programmation plus ou moins affirmée dans leurs curricula. Il existe dans la première un master professionnel en « Genre et développement », et dans la seconde une unité d'enseignement sur le genre dispensée aux étudiants de science politique. C'est le cas également à l'Institut des relations internationales du Cameroun où, sur cinq programmes de Master, seule la chaire ISESCO/FUMI[2] pour la Diversité culturelle de l'Université de Yaoundé II offre, en Master 1, un cours sur le genre. Les universités restantes et les instituts privés universitaires faisant quant à eux fi de cette discipline.

Compte tenu de l'étendue de l'espace universitaire camerounais, nous mettons spécifiquement l'accent sur l'analyse de l'institutionnalisation des études féministes et/ou de genre à l'Université de Yaoundé II, en centrant l'analyse sur ses deux facultés[3]. L'objectif principal est alors de questionner cette institutionnalisation pour saisir ses contours, ses facteurs d'émergence, le contenu des programmes, la réceptivité du milieu universitaire, et au-delà, l'impact sur les rapports sociaux de sexes. Ainsi, quel est le degré d'institutionnalisation des études de genre à l'Université de Yaoundé II ? Cette institutionnalisation s'exerce-t-elle en termes d'études ou de recherche, engendre-t-elle des changements sociaux dans l'université, ou en dehors ?

La marginalisation des études de genre dans le curriculum universitaire de Yaoundé II

Comme partout ailleurs, les études de genre ont, sur le plan institutionnel de l'Université de Yaoundé II, une histoire. Cependant, dans ce contexte particulier, contrairement aux schémas traditionnels, qui mettent en avant l'action des professeures-chercheures, des étudiantes féministes ou encore des féministes étatiques dans le combat pour l'intégration des études féministes et de genre dans les programmes universitaires, cette action est ici principalement le fait d'universitaires camerounais de sexe masculin non féministes, qui se sont intéressés à la question au cours des Instituts sur le genre et la gouvernance du CODESRIA à Dakar, dans les années 1990. Il s'agit des professeurs Luc Sindjoun et Ibrahim Mouiche, qui ont respectivement milité et construit cette discipline aujourd'hui dispensée dans le département de science politique de la Faculté des sciences juridiques et politiques, et depuis 2016 à l'IRIC. Toutefois, l'institutionnalisation dont il est question ici ne saurait se limiter à la simple acceptation dans le programme universitaire et ne peut se passer d'une analyse en profondeur de la réceptivité et de la récupération du milieu universitaire, à travers des paramètres tels que l'enseignement, les programmes spécifiques au genre, la professionnalisation, les structures de recherche, la production scientifique et l'autonomisation de la discipline.

La lente et tardive émergence des études de genre à l'Université de Yaoundé II

C'est un fait que les universités anglophones africaines appartiennent à une tradition féministe développée aux États-Unis puis en Grande-Bretagne, avec la création à partir des années 1960-1970 des *Women Studies* puis *Gender Studies* (Sow 2002). Si les universités francophones occidentales n'ont pas tardé à suivre le mouvement, les universités francophones africaines se sont quant à elles caractérisées par une intégration tardive des études féministes ou de genre. À l'université de Yaoundé II particulièrement, il a fallu attendre l'année académique 2006-2007 pour voir un chapitre sur les femmes intégré dans le cours d'anthropologie politique des étudiants de DEA dans le département de science politique.

Plusieurs paramètres ont empêché le développement de ces études. Il s'agit principalement de l'emprise du droit sur les études politiques, et plus tard du cloisonnement « paroissial » des spécialisations de la science politique. Il faut noter que de 1993 à 2005, bien qu'on ait pu créer une Faculté des sciences juridiques et politiques, l'autonomisation de la science politique eu égard aux études juridiques se faisait attendre. Cela se manifestait par l'existence d'un tronc commun d'études, avec une prévalence des matières de droit jusqu'en troisième année, où s'opérait une spécialisation soit en science politique soit en droit. Le droit étant essentiellement une science normative, une telle démarche interdisait naturellement toute interrogation critique des rapports sociaux de sexes, et partant, l'émergence d'une discipline axée sur le genre. Comme le précise Harriet Silius, si les sciences sociales et humaines dans leur ensemble ont été envahies par les études féministes, ce sont principalement la sociologie, puis l'histoire et la littérature qui ont favorisé leur développement au sein des universités (Silius 2002). En 2006, avec la création d'un département de science politique, les études de genre n'ont pas pour autant émergé automatiquement, à cause de la suprématie de certaines disciplines. À ce propos, un doctorant affirme :

> Au Cameroun, on savait qu'il y avait trois spécialisations, et si tu voulais être reconnu comme étant un grand politologue, il fallait que tu parles des

> questions de relations internationales, des questions de sociologie politique, et des questions de systèmes électoraux. Or en privilégiant ces trois variables, la science politique, qui est vraiment la racine, ne nourrissait pas certaines branches ou certaines problématiques, qui doivent être non négligeables[4].

Malgré cette conjoncture historique, les cours sur le genre ont fait peu à peu leur chemin dans le terrain universitaire. Mais la production des enseignements demeure insuffisante par rapport à la dynamique universitaire mondiale et interne. Ainsi, en lieu et place d'un département ou d'une discipline visiblement constituée et démocratisée, existe une programmation mineure et sélective. Le genre figure dans le programme des étudiants de Licence III, Science politique depuis 2008 à travers l'UE « Genre et politique ». La problématique du genre n'est encore abordée que dans le cadre du cours d'anthropologie politique dispensé en Master 2 – sous la forme d'un chapitre. Néanmoins, ces cours permettent à certains étudiants, s'ils sont intéressés par la question, de commencer à se familiariser avec cette thématique de recherche[5]. Toutefois, depuis 2015, l'UE « Genre et politique » a été rebaptisée Anthropologie politique 2, un titre qui embrigade le contenu et marque peut-être l'acte de décès d'une discipline encore naissante et fragile[6]. Chez les juristes, il n'existe pas de cours sur le genre, mais le statut de la femme est abordé dans le droit de la famille et des personnes. Dans la Faculté des sciences économiques et de gestion, aucun cours sur le genre n'est enregistré ; pourtant, ce serait le cadre idéal pour le développement d'une discipline telle que « Genre et développement ». Dans un tel contexte, comment envisager une carrière ou une spécialisation sur les études de genre si la motivation est moindre ? En outre, la transmission entre générations, c'est-à-dire sur la relève en études féministes (Zaidman 2005:35), apparaît problématique sur le long terme.

À côté de cette faible diffusion et insertion des études de genre existe un désintérêt des enseignants. En effet, seul le professeur Ibrahim Mouiche les construit et les dispense dans les niveaux sus-cités. Une situation qui fragilise davantage leur institutionnalisation dans la mesure où elle rappelle l'inquiétude que Dagenais relevait à propos des universités québécoises, à savoir que : « Si une professeure féministe part en année sabbatique ou à la retraite, le cours qu'elle a porté à bout de bras et remis à jour peut disparaître à jamais » (Dagenais 2002:26).

Pour comprendre cette résistance du milieu universitaire face aux études de genre, il apparaît opportun de s'intéresser à la manière dont sont perçues les études dites féministes en général. Ici comme ailleurs, celles-ci sont tributaires de l'image du féminisme, une notion souvent mal comprise et à connotation péjorative, surtout dans le contexte africain marqué par le poids du patriarcat. Dissertant sur « Le genre sur tous les fronts » à l'occasion de la cérémonie d'hommage que le Codesria lui a dédiée le 27 mars 2017 à Dakar, Fatou Sow arguait que « le féminisme, c'est simplement à la fois l'analyse des mécanismes qui instaurent des rapports d'infériorité, de pression, et la volonté de mener des actions pour les abolir[7] ». Une définition qui rompt avec la vision ordinaire d'un soulèvement des femmes contre les hommes.

Une recherche féministe peu fournie à l'Université de Yaoundé II

Selon Robert Mayer et Francine Ouellet, cités par Fatou Kinda, la recherche féministe est « toute activité qui permet à un individu ou à un groupe d'acquérir par lui-même des connaissances précises concernant les réalités sociales vécues quotidiennement par les femmes » (Kinda 2009:84). Elle est ainsi le fait de chercheurs masculins et féminins. La particularité d'une telle recherche par rapport aux approches classiques est sans doute sa « double dimension », c'est-à-dire « à la fois un projet sociopolitique de transformation des rapports sociaux et un projet scientifique d'élaboration des connaissances » (Ollivier & Tremblay 2000:7-8). Analyser la part réservée à ce mouvement intellectuel au sein de l'Université de Yaoundé II apparaît essentiel pour déterminer l'intérêt qu'étudiants et enseignants accordent à cette thématique.

Globalement, il n'existe pas une grande visibilité de cet objet dans les travaux de recherche des étudiants de l'Université de Yaoundé II, que ce soit en Master 2 ou en cycle de Doctorat. Un bilan en termes de sociologie de la connaissance ferait état de huit mémoires soutenus sur le genre, sur une période de sept ans (2008-2015) dans le département de science politique[8]. Au cours de l'année académique 2015-2016, on note également quelques mémoires sur le genre en attente de soutenance (trois) ; mais jusqu'ici, aucune thèse n'a encore été soutenue depuis l'incorporation du genre dans les programmes. Chez les juristes, deux mémoires soutenus en 1999 et en 2011 ont porté sur les femmes[9]. Dans la Faculté des sciences économiques et de gestion, on constate l'inexistence de travaux sur le genre.

Du côté des universitaires, les enseignants de cette institution ont commencé à analyser cette thématique dans leurs travaux au cours des années 2000, notamment à travers l'ouvrage collectif dirigé par le professeur Luc Sindjoun intitulé, *La Biographie sociale du sexe : Genre, société et politique au Cameroun*. Suivront d'autres travaux, à l'instar de ceux du professeur Ibrahim Mouiche, respectivement « Genre et commandement territorial au Cameroun » en 2007 et « Genre et asymétrie structurelle du pouvoir d'État : Quelles leçons pour le Cameroun ? » en 2014, paru dans l'ouvrage collectif dirigé par Justine Diffo Tchunkam, et les travaux de la professeure Nadine Machikou, autour de trois objets, à savoir la question des mobilisations festives (le 8 mars), les effets genrés de l'insurrection de Boko Haram, et les politiques compassionnelles de la Première Dame. De manière générale, la poignée des travaux sur le genre qui existent au sein des universités francophones camerounaises est surtout l'œuvre de grands universitaires spécialisés en socio-anthropologie, en relations internationales et en droit, ou de quelques docteurs en science politique et en sociologie. Cette rareté des publications rend infécond le débat sur le féminisme et sur le genre au Cameroun, et ne permet pas le développement d'une théorie féministe ayant une portée internationale. Car c'est de la pluralité des contributions scientifiques qu'émerge une communauté scientifique dans une discipline.

Plusieurs facteurs peuvent être mobilisés pour expliquer cette faible tendance sur la recherche féministe et sur le genre à l'Université de Yaoundé II ou dans les universités camerounaises francophones en général. Premièrement, il y a l'absence de centres de recherches féministes ou encore de regroupements d'enseignants-e-s et chercheur-e-s des sections féministes, comme c'est le cas dans certaines universités africaines et occidentales. Dans le contexte africain par exemple, le Nigeria est l'un des premiers pays à avoir mis en place, au début des années 1980, un Women's Center and Documentation Center à l'Université d'Ibadan. Le Ghana a également monté un groupe de *Women's Studies*, à l'Université du Ghana à Legon dans la banlieue d'Accra. Les bibliothèques universitaires et à initiative privée camerounaises de l'espace francophone sont caractérisées par une quasi-absence d'ouvrages sur le genre et sur le féminisme. Fatou Sow observe alors à juste titre que :

> La réflexion, la recherche et l'enseignement féministes sont encore à créer dans la majorité des universités africaines francophones, qui abritent très peu de centres d'étude et de programmes de recherche sur les femmes et s'occupent encore moins des questions de genre et développement, contrairement aux universités anglophones exposées au débat. (Sow 1999:424)

Deuxièmement, il existe un lien étroit entre l'insuffisance des cours sur le genre et le faible intérêt que les étudiants portent à cette thématique dans leurs travaux. Dagenais montre par exemple comment « la multiplication des cours féministes dans les programmes disciplinaires des universités francophones québécoises a effectivement permis la sensibilisation d'un grand nombre d'étudiants et d'étudiantes » et suscité plus de publications (Dagenais 2002:27). Ensuite, il y a comme un déclassement symbolique dans la valorisation et la légitimation des objets « genre » et « féminisme[10] ». Les travaux portant sur ces thématiques ne sont pas souvent pris au sérieux, surtout quand ils sont menés par des universitaires de sexe féminin. Enfin, se profile en filigrane le faible financement de la recherche à l'Université de Yaoundé II.

L'impact des études de genre et de la recherche féministe sur la transformation sociale au Cameroun

Loin d'être neutres, les études de genre et la recherche féministe ont un impact sur le comportement des individus et sur la structure sociale. Les premières permettent aux étudiants et aux étudiantes, à travers une pédagogie féministe bien élaborée, d'acquérir des connaissances scientifiques et les outils nécessaires à la compréhension et à l'analyse objective des rapports sociaux de sexe, et la recherche féministe quant à elle cherche à produire des connaissances utiles pour arriver à enrayer les inégalités liées aux rapports de sexes (Ramazanoglu & Holland 2002). Par conséquent, la formulation d'un projet de transformation sociale, l'élaboration de savoirs et la proposition de nouvelles pratiques sont autant d'exigences que doit remplir toute recherche dite féministe (Magloire 2003:38). Analyser le changement social inspiré par la recherche féministe revient ainsi à situer l'analyse à deux niveaux, soit à l'intérieur de l'Université de Yaoundé II et dans la société globale, pour déceler les différentes tendances de consommation des études de genre et des résultats de la recherche féministe.

De la transformation sociale dans le milieu universitaire

Le rapport entre l'institutionnalisation des études féministes ou de genre et l'impact sur la transformation sociale se pose avec acuité dans les universités occidentales et africaines. En effet, en combattant pour l'intégration de ces objets d'étude dans les curricula, les enseignantes et enseignants avaient pour principal objectif « d'opérer des changements à partir de l'intérieur » (Silius 2002:26), afin de faciliter leur généralisation dans la société globale. À l'Université de Yaoundé II, au regard de la faible vulgarisation des études de genre à l'intérieur du campus, il est difficile de parler d'un réel impact de celles-ci sur le comportement des étudiants, sur les masculinités des enseignants, encore moins sur la structuration de l'université. Toutefois, comme l'admettent certains étudiants de science politique, cette faible programmation leur a quand même permis de découvrir la discipline, et a eu un impact sur leur manière de penser les rapports sociaux de sexe en général, et le statut des femmes en particulier. Un étudiant affirme :

> Personnellement, ce cours m'a permis de revoir certaines de mes positions sur les femmes. Je ne tolère plus certaines injustices vis-à-vis d'elles, comme la violence et le machisme des hommes[11].

Les cours sur le genre ont surtout eu un impact sur le comportement des étudiantes qui, contrairement aux étudiants, manifestent toujours plus d'intérêt lorsqu'ils sont dispensés en Licence III ou en Master 2. Une étudiante se remémore la première fois que ce cours a été dispensé dans sa promotion en 2014 en ces termes :

> Au début, les cours sur le genre ont d'abord fait l'objet de plusieurs intrigues de la part des garçons, qui estimaient qu'on vient leur enseigner les problèmes de cuisine des femmes à l'université, pourquoi ? Par contre, poursuit-elle, l'attitude des filles était toute autre, elles manifestaient un grand intérêt. Mais au fur et à mesure que l'on évoluait dans le cours, grâce aux connaissances et aux informations qui étaient dispensées, et grâce surtout à la méthode de travail du professeur qui les dispensait, les garçons ont commencé à changer d'attitude[12]…

Dans la même lancée, le professeur Ibrahim Mouiche affirme que l'intérêt des étudiants de deux sexes vis-à-vis des cours sur le genre s'est manifestement amélioré par rapport aux années précédentes[13].

Quant à la structuration de l'Université de Yaoundé II, il est difficile d'établir un lien entre la marginalisation des études de genre et la faible présence des femmes dans la haute administration de l'université. Cependant, il faut noter que depuis 2014, il existe au sein de cette institution, un comité Genre inspiré par la dynamique internationale et nationale de prise en compte du genre dans tous les secteurs. Celui-ci est coordonné par la secrétaire générale de l'université, la professeure Alice Delphine Tang. Son organisation est telle que chaque faculté et chaque grande école rattachée à l'Université de Yaoundé II dispose d'un point focal genre, c'est-à-dire, un ensemble d'universitaires chargés de contrôler le respect de cette valeur dans toutes les activités internes[14].

Les Points focaux Genre des deux facultés de l'Université de Yaoundé II organisent ainsi des colloques sur le genre, depuis la mise en place de ce comité, pour éduquer la communauté universitaire[15]. Ils ont par exemple contribué à améliorer l'image de l'étudiante de cette université qui avait été salie par les médias, car présentée comme une fille de petite vertu. Les principales actions avaient alors été de chercher les causes de dérapages des étudiantes, de venir en aide financièrement aux étudiants et étudiantes nécessiteux ou handicapés, et d'imposer un code vestimentaire en 2016, pour redorer le blason de cette institution[16].

Par rapport au nombre de femmes dans l'administration et dans l'enseignement, l'Université de Yaoundé II est à l'image de la société, avec une très faible présence des femmes dans la haute hiérarchie. Une seule femme dans l'administration centrale, et quelques femmes dans les quatre grades de l'enseignement, comme l'indiquent les tableaux ci-après.

Tableau 1 : Statistiques des personnels enseignants des deux facultés de l'Université de Yaoundé II en 2014

FACULTÉ / GRADES	FSJP			FSEG			TOTAL GÉNÉRAL
SEXE	H	F	T	H	F	T	
Pr	14	00	14	08	00	08	22
M. C.	23	07	30	16	05	21	51
C. C.	62	19	81	59	05	64	148
ASS.	72	23	95	38	18	56	151
TOTAL	**171**	**49**	**220**	**121**	**28**	**149**	**738**

Source : Direction des affaires académiques et de la coopération/Division de l'enseignement et des personnels enseignants, Université de Yaoundé II

Tableau 2 : Statistiques des personnels enseignants des deux facultés de l'Université de Yaoundé II en 2015

FACULTÉ / GRADES	FSJP			FSEG			TOTAL GENERAL
SEXE	H	F	T	H	F	T	
Pr.	16	00	16	08	00	08	24
MC.	24	08	32	16	05	21	53
CC.	66	19	85	55	05	60	145
ASS.	59	21	80	36	16	52	132
TOTAL	**165**	**48**	**213**	**115**	**26**	**141**	**708**

Source : Direction des Affaires académiques et de la Coopération/Division de l'enseignement et des personnels enseignants, Université de Yaoundé II

Tableau 3 : Statistiques des personnels enseignants des deux facultés de l'Université de Yaoundé II en 2016

FACULTÉ / GRADES	FSJP			FSEG			TOTAL GÉNÉRAL
SEXE	H	F	T	H	F	T	
Pr	19	01	20	09	00	09	29
M. C.	27	09	36	25	06	31	67
C. C.	74	22	96	54	05	59	155
ASS.	43	17	60	26	13	39	99
TOTAL	**163**	**49**	**212**	**114**	**24**	**138**	**700**

Source : Direction des Affaires académiques et de la Coopération/Division de l'enseignement et des personnels enseignants, Université de Yaoundé II

Il ressort ainsi de ces tableaux que la carrière des femmes à l'Université Yaoundé II est traversée par un plafond de verre qui fait qu'il a fallu attendre 2016 pour voir la première femme devenir professeur titulaire, et ce dans le département de Science politique. L'intéressée affirme :

> La Science politique est une science masculine. À l'échelle d'un département qui est comme le mien, pendant des années j'ai été la seule femme chargée de cours, ensuite la seule maître de conférences, et maintenant, la seule professeure titulaire dans les universités francophones, dans tout le système CAMES en Science politique, c'est un problème[16].

Quoi qu'il en soit, plusieurs paramètres jouent dans le déclassement positionnel des femmes dans les universités. Premièrement, l'ascension universitaire des chercheurs des deux sexes dépend principalement du travail scientifique. Or il y a des dynamiques sociales qui se jouent dans la construction de la carrière des femmes à l'université en général, et dans la recherche en particulier. Il y a la question fondamentale du coût de la vie familiale et matrimoniale, qui fait que généralement, après le master, les femmes abandonnent l'institution universitaire et la recherche pour focaliser leur attention ailleurs, car pour la société, la réussite de la femme est davantage la réussite matrimoniale et maternelle. Pourtant, si elles ne font pas de thèses, elles ne pourront pas être recrutées[18], et partant, n'auront pas la possibilité d'élargir leur spectre de recherche en intégrant d'autres problématiques comme celle du genre. Ensuite, il y a le problème de harcèlement dont sont victimes certaines femmes à l'université, et enfin, l'absence d'un département d'études féministes et de genre ou d'une chaire d'études féministes empêche la création de nouveaux postes, c'est-à-dire l'embauche du personnel et la volonté de professionnalisation en études féministes et de genre.

De la transformation sociale hors campus

Parce que la recherche féministe porte en elle un projet de transformation sociale, l'on devrait assister à une récupération politique de ses résultats, et ce dans des conditions précises. Premièrement, elle doit être suffisamment développée en termes de capacités d'enquête sur les différents volets des études de genre, et en termes d'institutionnalisation de ses résultats, avec des publications d'ouvrages individuels ou collectifs, ensuite à travers la tenue des colloques, et enfin à travers la capacité des équipes et institutions de recherche à faire connaître leurs résultats auprès des décideurs politiques et administratifs. Comme vu précédemment, la recherche féministe à l'Université de Yaoundé II est encore numériquement faible, à cause notamment de la faible diffusion des études de genre et de l'absence de centres de recherche appropriés pour construire et nourrir le débat. Cependant, on peut relever quelques exemples de travaux d'universitaires de cette institution, qui apparaissent dans un ouvrage collectif financé par l'ONU-Femmes en 2014, en partenariat avec la société civile féminine camerounaise, ayant pour objectif général d'analyser la représentation politique des Camerounaises et d'émettre des recommandations pour les décideurs (Diffo Tchunkam 2014).

Toutefois, même si les étudiant-e-s s'intéressent de plus en plus aux cours de genre, et même si des propositions sont faites dans les travaux de chercheurs et universitaires, l'intégration politique des femmes continue d'être une problématique majeure dans la société camerounaise. Des critiques sont virulentes vis-à-vis des recherches qui recommandent la discrimination positive. On note ainsi l'inexistence d'une loi sur la parité, malgré des suggestions diverses faites par des universitaires. Seules quelques mesures cosmétiques sur la prise en compte du genre dans la vie publique et politique feignent de combler un terrain juridique dégagé de mesures contraignantes. Parmi ces mesures, l'on note par exemple l'intégration d'une clause sur le genre dans le Code électoral camerounais en 2013, grâce entre autres facteurs à l'action de la société civile féminine pilotée majoritairement par des universitaires femmes. C'est le cas l'association *More Women Politics*, coordonnée par la professeure Justine Diffo Tchunkam, enseignante de droit à l'Université de Yaoundé II.

Néanmoins, il faut noter que l'Université de Yaoundé II est en marge de plusieurs opportunités de partenariats avec ONU-Femmes et le Ministère de la promotion de la femme et de la famille (MINPROFF), à cause de la place marginale qu'elle accorde aux études sur le genre. L'université de Yaoundé I par exemple, a des ébauches de partenariats avec ONU-Femmes, du fait de l'existence d'un master professionnel en Genre et développement[19]. Le MINPROFF collabore également avec les universités ayant un programme avancé sur le genre, comme l'indiquait la sous-directrice de la promotion du genre, à l'occasion d'un atelier de formation des femmes organisé à Yaoundé au mois de juillet 2018 en ces termes :

> C'est dans le cadre des ateliers que le ministère de la Promotion de la Femme et de la Famille invite des universitaires pour faire des présentations qui portent sur les résultats de leurs études. Dans cet atelier par exemple, nous avons invité l'Université de Yaoundé I parce que justement, elle a un programme en master professionnel sur le genre[20].

Ainsi, l'Université de Yaoundé II doit encore fournir beaucoup d'efforts en termes de production d'enseignements sur le genre et/ou sur le féminisme et en termes de recherche féministe pour impulser une grande consommation et transformation. Pour l'essentiel, sa participation dans la mise en place d'une société plus égalitaire reste très faible au regard des griefs susmentionnés.

L'absence d'une revue féministe complexifie le problème, en ce sens qu'elle pourrait servir de réservoir d'analyses et d'idées pour le politique ; d'autant plus que les problématiques abondent au Cameroun, liées entre autres à la représentation politique, aux mutilations génitales, au repassage des seins, au mariage précoce, etc.

Conclusion

En définitive, l'Université de Yaoundé II a encore beaucoup d'efforts à fournir pour assurer le développement et la diffusion des études de genre dans son programme. Certes, l'on ne peut s'attendre à ce que cette institutionnalisation soit un long fleuve tranquille au regard des nombreuses résistances que suscite la problématique de genre. Mais il est nécessaire, dans un monde dépourvu de frontières comme le nôtre, d'opérer un changement au sein des universités camerounaises en général et de Yaoundé II en particulier, afin que celles-ci s'arriment à ce qui s'impose désormais comme une dynamique du temps scientifique. Plusieurs actions sont à entreprendre pour atteindre cet objectif. Il s'agit principalement de développer davantage les *Gender Studies* et de les vulgariser dans les autres départements de l'université, de mettre sur pied des centres de recherche expressément dédiés à la question du genre et du féminisme, d'organiser des colloques et séminaires en dehors des cours magistraux pour sensibiliser les étudiants à s'intéresser aux études de genre, de créer des espaces de coopération entre l'Université de Yaoundé I et d'autres universités africaines et occidentales ayant une avance sur l'institutionnalisation des études féministes et de genre, de mettre sur pied une revue féministe qui réunirait tous les travaux effectués sur le féminisme ou sur le genre, etc. Autant de mesures à envisager pour améliorer la visibilité, voire l'institutionnalisation de ces études dans les curricula des universités de l'espace francophone du Cameroun, et partant, avoir plus d'impact sur la transformation sociale.

Notes

1. Au sein de cette université, une unité d'enseignement sur le genre est dispensée aux étudiants de 3e année de sociologie et il existe un master professionnel en genre et développement.
2. ISESCO : Organisation islamique pour l'éducation, les sciences et la culture. FUMI : Fédération des universités du monde islamique.
3. L'Université de Yaoundé II est constituée de deux grandes facultés, la Faculté des sciences juridiques et politiques (FSJP) et la Faculté des sciences économiques et de gestion (FSEG), et de trois grandes écoles, l'École supérieure des sciences et techniques de l'information et de la communication (ESSTIC), l'Institut de formation et de recherche démographique (IFORD), l'Institut des relations internationales du Cameroun (IRIC).

4. Entretien avec René Faustin Bobo Bobo, doctorant en science politique, 8 juin 2018.
5. Entretien avec Mathias E. Owona Nguini, professeur des universités, 5 juillet 2018.
6. Entretien avec Abdoulaye Mfonka, docteur en science politique, 13 juin 2018.
7. http://fr.allafrica.com/stories/201703300768.html, consulté le 11 mars 2017.
8. Ces mémoires ont tous été soutenus par des étudiantes uniquement et abordaient le genre en rapport avec le milieu politique, professionnel, dans les festivités du 8 mars et dans le développement.
9. Ces mémoires étudiaient respectivement la protection des femmes et des enfants dans les conflits armés, et l'activité commerciale des femmes mariées.
10. Entretien avec N. Machikou, professeur titulaire des universités, 22 juin 2018.
11. Entretien avec Nestor Nkondo, étudiant en master 2, étudiant en science politique, master 2, université de Yaoundé II, 28 juillet 2018.
12. Entretien avec Ngon Ngang Marie-Françoise, étudiante en science politique, master 2, université de Yaoundé II, 28 juillet 2018.
13. Entretien avec Ibrahim Mouiche, professeur titulaire des universités, 2 juin 2018.
14. Globalement, les différents points focaux doivent, entre autres missions : S'attacher à la sensibilisation sur le genre, produire un état des lieux de la prise en compte du genre (évolution des effectifs, suivi des malades femmes, gestion des violences faites aux enseignantes et aux étudiantes en lien avec le Centre d'écoute du Centre médico-social, etc.) ; promouvoir l'excellence féminine; porter à la connaissance de la hiérarchie de l'Université de Yaoundé II toutes les inégalités de genre vécues ; veiller à l'équité au sein des composantes de l'Université de Yaoundé II, à la participation des groupes marginalisés au processus de décision, lutter contre l'inégalité du genre donnant lieu à l'égalité formelle ou réelle ; encourager la diffusion de la documentation sur le genre.
15. Entretien avec le chef de bureau des statistiques, des archives et du personnel de la Faculté des sciences économiques et de gestion, 12 juin 2018.
16. Entretiens avec A. D. Tang, secrétaire générale de l'université Yaoundé II et Salpana, cheffe de service de la Direction des affaires administratives et financières (DAAF), 7 juin 2018.
17. Entretien avec N. Machikou, *op. cit.*
18. Entretien avec N. Machikou, *op. cit.*
19. Entretien avec Uilirich Waffo *Gender statistics expert* ONU-femmes Cameroun, 29 juin 2018.
20. Entretien avec Mme Prisca Moto, sous-directrice de la promotion du genre au MINPROOF, 26 juillet 2018.

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Documentation orale : entretiens semi-directifs

JHEA/RESA Vol. 19, No. 2, 2021, pp. 107-125

(ISSN 0851–7762)

African Culture and the Quest for Sustainable and Improved Indigenous Knowledge Production: Nigeria and South Africa in Perspective

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Abstract

Culture is the way of life of a people. But Western culture has deprived Africa of most of its cultural practices and values. The jettisoning of the African way of life for a Western one has affected indigenous knowledge production. Beaming the light on South Africa and Nigeria, this article interrogates the impact of culture/African ways of knowing on indigenous knowledge production in Africa, and unravels how much Africa has been able to incorporate its culture in knowledge production systems amid the penetration and preponderance of alien culture. It relies on historical perspective and document analysis. The article finds that African ways of knowing have been largely eroded in Nigeria, and that South Africa fares better but still faces some challenges. This has negatively affected the quest for sustained and improved indigenous knowledge production, vis-à-vis finding lasting solutions to the peculiar political, economic and social problems in these countries. It concludes that if Nigeria and South Africa, and indeed the African continent, are to attain sustainable and improved indigenous knowledge production, they must preserve African ways of knowing, without which indigenous knowledge production will remain in the abyss.

Résumé

La culture est le mode de vie d'un peuple. Mais la culture occidentale a privé l'Afrique de la plupart de ses pratiques et valeurs culturelles. L'abandon du mode de vie africain pour un mode de vie occidental a affecté la production de connaissances indigènes. Mettant la lumière sur l'Afrique du Sud et le Nigéria,

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cet article interroge l'impact de la culture/modes de connaissance africains sur la production de connaissances indigènes en Afrique, et révèle à quel point l'Afrique a intégré sa culture dans les systèmes de production de connaissances dans un contexte de pénétration et de prépondérance de cultures étrangères. L'article s'appuie sur la perspective historique et l'analyse de documents. Il constate des modes de connaissance africains largement érodés au Nigeria, quand l'Afrique du Sud s'en sort mieux mais reste confrontée à des défis. Cela a eu un impact négatif sur la recherche d'une production durable et améliorée de connaissances endogènes, ainsi que sur la recherche de solutions durables aux problèmes politiques, économiques et sociaux spécifiques à ces pays. L'article conclut que si le Nigeria et l'Afrique du Sud, et même le continent africain, veulent parvenir à une production de connaissances endogènes durable et améliorée, ils doivent préserver les modes de connaissance africains, sans lesquels la production de connaissances autochtones restera dans les abîmes.

Introduction

Culture as the way of life of a people depicts how a certain people within a geographical location behave and react to both indigenous and global issues. Hofstede (1984:21) defines culture as 'the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another.' Cultural experiences differ across the globe and are rarely exactly the same in any two geographical locations, hence the notion that culture is unique. African cultural experiences differ significantly from those of the West or Europe. Whereas the likes of Europe and the 'Asian Tiger' states of Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan have preserved their cultures and inculcated them into their knowledge production systems (Idowu 2020), Africans have largely abandoned their cultural values in pursuit of Western culture which is alien to the people of the continent. This has a significant effect on the nature of knowledge produced on the continent. The embrace of Western culture fosters Westernised ideas/knowledge production and has interrupted the quest to improve the production of indigenous knowledge in Africa.

Culture is an important tool in the production of indigenous knowledge (Thaman 2000; Asante 1990). It leads the way to other indigenous matters of a people. Sadly, colonialism has stripped the continent of most of its cultural values, and indigenous knowledge production continues to suffer setbacks in Africa. It does this by replacing African pre-colonial knowledge systems (learning through proverbs, songs and folklore, local language and storytelling) with Western systems and Eurocentric curricula. Sustained and improved indigenous knowledge production is not unachievable in Africa (Higgs 2010), but it is only possible within the confines of the continent's culture.

Questions continue to arise on what African or indigenous knowledge entails. Scholars such as Mudimbe (1988), Walker and Hountondji (1985) and Hountondji (1996) aver that knowledge is indigenous or African when it originates from Africa, and is promoted by Africans, with the cultural values embedded in Africa. Knowledge is African or indigenous when it concerns itself with conceptual and theoretical issues concerning and underpinning African culture. As Gyekye (1987) rightly says, knowledge is a cultural phenomenon because it is grounded in cultural experiences. As such, if a people wants to produce indigenous knowledge peculiar to them, then such a people must necessarily stick to their culture. From the foregoing, it is clear that culture and indigenous knowledge production are intrinsically linked (Thaman 2000; Asante 1990) and as such, must be taken together. According to Oladipo (1992:24), the challenge with knowledge production in Africa has to do with 'the extent to which African philosophers [knowledge producers and knowledge seekers] have been able to use whatever intellectual skills they possess to illuminate the various dimensions of the African predicament'.

Higgs (2010) argues that the problem surrounding the production of indigenous knowledge in Africa is not one of meeting the criteria for knowledge being African, but a problem which has to do with the extent to which African knowledge seekers/producers have been able to direct their intellect in the struggle and destiny of Africans. What this suggests is that African scholars, rather than focus attention on African culture and histories in the quest for knowledge production for the advancement of the continent, continue to shift their focus towards Western cultures and histories. This has been to the detriment of African culture and a denial of a sustained and improved indigenous knowledge production on the continent.

Knowledge production in Africa has been given a Eurocentric outlook, largely reflecting Western cultures rather than the indigenous cultures of learners (Agrawal 1995, 2002; Battiste 2002; Cassie 2009). This, largely hampers the comprehension of learners as a result of cultural gaps between the Westernised school curricula and those of the cultural environment which learners are most used to (Abah, Mashebe & Denuga 2015). For instance, the teaching and/or replacement of local/indigenous languages with foreign languages like French, German, and English is emblematic of the Eurocentric curricula now prevalent among African schools. There is no gainsaying the fact that African indigenous knowledge has been in existence from long before Western education and cultures were introduced to Africa. As Thaman (2009) rightly states, the introduction of Western education/knowledge meant that African learners faced conflicting demands from the new knowledge and from the culture they had been used to. Rather than engage in the production of indigenous knowledge capable of resolving African political and development crises, Africans have continued to produce knowledge that is not particularly useful and applicable to the peculiar challenges besetting the continent.

It is pertinent to interrogate the place of culture in indigenous knowledge production in Africa, taking Nigeria and South Africa; as case studies. The article seeks to unravel how much culture influences knowledge production; how Africa has held onto or strayed from its culture; and how all of these affect the quest for a sustained and improved production of 'African indigenous knowledge'. The section following this introduction provides conceptual clarification for culture, indigenous knowledge and knowledge production. The subsequent section deals with theories of decolonisation, while section four examines the state of culture and indigenous knowledge production in Africa. Sections five and six examine culture and indigenous knowledge production in Nigeria and South Africa respectively, while section seven compares the countries' experiences. The final two sections present the way forward and concluding remarks.

Conceptualising Culture, Indigenous Knowledge and Knowledge Production

Culture has been defined as the way of life of a people. It is the values and norms people share which make it possible for them to live together in the same community and in a particular way. Obioha (2010:2) defines culture as 'the sum total of all things that refer to religion, roots of people, symbols, languages, songs, stories, celebrations, clothing and dressing, and all expressions of our way of life'. Hence, culture covers all aspects of our lives, from religion to politics, technology, and food production. Mimiko and Afolabi (2012) argue that culture cuts across the processes of production, distribution, exchange and consumption, and social relations. For Edewor (2003:195), culture is 'the way of life of the members of a society, the collection of ideas and habits which they learn, share and transmit from generation to generation'. It is worth noting that culture can be learned and unlearned (Obioha 2010); this explains why people can jettison their culture over time when they are introduced into another cultural setting.

Culture is intrinsically tied to the capacity/ability for indigenous knowledge production (Thaman 2000). What this suggests is that once culture has been punctured and cultural values lost, the prospects of indigenous knowledge production are diminished. In providing a link between culture and indigenous knowledge production, Goduka (2000:73) avers that cultural learning (like learning about the nature of spirit and its relationship with the environment and community) paves the way to knowledge about life itself. The incorporation of culture into knowledge production systems allows people to learn and make meaning of their everyday lives (Mkabela 2005:181). This suggests that the culture of a people enables them to develop indigenous knowledge peculiar to their environment and society. McCarthy (1996:1) succinctly outlines the significant impact of culture on indigenous knowledge production. According to him, 'knowledge is best conceived and studied as *culture*, and the various types of social knowledges communicate and signal social meanings – such as meanings about power and pleasure, beauty and death, goodness and danger. As powerful cultural forms, knowledges also constitute meanings and create entirely new objects and social practices' (McCarthy 1996:1). This demonstrates that indigenous knowledge production is practically impossible outside the confines of culture.

Furthermore, knowledge produced outside indigenous culture – that is the everyday life of the people – and built upon external culture would negatively influence indigenous knowledge production. For Akena (2012:606), this imposition of external culture is both colonising and disempowering, and undermines those norms, practices and values that maintain harmony and morality. This aligns significantly with the position of Smith (1999:59) that the production of 'new knowledge' based on external culture to replace 'old knowledge' based on internal culture of the people is akin to colonial exploitation. These arguments and positions demonstrate the significance of culture in indigenous knowledge production.

Inculcating culture into human development approaches has been found to ensure that learning is based on the everyday experiences of the indigenous people (Botha 2010), which in turn implies indigenous knowledge production. Nevertheless, while these various positions on the important role of culture in indigenous knowledge production are plausible, Goduka (2000) avers that this does not suggest a return to the archaic and barbaric traditions of pre-colonial periods, but rather the need to harness culture for the production of knowledge which is indigenous and peculiar to the challenges facing the people. This will indeed create space for combining both African indigenous culture and Western knowledge systems, a situation which will ensure that African students are better prepared for the greater world (Kante 2004).

Knowledge can be said to be indigenous when such knowledge is produced within a certain community or locality, and used in the same community for its advancement. According to the World Bank:

> Indigenous knowledge is unique to a particular culture and society. It is the basis for local decision making in agriculture, health, natural resources

> management and other activities. Indigenous knowledge is embedded in community practices, institutions, relationships and rituals. It is essentially tacit knowledge that is not easily codifiable (World Bank 1998:i).

Indigenous knowledge is local knowledge, unique to a particular culture or society (Warren 1991). It is knowledge about a certain people, for the people and by the people. Indigenous knowledge comprises the skills, experiences and insights of people, applied to maintain or improve their livelihood in their communities (Ilo n.d.:471).

Knowledge production is the act or process of generating knowledge. When new knowledge/ideas are invented, we can say that knowledge has been produced. The process of producing knowledge encompasses a cluster of related activities.

Theorising Decolonisation

This article adopts the decolonisation and anticolonial frameworks for analysis. Decolonisation theory, as propounded by scholars like Fanon (1963) and Thiophene (1995), posits that decolonisation takes some time, and that it is a gradual process, rather than a spontaneous event. For Fanon (1963), decolonisation is a process in history that operates to change the social order left behind by acts of colonialism. Decolonisation refers to an initial violent encounter of two forces which are 'opposed to each other by their very nature, which in fact results from and is nourished by the situation in the colonies' (Fanon 1963:36). It involves the questioning of colonialism and its aftermath (Dei 2002:7). For Thiophene (1995:95), decolonisation is a 'process, not arrival; it invokes an ongoing dialectic between hegemonic centrist systems and peripheral subversion of them; between European discourses and their colonial dis/mantling.' This theory raises the need for the awareness that the act of decolonisation is not instantaneous but is a gradual process. The theory is useful to understanding the fact that if Africa is to regain its cultural values, most of which have been lost to colonialism, it must be through gradual processes and must not be rushed. The theory suggests that Africa must set the pace for the process of decolonising its culture to enhance indigenous knowledge production. Decolonisation theory helps to explain why, in spite of the fact that colonialism seems to have long 'come and gone' in Africa, Africans are still entangled in the web of European culture and knowledge.

Anticolonial framework, as put forward by scholars like Memmi (1969) and Fanon (1963), reaffirms the reality of recolonisation processes through the dictates of global capital and mainly through knowledge production. The theory unravels the tussle in cultures, ideas, and histories of knowledge production and their use. It conceptualises 'colonial' not simply as 'foreign' or 'alien', but rather as 'imposed and dominating' (Dei 2002). Anticolonial framework recognises the importance of locally produced knowledge, the products of cultural histories of a people and the daily human experiences and unique histories. The theory recognises the importance and potency in the use of local languages and indigenous knowledge and culture to create social understandings. It also advocates the combination of indigenous literature with culture, history, politics, economics, and understandings of issues of the spiritual realm. Anticolonial framework 'offers a critique of the wholesale degradation, disparagement and discard of "tradition and culture" in the interest of so-called "modernity" and the "global space"' (Dei 2002:8). The theory will therefore be useful in explaining and understanding the need for Africa (Nigeria and South Africa in particular) to sever links with Eurocentric culture and embrace its own cultural values in its quest for indigenous knowledge production. As the theory encourages parting ways with a foreign way of life and the development of indigenous African knowledge, so is it useful to explain the Nigerian and South African cases. This will help to drive home an understanding of why these countries must return and hold onto their cultural values if they are to attain the sustained and improved indigenous knowledge production they so crave.

The State of Culture and Indigenous Knowledge Production in Africa

The situation in Africa where culture (indigenous languages, proverbs, folklore, and songs, among others) has been largely replaced by Westernisation/modernity hampers the production of indigenous knowledge, while encouraging the production of Western knowledge and ideas. The prospect of the sustained and improved production of local knowledge looks slimmer by the day. Like most of their counterparts across the African continent, the prospects of both countries in this study for the production of culturally unique knowledge (Warren 1991) have been dealt a huge blow owing to abandonment of cultural values.

For Hountondji (1995; 2002), another major setback for indigenous knowledge production in Africa is the fact that academic and research activities are still carried out in colonial languages like French, English and Portuguese. This is a cultural erosion and a hindrance to the development of research and theory based on indigenous African conceptual frameworks and paradigms. Kaya and Seleti (2013:32) posit that colonial and apartheid education and research in Africa did not give room for indigenous knowledge production, because they replaced the African way of life with the Western way of life. Mimiko and Afolabi (2012:92) explain the effect of such cultural neglect in Africa thus: 'comprehensive social development, the type that Africa desires today cannot be attained in the context of a wholesale displacement of all facets and forms of the African culture…'

Knowledge production in Africa suffers from Eurocentric biases which have pushed indigenous African knowledge to the backstage in the global knowledge production system (Altbach 1987; Teferra & Altbach 2004:38–40). Lowy (1995:728) posits that the Westernisation of knowledge in Africa has imposed on both teachers and learners, a knowledge which does not show a true reflection of their experience of the world, and this has forced them to adhere to the imposed knowledge because they have little choice in the colonial framework. In Africa, therefore, knowledge becomes Western ideas and philosophies which are based on external cultures in Europe and America. This near total neglect of African culture in the knowledge production system on the continent has impeded Africa's ability to contribute to, and make significant impact in global knowledge production system (Habib 2014). Le Grange (2007) attests to the fact that African local cultural knowledge, which is tenable in various African knowledge genres, has been dealt a blow in educational and knowledge production systems. This is despite the fact that African culture provides a rich source for knowledge production. Evidence shows that African culture was successfully used for youth education in times past (Boateng 1990).

To drive home the point about the relegation of African culture in the knowledge production system, Semali (1999) relates how efforts to integrate indigenous literacy (poems, drama, proverbs, etc.) into the education system in Tanzania met with various challenges. Challenges included over-reliance on international assistance, lack of political will on the part of leaders, the absence of teaching methods which are indigenous to Africans, and the disconnect of African scholars from African culture (Semali 1994).

Owing to the neglect of African culture in knowledge production on the continent, knowledge produced is consistently disconnected from local realities, concerns and challenges. As a result, African intellectuals are largely insensitive to the challenges in their local communities (Muya 2007). The reason for this is quite straightforward – as the Western and Eurocentric knowledge which Africans now adopt was designed to suit societal challenges in Europe and the West, it cannot be successful in Africa. Kaya and Seleti (2013) provide evidence for the foregoing when they aver that African intellectuals are yet to be able to design theoretical and methodological approaches peculiar to the attainment of knowledge production and sustainable development on the continent.

According to Kaya and Seleti (2013:34), 'there is little attention given to African indigenous literary and philosophical traditions because they tend to be viewed as primitive and unscientific, hence, not proper sources of social theory and research development'. Today, Africans are compelled to either stay at home away from formal education, or are introduced into full-time formal education which completely separates them from African traditional knowledge systems (Raymond 2011). Western education inculcates in African youths the belief that their indigenous culture and way of life can offer them nothing, and that African indigenous knowledge and languages are obsolete and lack the capacity to solve modern societal challenges (Kaya & Seleti 2013:36). This continues to hamper the prospects of harnessing African culture for indigenous and sustained knowledge production on the continent.

Akena (2010) provides the example of Uganda, where young Africans were taken away from their homes, and were disconnected from their local and indigenous knowledge and traditional education. The colonial masters taught Ugandans and Africans the bible with the notion of liberating them from poverty, disease and backwardness, but it eventually deprived Africans of their indigenous knowledge, spirituality and tradition (Akena 2010, 2012).

Culture and Indigenous Knowledge Production in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the transmission of knowledge from elders to younger generations via storytelling, songs, folklore, proverbs, norms, local languages, observation and experiment (Ilo n.d.) has been largely abandoned. These methods are, according to Ilo, the link to indigenous knowledge production. With the distortion of these processes, indigenous knowledge production suffers setbacks. Nigeria is a country with diverse ethnic groups, multiple languages, and numerous cultural values and experiences, noticeable in their beliefs, folklore, medicine, religion, marriage, and education, to mention but few. Nevertheless, a many of these have been largely eroded by a Western way of living. There is a Westernisation of the Nigerian way of life which affects the country's ability/capacity to produce sustained and improved indigenous knowledge.

The use of the mother tongue in Nigeria has gradually reduced over the years, replaced with English. As Iwara (2015:26) has demonstrated, traditional languages in Africa, from Nigeria to Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, have been largely lost and replaced with English. This is part of the process of cultural erosion in these countries. Nigeria is also affected significantly by the challenge identified by Kaya and Seleti (2013:32) that 'despite decades of self-rule, African scholars have not succeeded in empowering the continent to develop its own educational theoretical and methodological framework for knowledge production and sustainable development'. This claim can be accounted for by the erosion of the indigenous way of life in Nigeria, which makes indigenous knowledge production difficult. In Nigeria, educational structures – which are the vehicles for knowledge production – were inherited from colonial masters, and are based on cultural practices and values different from the African way of life and completely alien to the African indigenous societies (Kaya & Seleti 2013). This is perpetuated by continuing ties with former colonising masters, economically, socially and technologically. The marginalisation of, and failure to integrate African cultural practices and values and indigenous languages into the education system at all levels in Nigeria, continue to hamper the potential of the country to produce knowledge indigenous to its people and to its particular challenges (Mimiko & Afolabi 2012).

To demonstrate the extent to which culture has been lost in Nigeria, Opata (1998) shows how a significant aspect of Igbo traditional culture, which aligns significantly with Western knowledge and ideas, has not been incorporated into the knowledge production system. According to him, the breaking and exchange of kola nuts, signifying peace, goodwill and reconciliation, aligns with Western and modern knowledge on the importance of respect for others' opinions, dialogue, deference to elders, conflict negotiation, and tolerance and forgiveness. If Igbo culture was incorporated into the knowledge production system, Opata (1998) is of the view that parents could be involved in educational curricula in Nigeria, and forge the perfect link between culture, schooling, and indigenous knowledge production. The role of parents as the custodians of culture would be re-ignited, harnessed, and they could inculcate traditional culture in their children, which will complement the knowledge obtained in schools. This would in turn, make room for indigenous knowledge production in the country.

While indigenous and local languages were once used in Nigerian primary and secondary schools, have been gradually replaced by foreign languages like French, Spanish, and German, among others. Regarding higher levels of education, no higher institution in Nigeria offers indigenous knowledge system programme, whether at undergraduate or postgraduate levels. The Nigerian government recognises the important place of culture in indigenous knowledge production, but has paid lip service to the need to incorporate indigenous culture into the learning and teaching processes. This lack of commitment to incorporate culture into the knowledge production system in the country continues to impede the potential for indigenous knowledge production in Nigeria.

Culture and Indigenous Knowledge Production in South Africa

Pietersen (2005) shows how South Africa has abandoned the indigenous way of life and indigenous knowledge in the pursuit of Western knowledge. Pietersen posits that though empirical research has greatly improved and has become methodologically sophisticated in South Africa, knowledge production is still largely based on Western paradigms, and the use of non-local materials is rampant.

Smith (2002) and Walter (2002) argue that education remains one means through which South Africa is being kept from its indigenous way of life and the prospect of sustained and improved indigenous knowledge production. This they attribute to the continuous marginalisation and lack of integration of African cultural values and indigenous languages into the education system at all levels.

There is no doubt that South Africa keeps looking for means to culturally diversify its knowledge production system to propel national development (Botha 2010). This has been driven mostly by three prominent reforms in the education system, namely: the outcomes-based education model, the Curriculum 2005 (C2005), and efforts to correct the social inequality brought about by Western and Eurocentric knowledge systems. Nevertheless, Botha (2010:223) argues that these have not been sufficient to reverse the Western model of education and instill African culture. For instance, the C2005 education reform has been criticised for still adopting Eurocentric models (Cross, Mungadi & Rouhani 2002). It still advocates for modernity to the detriment of local ways of life and culture, and it jettisons and maligns African traditional values (Breidlid 2003). C2005 has also been criticised for adopting Eurocentric models which are not able to create a link and balance between national and ethnic/cultural identities which are relevant for citizens' self-recognition (Van Lieres 2005). Botha (2010:224) also traces the origin of C2005 to debate which evolved in places like New Zealand, Canada, Australia, Scotland and the United States. This reaffirms the fact that education in South Africa and Africa in general is not rooted in the indigenous culture of the people, but on Western ideas.

Derek Hanekom, the then incumbent South African Deputy Minister of Science and Technology, noted in 2004 that 'indigenous knowledge has always been and continues to be the primary factor in the survival and welfare of the majority of South Africans' (IKS Policy 2004:4), but evidence shows that, in practice, the country does not significantly demonstrate the important place of indigenous culture in the education system (Botha

2010:232). Botha (2010) warned that as long as the country's education framework still significantly takes on Western approaches, local and indigenous knowledge production will continue to face marginalisation and the threat of extinction.

While the South African government realises and acknowledges the important place of indigenous African culture in indigenous knowledge production, implementation has been lacklustre, portraying a lack of commitment to fully disconnect from the Eurocentric approaches of learning, and a lack of faith in the indigenous models and approaches (Botha 2010:235; Mangena 2008).

In an effort to integrate African culture in its knowledge production systems, Kaya and Seleti (2013:38) note that various higher education institutions in South Africa have put in place initiatives to achieve this. Such initiatives include the use of local language (Setswana) for teaching at the North-West University (Mmola 2010). This IKS initiative has recorded some successes, but not without some challenges. The programme has ensured that teaching is highly appreciated by students, who now feel a sense of autonomy by learning in their local language. Students' academic performance has improved, and parents feel a sense of belonging as they are being used as instructors of local culture (Kaya & Seleti 2013:39; Mmola 2010). Some of the challenges with the IKS programme are the difficulty in implementation, shortage of qualified IKS staff, and the lack of relevant materials (Kaya & Seleti 2013:40–41).

The implications of the similarities and contrasts between the Nigerian and South African cases in terms of indigenous knowledge production are that the prospects of Africa achieving sustainable and improved indigenous knowledge production are abysmally poor. The comparison implies that both Nigeria and South Africa have largely abandoned indigenous African culture, and this impacts adversely on their quest for sustainable and improved indigenous knowledge production. The comparisons also indicate that South Africa has done much better than Nigeria in the quest to integrate African culture in the knowledge production system in order to achieve sustainable and improved indigenous knowledge production.

Comparing Nigeria and South Africa

Table 1: Comparing Nigeria and South Africa in terms of the preservation of African culture and the quest for sustained indigenous knowledge production

Differences	Similarities
While South Africa has made frantic efforts to break away from colonial methods, Nigeria has not made similar efforts	African culture has been eroded in both Nigeria and South Africa
While South Africa has at least three national policies to incorporate African culture in its education system, Nigeria is yet to design and adopt any	Both countries have made efforts to incorporate local indigenous culture at some levels of their educational system
Various higher institutions of learning in South Africa have developed initiatives to incorporate indigenous knowledge production systems in various aspects of their education curricula, whereas this has not been the case with Nigeria	Indigenous knowledge production has been hampered by Western culture in both countries
The teaching of local languages keeps depreciating in Nigeria with the replacement with foreign languages, but South Africa has continued to teach its local languages in schools	Both countries have recognised the important place of culture in indigenous knowledge production, but have not taken the appropriate or adequate steps to implement same
Although both Nigeria and South Africa's indigenous knowledge production capacities have been dealt a huge blow by Western and European approaches, South Africa has fared better in terms of cultural preservation and indigenous knowledge production	It appears both countries lack the commitment to fully disconnect from Western and Eurocentric education approaches, but also lack faith in the indigenous models and approaches
While South Africa has a university offering an accredited indigenous knowledge system programme at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, Nigeria has none	

Source: The author, 2021

Way Forward

To catalyse indigenous knowledge production on the continent, Africa must seek knowledge indigenous to its own ecological and cultural make up, towards the political, economic, ethical, social and general upliftment and development of its people. Higgs (2010) submits that knowledge production in Africa must be pragmatic and be able to render a 'service' to its people, rather than servicing Western cultures and history. Knowledge production in Africa must be directed towards African culture; that way, it can contribute effectively towards the amelioration of conditions on the continent. Wiredu (as cited in Anyanwu 1989:127) submits that 'we [Africans] will only solve our problems if we see them as human problems arising out of a special situation [unique culture and history]'. Anyanwu (1989:127) averred that indigenous knowledge 'invites people to take a stand on the issue of reality as experienced by Africans'. The earlier Africa realises all of these realities, the better for its quest for sustainable and improved indigenous knowledge production.

Indigenous knowledge must be pursued to address the continent's peculiar challenges. Africa cannot continue to attempt to adopt or apply Western knowledge and ways of life to resolve its peculiar challenges; actions must be taken to preserve its cultural values and rescue it from an imminent extinction so as to attain a sustainable and improved indigenous knowledge production on the continent. This is the only way that Africa can successfully address its political, economic and social challenges. This is the way that Europe and the Asian Tigers have gone, with positive results in terms of indigenous knowledge production, and educational, and all-round development (Idowu 2020).

Conclusion

The article finds that culture enables the development of a type of knowledge indigenous to the local people. When indigenous ways of life are abandoned in favour of Western cultures, this fosters the development of 'Westernised' knowledge which indigenous people are not used to. Such alien knowledge is not able to solve indigenous political, economic and social problems.

As the anticolonial framework posits, the production of indigenous knowledge can only be achieved by strict adherence to indigenous cultural practices. Nigeria, South Africa and indeed Africa must recognise this if they are to improve on the production of indigenous knowledge on the continent. These countries must make attempts to decolonise their cultures and strive to produce knowledge that is based on their local way of life.

However, caution must be taken in a bid to decolonise African culture. Decolonisation theory has pointed out that decolonisation is a process and is not to be rushed. Nigeria, South Africa and Africa at large must know that decolonisation is gradual and must be so treated.

A decolonised way of life and efforts to produce knowledge strictly based on the indigenous African way of life will aid Africa in its quest for sustainable and improved indigenous knowledge production. Africa must go back to its culture and begin to appreciate its culture of storytelling, rituals, beliefs, marriages, folklore, norms, songs, proverbs, and local languages, and base its knowledge on these, rather than on Western cultures. African culture must, as a matter of urgency, be reintroduced into school curricula at all levels. When indigenous knowledge production is improved in Africa, then the prospect of achieving development can be revived on the continent. This is true to the extent that indigenous knowledge, which people are familiar with, is better put into use for political, economic and social development than those entirely alien to them. An improvement on indigenous knowledge production through the reinstatement of Africa's cultural values, will also mean sustainable development for the continent. While some cultural values on the continent were barbaric – like the killing of twin children, the slave trade and human sacrifices – the non-barbaric and progressive cultural values must be brought back.

The study finds that Nigeria and South Africa have to a large extent neglected their respective cultures. There is low level of indigenous knowledge production. In both countries, younger generations are acquiring values and lifestyles alien to African culture as a result of exposure to global and Western cultures. This implies that elders, who are the custodians of culture, are dying without passing their knowledge on to the children. This could result in the extinction of African culture and indigenous knowledge production on the continent. Nevertheless, South Africa has done better in the quest to preserve African culture and integrate it into the education system than Nigeria.

Indigenous games, dances, initiation schools, agricultural systems, proverbs, storytelling, and songs, which are indigenous institutions of knowledge in Africa, remain the bedrock of the indigenous African knowledge system, and must be preserved. African researchers must turn to indigenous knowledge holders and elders in African communities to improve on and ensure a sustained production of indigenous knowledge on the continent.

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