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(With selected papers from the 15th CODESRIA General Assembly)

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Academic (Im)mobility: Ecology of Ethnographic Research and Knowledge Production on Africans in China

Kudus Oluwatoyin Adebayo*

Abstract

Since the emergence of China in the geopolitical and economic spaces of Africa, academics have followed Chinese and African people moving in both directions and conducted on-the-ground, cross-border ethnographies. However, academics are not equally mobile. This autoethnography analyses the intersections of ethnography, mobility and knowledge production on 'Africans in China' through a critical exploration of the contextual issues shaping the unequal participation of Africa-based researchers in the study of Africa(ns) in a non-African setting. Based on my experiences before, during and after migration to Guangzhou city, I demonstrate that 'being there,' fetishised as ideal-type anthropology, conceals privilege and racial and power dynamics that constrain the practice of cross-border ethnography in the global South.

Résumé

Depuis l'émergence de la Chine dans les espaces géopolitiques et économiques de l'Afrique, les universitaires ont suivi les Chinois et les Africains évoluant dans les deux sens, et ont mené, sur le terrain, des ethnographies transfrontalières. Cependant, les universitaires ne sont pas aussi mobiles. Cette auto ethnographie analyse les intersections de l'ethnographie, de la mobilité et de la production de connaissances sur les « Africains en Chine » à travers une exploration critique des questions contextuelles qui façonnent la participation inégale des chercheurs basés en Afrique à l'étude de l'Afrique et des africains dans un cadre non-africain. Me basant sur mes expériences avant, pendant et après ma migration vers la ville de Guangzhou, je démontre que le « être là », fétichisé en tant qu'anthropologie de type idéal, dissimule des privilèges et des dynamiques raciales et de pouvoir qui contraignent la pratique de l'ethnographie transfrontalière dans le Sud global.

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Introduction

On 11 June 2018, Vivian Lu and Mingwei Huang circulated a short survey report through the Chinese in Africa/Africans in China Research Network (CA/AC). With the surge in scholarly interest in the dynamics of interactions between China and Africa, Lu and Huang (2018) attempted to understand how those taking part in China-Africa (or Africa-China) studies conduct ethnographic fieldwork, including the impact of the politics of field access and exclusion. Some of the key findings of the authors can be summarised into a thesis that captures the condition under which knowledge on 'Africans in China' is produced today. Their claim is that while many Africa-China scholars can do ethnography in China or African countries, race and nationality, institutional positions and locations across continents determine who gets to participate. African researchers identified access to Chinese visas as a major barrier.[1] While the report is limited by its largely descriptive approach, it is nonetheless timely and instructive as it calls attention to the 'spatial grounding' of African academics 'in place', posing a challenge to the promise of ethnography in Africa-China studies.

Since the emergence of China in the geopolitical and economic spaces of Africa, academics in universities and institutes in both the northern and southern hemispheres have followed the Chinese state and business enterprises where they went. Academics are also fascinated with how Africans have moved in the other direction, beaming searchlights to understand, interpret and predict the dynamics of an unfolding process. In this way, researchers reached critical mass as knowledge producers on the character of the Africa-China interactions. In many cases, the researchers produce knowledge by conducting on-the-ground ethnographies (Lu and Huang 2018), which often involve some form of cross-border mobility. Unfortunately, academics are not equally mobile! (Grgurinović 2013; Mau *et al.* 2015; Neumayer 2006).

For too long, the context within which Africa-based researchers conduct ethnography outside the African continent has not been brought to the fore of scholarly analysis. This is due to the fact that a significant amount of studies conducted in African humanities and social science disciplines are locally grounded (Alatas 2003), rarely involving cross-continental mobility for fieldwork. By analysing the intersections of ethnography, mobility and knowledge production in 'Africans in China' research, I seek to highlight the contextual issues that structure the (un)equal participation of Africa-based researchers in the study of Africa(ns) in a non-African setting. I contend that 'being there', fetishised as ideal-type anthropology, conceals privilege and racial and power dynamics that constrain the practice of cross-border ethnography in the global South.

Essentially, I reflect on academic (im)mobility[2] as a distinct form of movement in Africa-China interactions, with an interest in analysing how knowledge production on 'Africans in China' is shaped by the structures of constraints and opportunities within which 'migration for ethnography' occur. I frame academic (im)mobility as a prerequisite and vehicle for producing knowledge on cross-cultural interactions and possibilities, and specifically treat ethnography as a knowledge-making tool that all scholars researching the African experience globally should be able to employ. In this autoethnographic account, which is based mainly on my experiences before, during and after migration to Guangzhou city as a doctoral student, I reflect on the barriers embedded in the structures within which a Nigerian scholar seeks to participate in documenting the lived experiences of Nigerians in China. This pursuit is motivated by both an invitation and a charge. The invitation comes from Larsen (2016:90) when she writes that focus should be on how '…knowledge is created, shaped, and changed through its mobile conditions of production'. The charge, on the other hand, originates from Grgurinović's intention:

> To open the space for a critical consideration of the uncritical, unifying discourse of academic immobility as an aspect of wider politics of science, education, and knowledge, which puts great emphasis on mobility as an important factor in what is vaguely defined as scientific 'excellence' (of institutions and individual scientists). (Grgurinović 2013:156)

In the rest of the article, I adopt a reflexive methodology, '…in the sense of seeing ourselves in a mirror, of ourselves being the object of our thought' (Bruce and Yearly 2005), to think through correspondences with China- and West-based academics and collaborators while planning my journey, as well as my experiences at the Chinese embassy in Lagos and port of entry in Guangzhou. Reflexivity emphasises the importance of self-knowledge and sensitivity, the role of self and impact of positionality in the creation of knowledge (Berger 2015). Advancing reflexivity, Bourdieu (2003) proposes 'participant objectivation' in which our personal experiences can become analytical resources to produce epistemic and existential benefits once we subject them to sociological control through self-socio-analysis. He believes '…that scientific knowledge and knowledge of oneself and of one's own social unconscious advance hand in hand' (Bourdieu 2003:289). To adopt a reflexive approach, therefore, implies that the researcher is the 'principal character', not just the 'central character', he is his own key informant; or simply, the researcher and researched are one and the same (Davies 2002).

Epistemic Domination, Mobility and Knowledge Production in Africa

Adebanwi (2016:353) writes that 'the fate of the knowledge industry is the measure of all progress – economic, social and political'. Unfortunately, the global division of intellectual labour is unequally distributed and it is structured in a way that impacts negatively on the production of knowledge in Africa. Alatas (2003) decries the subordinate status of knowledges of the Third World, which includes most of Africa, due to the relentlessness of academic dependency even after political independence. He argues that intellectuals of the Third World rely on, and their scholarly output is conditioned by, Western social sciences. In addition to the divisions around theoretical and empirical intellectual labour on the one hand, and the separations formed along the lines of doing comparatist versus single-case studies on the other hand, Alatas (2003:607) highlights perceptively the division between doing 'other country studies and own country studies'.

Arowosegbe (2016) posits that knowledge production on Africa happens within a historically determined and on-going power asymmetry, and that the political and economic domination of the African continent by the West has sustained epistemic dependency in African universities. Other scholars have raised the problem of epistemic domination of Africa by Western social sciences in different ways (Omobowale 2013; Keim 2008). Keim (2008), for instance, attempts to explain the marginality of Africa (and other developing countries in Latin America and Asia) in the production of social scientific knowledge by using the centre-periphery-model. Much in the fashion of dependency theorising, and focusing especially on the sociological enterprise, he argues that the sociologies of Western Europe and the United States are at the centre while the global South occupies the periphery. In Keim's (2008) model, however, there is no place for the 'semi-periphery.' Ake (2011) discusses the role of globalisation in deepening imperialism in African social sciences.

Strikingly, the question of epistemic domination in African knowledge production space is rarely discussed alongside issues of African mobilities, especially academic mobility under the condition of unequal globalisation. Interrogating this neglect is important because the sovereign right to control who crosses or remains shut out of borders still lies largely with nation-states despite the fact that globalisation is alive and well (Britz & Ponelis 2012). Tighter border controls in the global North were no doubt influenced by the rise in terrorism threats since 9/11 (Brooks & Waters 2011; Favell, Feldblum, & Smith 2007; Larsen 2016). While the more affluent countries

are unlikely to transcend their terrorist fears any time soon, concerns about economic migrants from poor countries who may decide to stay put after arrival continue to put immigration at the centre of national debates and policy discourses (Neumayer 2006).[3]

So, the borders that globalisation optimists claim have opened up are fast closing again, only permitting certain people, designated as wanted, while keeping out the unwanted 'others' (Mau *et al.* 2015). Specifically, Mau *et al.* (2015) find that while visa-free mobility has increased over the past 40 years, not all countries benefitted equally, with wealthy countries gaining more mobility rights while the same rights stagnated or diminished for others, particularly for African countries. In essence, stricter visa rules are being deployed as a tool for disciplining people from some parts of the globe (Neumayer 2006). Through the cost and processing of visa applications, and the unilateral powers of the street-level bureaucracy to deny visas, receiving states are able to end mobilities before they begin (Lee, Paulidor & Mpaga 2017). This makes globalisation a deeply conflicted process, in that unprecedented mobility is accompanied by enforced immobility (Neumayer 2006).

As a sub-category of mobile people, academics are feeling the effects of contemporary border dynamics, albeit varied in degrees. In spite of the possibility of facilitating the deterritorialisation of knowledge production, Larsen (2016:81) posits that academic mobility is not possible for all. At the same time that the disjunctive nature of global flows creates possibilities, inconsistencies and social inequalities still persist, owing specifically to '… the geopolitical power dimensions of academic mobility and inequalities that exist between and among academics based on race, gender, class, and other contextual factors' (Larsen 2016:92). Like other forms of mobility, she contends that 'mobility capital' is dispersed unevenly among academics, with implications for the character of knowledge produced and circulated in the globalised era.

African scholars in particular move cross-continentally under a condition of global academic migration inequality. Between 2018 and 2019 alone, scholarly communities and media organisations in the global North disseminated several sensational statements and reports that capture the entrenched nature of enforced immobility against African academics.[4] Noting that a significantly high proportion of academic conferences take place outside Africa, Britz and Ponelis (2012) state that Africans travelling on the passports of African countries face strict visa restrictions from most countries in the global North. The reasons, they insist, are geographic, financial and political in nature. In their words:

> The international traveling problem for academics from Africa is part of a wider international vocal debate on immigration that is spurred by not only national security but also by ideology, economic interest and negative perceptions. National safety and pride as well as own economic interest have many times resulted into narrowing the door for immigrants and as a result translated into legal barriers for traveling scholars (Britz & Ponelis 2012:473).

This captures the situation of Nigerian academics. Nigerian academics planning to attend conferences and trainings in countries across the global North often find that their mobility destiny is inevitably linked with the destiny of the Nigerian international migrant population. In an attempt to escape poverty and secure a better life abroad, many young Nigerians visit foreign embassies with manufactured documents to improve their chances of obtaining a visa (Akanle *et al.* 2013). Many of them are stereotyped at the embassies of the US, Britain, Canada and many Schengen countries, as 'illegals,' and 'absconders' who routinely assemble fake documents to secure a visa. In the words of Obadare and Adebanwi (2010:42), 'the would-be migrant is largely regarded by the consular officials as a vagrant [and] the average Western consulate in Nigeria is a space of abjection and humiliation'.

It is not unusual for Nigerian academics to regard embassies as spaces of abjection as well because the stereotyped image of Nigerians is normally deployed when dealing with scholars. As Akanle *et al.* (2013:87) observe, 'when Nigerian academics apply for visas, they are usually treated with the same disrespect and suspicion as other Nigerians, in part because it is difficult to ascertain their true status and because lecturers are not seen as immune to fraudulent visa applications'. Sometimes, the embassies request 'special documents' from Nigerian academics, and visa rejection is fairly common even after supplying the requested documents and paying the necessary fees, both to the embassies and the intended academic meetings, thereby leading to a waste of resources in an already low-resource environment (Akanle *et al.* 2013; Obadare & Adebanwi 2010).

The visa regime that limits African intellectual mobilities impacts negatively on development, creativity, and knowledge sharing, with implications for the questions of social (Britz & Ponelis 2012) and epistemic justice. Akanle *et al.* (2013) complain that because of the visa challenge, African-generated knowledge remains at the margins of global scholarship. The inability of African scholars to travel because of the inequality in global visa regimes limits the participation of Africa in the global knowledge economy. This further entrenches the already skewed global knowledge structure into a deeply one-sided understanding of the world.[5]

All of this reveals how the dominant narrative of globalisation masks the pre-eminence of borders which continue to keep some people out based on geography of origin, stereotypes and stigmatisation. However, much of the discussion and many of the analyses focus on African academics who visit the West, usually on a short-term basis, to attend conferences and workshops. Not much is being done to understand African academic immobility in the context of Afro-Asia interactions nor the ways that barriers in emerging powerhouses like China constrain Africa-based ethnographic endeavours that are oriented towards understanding the lives of Africans residing in Chinese cities. Also, the centre-periphery model in intellectual labour inequalities (Keim 2008) overlooks the unequal relations between the periphery and semi-periphery areas. With advances in Africa-China relations, I argue that China should be approached as a node of interest for ethnographic and social scientific activities for African scholars. For one, cities in mainland China host a significant African population. There is no doubt that this population is relevant for understanding social change processes in China and Africa. More importantly, China-bound migration is now an aspect of the modern history of Africa, the documentation of which should involve scholars working from and in both regions and elsewhere. In the next section, I describe my experience as a Nigerian-based doctoral student seeking ethnographic information on Nigerians in China.

The Study of Africans in the World: Doing Ethnography in China

The inflow of African students into China for educational purposes and their experiences in various Chinese cities are being documented by 'Africans in China' researchers (Bredeloup 2014; Haugen 2013; Ho 2017; Li 2013). However, most of these students are on government bilateral scholarships and enrolled in STEM or short-term Chinese culture and language programmes. The knowledge produced from participating in these programmes makes little contribution towards understanding the transformations that the African presence in China is bringing about.

When I decided to study the Nigerian migrant community in China, I engaged colleagues and faculty members to know what they thought. While the former wondered if all the problems in Nigeria had been researched, most of those in the latter group warned me about the impossibility of my pursuit. One faculty member, having reminded me of my 'Nigerian-ness' and talking about my placement in the global South and financial status as self-sponsored student, told me stories of friends who abandoned PhD pursuits midway after wasting their time chasing 'ambitious' research.

The two groups mentioned above are part of the social organisation within which I would conduct research that had not begun but was already dead on arrival. Framed as pragmatic advice, I was admonished to subject myself to an honest evaluation, to think about funding and the demands of cross-continental mobility particularly. However, by proposing that I should abandon the original idea for more localised research, I noticed that a more fundamental assumption of other doctoral students and faculty is that an African based in an African university is not supposed to participate – or is incapable of participating – in a debate on Africans residing in a non-African country.[6] Certainly, the protracted problem of lack of funding for doctoral research has created a culture or tradition within Nigerian academe where students have come to believe that engaging in ethnographic research outside the African continent is not possible or wise.

Being at the very early stage of my research, it would have been a good time to abandon the idea. However, I had convinced myself to believe that, in choosing to study Nigerians in China, I would be well-positioned to participate in constructing a history of Africa that is still unfolding – a responsibility that Western and Asian scholars had taken on at the time. I was focused on the implications of my 'pragmatic' move, whether it would matter, over the short- or long term. My PhD supervisor was on board all the way. Having taught about sociological theory for many decades and having introduced graduate students to issues in diaspora theorising, he was naturally disposed to support my research interest. The key research puzzle for me was to understand the gamut of processes, social relations and practices with which Nigerians increasingly settle as migrants in Guangzhou, the largest city in south China.

The first major hurdle for the research was funding. Many African universities lack access to research funds, and the problem is worse in social sciences and humanities disciplines. In a chronically resource-poor setting like Nigeria, institutional funding for research is almost non-existent. Most doctoral students in Nigerian universities are self-financed. As the first national university in the country, the University of Ibadan, where I was enrolled, is one of the few universities in Nigeria that provides some financial support to doctoral students.[7] However, the funds available within the university are often inadequate to conduct ethnographic fieldwork, especially a cross-border kind. For transnational ethnographic activity, a doctoral researcher is no doubt immobile. As a result, I was constrained to look outwards for other funding sources, some of which you only stand a chance of getting if you are capable and willing to re-think, un-think, abandon or readapt your research proposal, proposition and focus. Being adaptive, in these senses, is 'being creative'!

Once the issue of funding was resolved (sources listed at the end of the paper), I was confronted with the problem of travel logistics. Over the course of a two-year planning and waiting period, I learned that academic mobility for ethnographic fieldwork is neither a neutral nor a straightforward process, but rather an activity that takes place within structures of institutional inefficiencies and ineffectiveness, global inequality and racialised hierarchies of power, visa black-market economies and mobility informalisation. To plan my travel, I checked the visa requirements on the website of the Chinese embassy in Nigeria and found that I was qualified to apply for an 'F' visa which is 'issued to foreigners who intend to go to China for exchanges, visits, study tours, etc.'[8] The documents required for the 'F' visa were:

1. Application form;
2. International passport data page;
3. Original invitation letter of duly authorised unit or confirmation letter of invitation issued by the Chinese government departments, companies and social organisations authorised by the Chinese Foreign Ministry;
4. Appropriately stamped invitation letters issued by a relevant unit or individual, with information of applicant and inviting entity/individual and details of planned visit;
5. Letter of introduction from applicant's place of work detailing relevant personal information and purpose of visit;
6. Latest six months bank statements with minimum of ₦4 million deposit,[9] and;
7. Any other documents deemed necessary by the Chinese embassy.

Depending on the number of entries requested and the duration of stay, visa costs range from a minimum of ₦8,000 (or $50) to ₦24,000 (or $150). Also, consular officers have the sole right to determine the visa validity period, number of entries and duration of stay, and may also alter or cancel issued visas without explanation.

Of the documents required for a visa application, item numbers 1, 2, and 5 were easily assembled. As a doctoral student without a job, item number 6 appeared preposterous. Item number 7 is a standard line in almost all embassies to give room for operational latitude. This could be ignored for now as its impact on my mobility could not be readily assessed. The difficulty with Chinese visa applications centres was on item numbers 3 and 4 since both cannot be obtained without interfacing with Chinese scholars and education institutions, preferably universities.

Being a member of a major Africa-China research network, I reached out to experienced researchers, including three senior Chinese researchers at universities in Beijing, Guangzhou, and Wuhan. In the two years that I

worked on mobility logistics, two other senior academics based in European and American universities but with strong ties to Chinese universities also helped.[10] I exchanged several dozen emails over the two years and the responses were generally good, with most people expressing a willingness to help. Senior academics in Chinese universities were particularly responsive and helpful. Nevertheless, many long correspondences met a brick wall as the institutions could not supply me with the document I needed the most.

I obtained a police clearance and did an extensive medical investigation that included HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis B examinations and posted all the originals to China via a courier service. In all, I received five letters of invitation: two came from a renowned Chinese scholar based in Guangzhou; two from another Chinese scholar, the first while he was based in Guangzhou and the second when he moved to another university outside Guangzhou; the last one was issued by a young Chinese scholar who recently tenured in a Beijing university. Of course, the original letters arrived at different times through courier services. Also, prior to issuing some letters, I was told to prepare a plan of daily activities that spanned three months, stating where I would be at what time and what specific activities I planned to carry out.

When I approached the Chinese embassy in Lagos with the documents,[11] I found that my application could not be accepted without an 'Original Invitation Letter of a Duly Authorised Unit' (OILDAU) – item number 3. The OILDAU is issued by the Chinese Foreign Ministry (CFM) and the organisation or individual intending to invite a foreigner ought to apply for it. My interactions with Nigerians employed to check documents at the Chinese embassy and visa agents indicated that no application is processed without the OILDAU. With the back-and-forth exchanges with Chinese professors and helpers, the OILDAU would dominate our discussions and, at the same time, be a source of disappointment – and depression.

What is this OILDAU and why is it so obscure and out of reach? Most of the Chinese scholars I worked with were not aware of the so-called OILDAU. One professor approached the international affairs office of his university to make inquiries and was told that it would take several months to get it. Two other helpers said that the CFM was not issuing the documents to Nigerians.[12] The more I interfaced with these gatekeepers and those offering assistance in China, the clearer it became that, in the structure of mobility from Nigeria to China, the OILDAU is a best-kept industry secret.

Through the tangled process of assembling travel documents, I was advised to pursue other options. One of these was to register as a language student or for a year-long cultural programme that is supported by the government of China in Chinese universities. I had spent a lot of time on

my PhD already and there was still no guarantee that I would be selected for the programmes.[13] Another worthwhile suggestion, which I had not thought of, was to explore, if available, the active Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) of my home university with universities in China. The University of Ibadan has an Office of International Programmes (OIP) which coordinates such affairs. The Director of the OIP agreed to meet me, and my interactions with her showed her readiness to assist.[14] Unfortunately, the office had no MOU that would work for me. On the one hand, my university did not have a relationship with a university in Guangdong Province where I planned to do research. On the other hand, existing relationships were applicable to mobilities for exchange programmes targeting undergraduate students.

Informality and Chinese Visa Market Economy in Nigeria

While I explored 'mobility options', I maintained a constant presence in my academic department in Nigeria. I was stuck, and waiting in the sense of 'waiting out a crisis' (Hage 2009). In fact, my 'directionlessness' troubled a professor who tried to help by contacting a friend at Nigeria's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. With his mobile phone on loudspeaker, I heard the contact express pessimism about the feasibility of getting the Chinese visa the 'normal way.' The alternative way he proposed would cost up to ₦800,000[15] for a 30-day 'M' (business) visa but there was no guarantee. Of course, from my interactions with visa agents, I knew the cost was exaggerated, and that I would require less than that amount if I were to patronise the informal Chinese visa market.

Still willing to help, the same professor offered another way out of my visa problem. He encouraged me to pray as only God could resolve my visa problem. Given the fact that I had funding sources and travel experience, he believed my condition could not be left to the physical realm. As a strategy for navigating socially inexplicable occurrences, the professor suggested prayers. This suggestion is not surprising for two reasons. One, over my years as a graduate student, the professor had become familiar with my general disinterest in religion, and had, at different times, tried to get me to turn to Christianity. Second, and most crucially, religion, even in its transnational form, is a crucial part of the visa economy in Nigeria. As Obadare and Adebanwi (2010) reveal, migration in Nigeria is treated as a spiritual phenomenon needing divine intervention. Traveling abroad, they continue, involves the services of traditional *juju* men, Islamic *Alfas* and Christian pastors and evangelists. The reliance on religion, they discover, is '…necessitated by the uncertainties built into both the particular process of getting entry visas…and with emigration from the country as a whole' (Obadare & Adebanwi 2010:36).

The informal Chinese visa market, with its extensive link to centres in China, is thriving in Nigeria. Researchers studying Africans' presence in China describe how the restrictive visa regime led to the rise of Chinese-run semi-legal or illegal visa agency services, often conducted in conjunction with state officials (Lan 2017). These agents help with visa renewals and arrange invitation letters for African visa applicants. They have a strong network with African visa entrepreneurs in big cities such as Lagos and Abuja. In my case, I learned that agents in Lagos are well integrated into the Chinese visa processing value chain. The visa processing framework recognise them officially as brokers whose primary role is to interface between prospective migrants and the Chinese embassy.

I had known the visa agents were a real option from the time I began planning for my fieldwork. However, I was struggling with whether I could trick myself into accepting an explanation that legitimises the option and that, at the same time, renders insignificant the potential legal, ethical and existential issues arising therefrom. Some of the questions I grappled with were: how do I to justify, to myself, the payment of $2,000 for a service that costs $50? Since the agents can only 'assist' with a business visa, am I a businessman? The second question is especially puzzling because, to apply for business visa, an applicant must prove that s/he is a businessperson. To make a businessperson out of you and 'package' you for the embassy, the agents must manufacture documents, especially introduction and invitation letters authenticating an applicant's status. The OILDAU from China must also carry corresponding information. I was worried that mobility through the informal visa market structure posed a threat to me directly. I was concerned that the visa black market economy could potentially invalidate my 'authentic scholarly identity'.

The uncertainties surrounding my situation at the time, and the urgency and responsibility to execute the project I had committed to, were being processed as the institutional clock tick-tocked. To settle into the path I was constrained to take, I convinced myself that I was only attempting to 'move within a moving environment' (Vigh 2009). To proceed, I rationalised the visa market as 'visa informality'. That reconstruction made my decision immediately relatable. As with Treiber (2014) who reasons that informality in migration is a typical mode of action in 'unprivileged migration', I resolved that having a business visa with the help of an agent was built into China's mobility system. It was my way of dealing with the dilemma of exclusion, I concluded. That is, still in Treiber's (2014:7) understanding, I interpreted the informal visa market as something that keeps the world accessible and manageable, that it is:

> Difficult to classify informal praxis clearly into fraud, manipulation, circumvention or exploitation…that informality has become a decisive trait of unprivileged migration through our brutally asymmetric world (Treiber 2014:21).

Once I decided to go with visa agents, plans were set in motion. Of all the seven items listed as part of documentation, I submitted just three[16] while the agent sourced the rest. Incredibly, the 'normal way' of obtaining visa took two years and failed; the 'not-normal way' produced a 30-day business visa in under a month.

Uncertainty and Risk: Entering the Field and Staying Safe in Guangzhou City

In the informal visa market, identity-switching and performance are critical to successful mobility. For the interview at the Chinese Embassy in Lagos, I was prepped by my agent to take on the identity of a businessman by internalising a set of business-like questions and their answers. Surprisingly, however, these questions were not revealed to me until the morning of the interview. Until that morning, I did not also know that I was travelling to Ningbo for business tourism along with four other staff members of a company that I did not know I worked at. As a performer in a group interview, I had to quickly learn who held which position. I learned fast but it was difficult remembering who the Director of our fictitious company was between the couple in my contingent.

Our agent was present all the way, pacing up and down the waiting area and the interview hall. When our time for interview came, the agent handed the documents to the consular officer who sat calmly behind a glass barrier. Even though my queue was short with just four or five persons ahead of me, it felt very long. My anxiety rose as I moved closer to the interviewer, wondering, unsure and fearful, while struggling to stay alert long enough to remember the information about our company and the staff members on 'our' business tour. I was surprised that the interview itself, which lasted for about a minute, was casual and non-intrusive.[17]

Having collected my visa, I presumed I was free. However, the worst part of the existential burden that follows from the condition of posing as a businessperson lies at the port of entry in Guangzhou, China. The Baiyun International Airport in Guangzhou is one of the busiest airports in the world, with connections to many Chinese cities through commerce and industry. Most Africans who arrived in China since the first decade of the twenty-first century came to Guangzhou and entered through Baiyun.

I arrived at the airport around evening and the immigration desk was not as intimidating as expected. Going through this checkpoint was smooth. I picked my bags and changed some money from a desk to the left. A Nigerian co-passenger, Adekunle,[18] was by my side as we approached the exit area. Then a customs officer nudged us to a secondary checking area. Once the machine had scanned our bags again, we started to leave. Adekunle was ahead of me by a few steps. In no time, another officer popped up and asked where I came from, to which I responded: Nigeria. 'So, you're a Nigerian?' he asked to confirm. I said 'Yes' again. From here on, the burden of an appropriated identity confronted me.

To start, there were a series of accusatory probes: 'You know you Nigerians swallow drugs and bring into China?' 'Are you one of them?' 'What do you have in your stomach?' I said food. 'Are you sure it is food and not drugs?' The officer continued with his interrogation. Noticing my absence, Adekunle returned to look for me but the officer told him that I was not his business. Later, he asked to know the purpose of my visit, and I said business. On his assessment, I did not look the part. For one, my outfit was casual: I wore a jacket over jeans with a T-shirt my girlfriend had given me just two days before as a birthday gift. I wore eye glasses and my moustache was long. My equally long hair was rough from the long journey to Guangzhou. Everything about my appearance contradicted the identity of a 'businessman'. In his doubtfulness about my credentials as a businessman, he pressed on with more accusatory questions as follows:[19]

Officer:	How much money do you have?
Me:	$500
Officer:	You mean you are here on a business and all you have is $500?
Me:	Well that is the cash I have. I have a USD debit card with more money on it. I don't have to carry cash.
Officer:	What if you want to use the card and it doesn't work? What will you do?
Me:	Well you have ATM here, it should work. Do you want us to try?
Officer:	Well I don't believe you. What kind of business do you do?
Me:	I sell bags.
Officer:	So, you sell bag? Okay tell me how long you have been using this bag – pointing to my XYZ branded travelling bag.
Me:	It's been a while.
Officer:	Tell me about the brand of the bag you're carrying.
Me:	I don't know about this bag.

> Officer: You mean to tell me that you're dealing with bags and you don't know about this brand? The brand is known all over the world! I feel there's something you're not telling me; is there something you're not telling me?

Suddenly, the excitement I felt after passing the immigration desk vanished. I was afraid and not being able to show my dread aggravated my anxiety. Was this the end of my fieldwork? I broached the thought of being thrown back on the plane as quickly as I had landed. I was prepared to confess, to show the letter of introduction I obtained from my university as proof of my real identity and actual purpose in China. I was busy in my thoughts while remaining calm, giving up nothing. After some minutes of interrogation, I told the officer that I had nothing more to say to him, when I, indeed, had more to tell him.

However, the officer, in his impatience, was sure I had illicit items like drugs tucked away inside my belly. He ordered me to present my luggage to a bigger machine for further scans. While the scan was happening, I looked away from the officer but kept him in sight. I was then guided to another machine to do a full body scan. They needed to check my stomach, just to be sure. Before I stepped in, I asked if I should take off my clothes, to which the officer responded in the negative. By now, another officer had joined us. With the bodily scrutiny complete, the second officer handed over my passport and told me to go. The interrogating officer was no longer in sight. The trip became smooth again. Adekunle was waiting for me outside the airport with a cigarette between his fingers. The night was cold. Throughout the bus ride, I stared at the second-hand bag I picked up in Lagos and wondered how it had transformed into an albatross.

Academic Im(mobility) and 'Africans in China' Studies: A Closing Reflection

In a world deeply unequal, where geography, position, racism, stigmatisation, othering and power relations determine and precondition the environment surrounding who gets 'out there' to do ethnography, the charge against 'armchair anthropologists' (Howell 2017) demands critical and refreshed scrutiny. The reality of borders in modern nation-states consigns to oblivion the essentialised assumptions of academic freedom that the charge of anti-armchair anthropology implies. We must acknowledge the global racial and power structure by asking and critiquing how academic freedom should be reckoned in the context of boundary and unequal mobility freedoms and restrictions.

In this article, I have highlighted that in the pursuit of ethnography data, certain structural factors and rules, both written and unwritten, are sources of contradictions. African researchers are trapped in a world that is closing as quickly as it is opening. The firm grip of states to control who is mobile or immobile strengthens the position of agents operating in the informal visa market. The structural constraints that precondition the extent of researchers' mobility sustain an economy that imbues the fieldwork process with 'existential threat'. I have shown that in the current order of 'epistemic things', academics share important characteristics with migrants generally. Precisely, I showed through my personal experience that academics are not so different after all – or instead that some are indeed different! I maintain that border constraints impact on the ability of African social scientists to make contributions towards understanding the lives and implications of the presence of Africans in the world.

With China's growing wealth and increasing presence in global affairs, the kinds of people moving to China from Africa have diversified. Migrant flows have come to include trade migrants who hope to reap rewards from China's economic prosperity and advanced commodity manufacture. Even more interesting are the economic migrants who have constructed and pursued what some have called 'China Dream' (Marfaing 2019). This brings more than transient African people; it is also producing a distinctive presence that is rapidly altering and transforming the outlook of the cities that Africans have moved to. In Guangzhou where the visibility of Africans is high, the people in the streets exhibit the extra dimension of Africa's blackness. Much like the state, local Chinese residents are noticing, and constructions and narratives of invasion are circulating with the worst forms surfacing online among Chinese netizens (Pfafman, Carpenter & Tang 2015; Wing-Fai 2015; Cheng 2011).[20] Offline, the problem of criminality fuels animosity towards specific African groups (Pang & Yuan 2013) despite the dynamic closeness that is occurring through work and interracial marriage.

As part of the African diasporisation and twenty-first century histories are constructed in China and other Asian countries, more issues will arise. Diasporas of Africans are part of the knowledge realm with which African researchers must engage. As one scholar observes, African studies and diaspora studies must be integrated with one another (Busia 2006). This view anticipates the need for African researchers to show an interest in, and do active research on, African diasporas, including those currently in formation in Asia. 'Africans in China' studies must also be considered an arm of Africa's historical formation, linked to past and future changes. In short, the presence

of Africans in China is an aspect of a history-making process. This endeavour should involve researchers working from everywhere, not only those privileged by global racial hierarchies or geographies of visa power which place African intellectuals at the bottom of the global knowledge system.

'Africans in China' is a critical part of Africa's postcolonial decolonisation project, where knowledge of Africa is co-produced, and debated through multi-perspectival lenses. Efforts should be, from the beginning, directed at guarding against African intellectuals becoming reactionaries against knowledges on Africa(ns) in China in the future. This is because, once documented, transmitted, reproduced, and institutionalised, the knowledge so produced becomes a power unto itself, which will require equal or more superior and aggressive knowledge-power to dethrone. This is not a pessimistic view of Africa's future as potential knowledge producer. Rather it anticipates that in the future, dissipating intellectual energies on reactionary epistemologies will be a waste, especially when opportunities exist in the present to co-produce knowledge. Moreover, the task of centring academic mobility in Africa-China strategic relations also offers an opportunity to reverse the dominance of the Western episteme in conditioning what Africa knows about China and other Asian countries. It would serve similar purposes in respect of what Africa/Africans knows about itself/themselves in Asia. So, why wait?

In all of this, African states must be responsible and responsive by funding graduate students and programmes focused on the study of Africans in the world.[21] A concerted effort is needed to ensure that the funding of higher education is not outsourced as has been done for many decades. This step is critical in reducing the academic and epistemic dependency of the continent. Furthermore, there is a need to broaden the scope and content of academic freedom to accommodate academic mobility. The traditional view limited academic freedom to the freedom of intellectuals and educational institutions from state repression, university closures, thuggery, and ideological confinements (Mkandawire 1997). To advance the integration of academic mobility into academic freedom, there should be an acknowledgement that Africans in the world beyond the African continent are a part of the story of Africa. We must also agree that the translation of the stories into knowledge of Africa(ns) must involve the active participation of African researchers, especially those based in African universities.[22] Finally, ensuring that African scholarship should not be silenced, as Mkandawire (1997) worries, requires a continent-wide commitment to opening the world to African scholars and researchers at all levels through advocacy, collaboration and social and political engagements. 'Knowing the world', an

attitude which Africa must cultivate to meaningfully engage in the rapidly transforming global society, demands being out there in that same world. Academic mobility is central to achieving this.

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Notes

1. Only eight of the total number of respondents (n=42) were Africans. One respondent called for 'thoughtfulness around the visa challenges facing people from African countries…[,] that this is an impediment to the quality of research to Africa-China studies' (Lu and Huang, 2018:4).
2. This refers simply to (in)ability or (in)capability to move freely across national borders in pursuit of intellectual or scholarly engagements such as conferences, collaborative meetings and to conduct ethnographic fieldwork. In the case of African researchers, being able to move cross-continentally is emphasised. 'Academic (im)mobility' in this article should be differentiated from other uses of the term, e.g. Sivak and Yudkevich (2015) where it is used as 'academic in-breeding' (see Dutton 1980).
3. This reflects a pre-Covid-19 condition of the world. The Covid-19 pandemic will likely worsen the situation and further impose more immobilities on African migrants. With the adoption of vaccine certificates in the European Union and the possibility that vaccination in many African countries will take several years to reach the mass of the population, African migrants in general and scholars in particular will likely remain grounded in place for much longer than their counterparts in more economically advanced societies.
4. See, for example, Canadian Association of African Studies (2018) and Grounds (2019)
5. Britz and Ponelis (2012) interestingly reference a key international instrument that seeks to affirm the right to pursue intellectual activities without hinder-

ance – the Kampala Declaration in 1990. At the summit where the Kampala Declaration was agreed and in similar meetings, academic (im)mobility was framed as an impediment to academic freedom of movement (p. 471).

6. Prior to my research on Nigerians in Guangzhou, two (that I know of) PhD-level ethnographic research projects were conducted outside Nigeria, all within West Africa. The longstanding ECOWAS agreement guarantees the free movement of citizens between member states within the sub-region and visas are not required for the researchers to move within the sub-region.
7. I was awarded the Postgraduate School Scholarship Scheme from the Postgraduate School of the University of Ibadan. The award covers a substantial part of tuition fees and gives a monthly stipend of approximately $270 (July 2014 rate).
8. See http://lagos.china-consulate.org/eng/lszj/zgqz/t1090583.htm, accessed 15 May, 2015.
9. Approximately $25,000 at the 2015 exchange rate.
10. One was Swiss and the other a Nigerian professor. The Nigerian professor did not have a direct link to China but he recommended an American colleague with decades of research collaboration with a Chinese university.
11. For item number 6 (bank statement), I approached senior scholars and friends to raise the needed cash to 'beef up' my account. Personally, I converted US dollars from my account to Naira to further jack up the deposit, since, according to visa agents, the Chinese consular officers want to see the Naira not the US dollars.
12. In one case, after series of exchanges and documentation from August 8 to November 30, 2016, I received the following response: 'Hello XYZ, How are you recently? Thank you for your care. Sorry, I must tell you a bad news. Because of limits of China's government policy to Nigeria, staffs in the office cannot give you a visa. I hope your things is OK. Sorry [crying emoji]. Best regards, ABC (Personal email correspondence, November 30, 2016)
13. I arrived in Guangzhou to find that not considering this option had been wise. A number of Nigerians in the city told me that enrolling for Chinese language programmes is tough. Many Chinese universities in Guangzhou are realising that some Nigerians enrol in the programmes to obtain long-term visas that let them stay in the city while mainly doing business without much hassle from the security agencies.
14. An assistant was assigned to plough through all active MOU with Chinese schools. The status of a number of MOUs could not be determined by the OIP.
15. Approximately $5,000 based on the mid-year 2016 conversion rate.
16. Passport photo, international passport and personal bank statement.
17. I went through this routine a second time to finalise my fieldwork. This time, however, my agent said I had a registered company named 'XYZ International' and I was visiting China as the Director to make business contacts. So, I interviewed as an individual applicant.

18. Not his real name.
19. Based on memory recall after I left the airport.
20. This reality is manifested in the most alarming form with the outbreak of Covid-19 in China. See Africans in China Face Evictions, Discrimination – Report (https://allafrica.com/view/group/main/main/id/00072795.html); Will African Migration to China Ever Be the Same Again? (https://allafrica.com/view/group/main/main/id/00072993.html). 4 June 2021.
21. While African states have damaged African higher education through the infusion of destructive neo-liberal ideas and policies, their role and participation remains crucial in facilitating mobility-linked academic freedom in Africa.
22. This "going out" into the world should not be limited to the study of African diaspora alone. African researchers with an interest in learning about other societies should also be able to do so without the hindrances of borders, race, passports, nationality and other such issues. I thank the peer reviewer for raising this important point.

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What Should Globalisation Mean for African Humanities and Why?

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Abstract

This work sets out to engage the ideology of globalisation by interrogating the notion of humanities that has been applied to study the concept. To do this, it addresses the following question: if the idea of globalisation was interrogated from the idea of man (being human)[1] and studies of human nature informed by the values, principles and norms that define the idea of humankind from the African worldview, what would it amount to? What ideals would drive such a project and what difference would it make for the human community? To address these questions, the article will locate African humanities through what it calls the dominant humanities orientation in Africa, defined as the study of man (being human) available through the intellectual industry of modern Africa and inscribed through various subjects studied in the humanities in African institutions. Thereafter, it will proceed to locate what man (being human) would mean, assuming that effort is made to locate the meaning through the African endogenous worldview. The article will next proceed to articulate the gains of applying the African endogenous idea of man (being human) in articulating and directing globalisation. The method applied is an inductive analysis of views and positions in the humanities, African thought and globalisation.

Résumé

Ce travail se propose d'aborder l'idéologie de la mondialisation en interrogeant la notion de sciences humaines qui a été appliquée pour étudier le concept. Pour ce faire, il pose la question suivante : si l'idée de mondialisation était posée à partir de l'idée de l'homme (en tant qu'être humain) et d'études de la nature humaine informées par les valeurs, principes et normes qui définissent l'idée d'humanité de la vision africaine du monde, à quoi correspondrait la réponse ? Quels idéaux pourraient sous-tendre un tel projet et quelle différence aurait-il pour la communauté humaine ? Pour répondre à ces questions, l'article situera les humanités africaines à travers ce qu'il appelle l'orientation dominante des humanités en Afrique, définies comme l'étude de l'homme (être humain) dispo-

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nible à travers l'industrie intellectuelle de l'Afrique moderne, et inscrites à travers divers sujets étudiés en Sciences humaines dans les institutions africaines. Ensuite, il procédera à la localisation de ce que signifierait l'homme (être humain), supposant que des efforts sont faits pour localiser le sens à travers la vision endogène africaine du monde. L'article procédera ensuite à l'articulation des avantages de l'application de l'idée endogène africaine de l'homme (être humain) dans l'articulation et la direction de la mondialisation. La méthode appliquée est l'analyse inductive des points de vue et des positions dans les sciences humaines, de la pensée africaine et de la mondialisation.

Introduction

Much of the literature that discuss globalisation in relation to the humanities discuss the role of the humanities in shaping the discourse on globalisation. The literature dwells on how the humanities can widen thoughts on such issues as global migration, race, citizenship, labour, etc. and addresses such impediments as stereotypes and prejudices that affect global interactions. Writers discuss issues such as inter-culturalism, trans-culturalism and whether globalisation should lead to trans-humanism or post-humanism (defined as a world where the notion of humankind is essentially directed by science and technology). In brief, they discuss how the humanities can lead to 'responsible decisions' (Annotte Schevan 2011) in relation to globalisation. Although these approaches are worthy, they harbour several deficiencies. First, they assume that the current idea of humanities is sufficient to direct the idea of globalisation. They apply the current theories available in the humanities to shape thoughts on globalisation. Secondly, they ignore the fact that the current global world order is the product of concepts and notions in the humanities. Thirdly, they underplay the fact that the current tradition of humanities' scholarship is a product of the evolution of a given thought-scheme and is constructed to respond to a given notion of being human. If this is the case, this notion of humanities is limited and the current trend of globalisation that arises from it could also suffer this limitation. This article sets out to interrogate this state of affairs by questioning the humanities now in vogue in the study of globalisation and, by extension, the notion of man (being human) that directs globalisation. The focus of the article is to provide a fresh option for engaging with globalisation through the African thought scheme.

The article poses the question: assuming that the idea of globalisation could be advanced from the idea of man (being human) and the study of man (being human) as might be seen through the values, principles

and norms of another worldview (for instance the African worldview), what would it amount to? What ideals would drive such a project and what difference would it make for the human community? The effort to interrogate globalisation in this way is considered cogent because it is anchored in the assumption that whereas the 'globe' from where the idea of globalisation achieves its meaning is a concept that connects the entire human community, the notion of man (being human) that should direct this concept has different meanings in different civilisations and cultures. The idea of globalisation cannot be free from the forces and influences of these civilisations and cultures. It is necessary to interrogate the notion of humankind that is at work and most influential in the idea of globalisation now and the extent to which it can address human needs across cultures.

In relation to Africa, it is necessary to locate the extent to which the idea of humankind, as rooted in the worldview and thought of African people, is involved in the notion of globalisation in vogue now. By locating the extent to which this is the case, the paper will then proceed to articulate whether there is a need to rethink globalisation through the African worldview, through the idea of humanity available in the African worldview. It will then interrogate what it would mean if the idea of humanity as rooted in the African worldview was used to define and direct the project of globalisation, as well as suggest the expected outcome of this effort.

To achieve these aims, the article questions the idea of man (being human) in African humanities through what it calls the dominant orientation of humanities in Africa. By this is meant the idea of humankind available in the intellectual industry of modern Africa and threaded through various subjects studied in the humanities in African institutions. This by extension implies the various forms of socio-cultural encounter through which the idea of humanity has been registered in the social and political spheres and structures of modern Africa. Thereafter, the article will discuss this tradition of humanities in relation to the idea of globalisation and articulate the imperial character of this form of humanities – how it amounts to 'imperial humanities'.It will then proceed to locate the limitations of these humanities and how they function as the imperial humanities by articulating this idea of (being human) in African thought and suggesting what it would mean if the idea of man (being human) in African thought is applied to define and direct globalisation and how this could (re)direct the project of globalisation to a worthier outcome. The method applied is textual analysis and critical deduction.

Questioning the Idea of Man (being human) in African Humanities

The concepts and theories applied to direct the humanities in Africa are mainly those invented through another linguistic and conceptual framework, disregarding the alienating power and force of these in influencing and shaping thoughts and ideas. For instance, concepts such as society, slavery, war, power, leadership, culture, etc., which are the driving forces of the humanities, are primarily driven by the Western notion of the concepts and not by their endogenous meaning and import in the large bulk of literature in the humanities that are taught in Africa. If the effort is made to decolonise concepts and ideas (Wiredu 1995) or rediscover concepts and ideas through 'conceptual Africanisation' (Ugwuanyi 2016), it will be discovered that some concepts have been forcefully inserted into humanities' scholarship in Africa and applied to drive and direct the humanities, even though they may be in conflict with or negate the meaning of these concepts if they are explored through the African worldview.

In the same vein, the study of man (being human) in Africa is primarily evaluated through an alien (foreign) notion of humankind and human experience and not through the notion of humankind or the human experience as they have evolved through the African experience or through the African thought-scheme. As a result of this, the cultures and experiences of people in the African world have not served to direct the bulk of critical reflections in the humanities, notwithstanding the fact that humankind has different civilisations 'differentiated from each other by history, language, custom, tradition, and most important, religion' (Huntington 1993:25). Also, these 'different civilisations have different views on the relations between God and man, the individual and the group, the citizens and the state, parents and children, husband and wife, as well as differing ways on the relative importance of rights and responsibilities, liberty and authority, equality and hierarchy' (Huntington 1993:25) which should direct the humanities. The implication of this is that the humanities apply concepts that may be different from those offered by a particular civilisation when the subject is studied to produce and circulate knowledge, thereby marginalising one civilisation in favour of the other and leading to what can be called alienating humanities, on the one hand, and marginal and/or alienated humanities, on the other.

Several reasons can be adduced to explain this state of affairs. The first is the long-running notion of a human being as a rational animal and 'the science and arts of reason' (Ugwuanyi 2010) that have been applied in favour of this notion. Although the view that human beings are rational animals is attractive to all cultures, rationality is a complex concept because reason

can be both constructive and destructive. 'Reason is like fire, an immensely useful tool that can very easily destroy if not used correctly' (Goldberg 2018:6). The definition of human beings as rational animals also has wider demands on the ethics of reason. These demands interrogate the nature of reason and the modes and forms of rationality. Without addressing these, rationality can serve negative ends that affect the ethics of reason. A history of the evolution of reason in different cultures of the world suggests that reason has often evolved in different contexts and is influenced by different values. Notwithstanding the universal definition of a human being as a rational animal, who applies this definition and to whom it is applied, may determine how it is validated. It is therefore proper to suggest that because of the ethnocentric assumptions that have influenced the definition of a human being as an animal, its application in relation to Africa since the beginning of Western modernity is questionable and the extent to which the assumption that a human being is a rational animal can be held to include Africans and Amerindians is also debatable (Ramose 1999:1).

To present a compelling narrative in this regard, it should be noted that the first formal universities in Europe came into existence as early as the eleventh century and that these universities, which dealt with classics and the works of the earliest thinkers of the Western world, had the privilege of upholding the definition of man as a rational animal. Yet, nearly five hundred years after this early breath of learning, an industrial slave trade, with its unimaginable horrors, was embarked upon by merchants of the Western world, whose education was founded on this position but who believed that only those who participated in the Western canon of reason should be held to be rational and human. Africans were denied the status of humanity and rationality and Africa became a major centre for this trade. This was to go on for about four hundred years, carried out by educated people of the Western world and products of Western universities and cultures of learning, where man was defined as a rational animal. This severe damage to the ethics of reason and humanity is a severe indictment of the idea of reason that recognises a human being as a rational animal.

At the academies, where man was held to be a rational animal, different positions were held by even the best of European minds, illustrating that the idea of man (being human) was categorised and applied to human beings differently. The expression 'man is a rational animal' as applied to the African was different, and any study of people in Africa was not meant to defend the view that 'man' in its universal meaning and import was a rational animal. For instance, David Hume, a prominent Scottish philosopher, held 'the Negroes to be naturally inferior to the whites' and that nature had 'made an original distinction betwixt these breeds of men'

(Biakolo in P.H. Coetzee, ed., 1998:2). Similarly, the French philosopher Montesquieu said: 'It is hardly to be believed that God who is a wise being should place a soul, especially a good soul, in such a Black and ugly body' (Ogude 1983:109). The racist philosopher Fredrick Hegel was even more blunt. Of the African, he said: 'There is nothing harmonious with humanity to be found in this type of character' (Ochieng'-Odhiambo 1997:5). These are positions that defined man as a rational animal but denied rationality to human beings in Africa.

The summary of my claims here is that the current idea of humankind driving the humanities has not favoured humankind as a whole, and that the humanities as they are taught in Africa and as they have inherited this tradition amount to imperial humanities – the idea of humanities that takes or adopts a single notion of humankind from a single culture and imposes it on other cultures and civilisations. This characterisation of human science as imperialism is in line with Ake (1982), who described 'social science as imperialism'.

Imperial Humanities, Human Othering and Imperial Globalisation

In this part of the work, I explain the notion of imperial humanities further. I then proceed to discuss how this has produced a deficient notion of globalisation.

The term imperial humanities implies a form of humanities or humanistic studies that applies one culture to interpret humankind, disregarding other cultural nationalities or 'cultural rationalities' of the world. By cultural nationalities is meant aspects of the world that function through different cultural paradigms, and by cultural rationalities, I mean different ways reason could function legitimately and be found to be cogent and meaningful. When humanities function with an imperial character, they essentially function for conquest, domination, competition, and alienation. They lead to a reductionist ethics of knowledge, where knowledge can only interact with other forms of knowledge through contrast and conquest and not through collaboration and consensus.

There are at least two ways by which the study of man (being human) through the humanities or human science can lead to what amounts to imperial humanities. Apart from the conceptual and definitional error that can lead to an erroneous tradition of humanities as outlined above, there are at least two other paradigms of humanities that can be considered imperial. The first is when an aspect of reasoning dominates other aspects of reasoning. The second is when the humanities emphasise one aspect of human nature at the expense of others.

To begin with the first paradigm, it should be noted that human reasoning can be technical, collaborative, emotional, empathetic, creative, conceptual, analytical, generative, constructive, critical, etc. These aspects of reason deserve equal emphasis in the project of reason. Any attempt to privilege one form of reasoning above others in a manner that compels the others to lose their potential would lead to an improper conception of human nature and a deficient application of reason on human nature. For instance, when we look at the human mode of being in terms of how a given analytic framework enables us to understand human nature without making provisions for other aspects of human nature that influence this framework, we might end up with an idea of human nature that is imperial – a view of human nature undermines other views.

In the second paradigm, human nature has diverse needs and demands – economic, moral, political, social, etc. – that demand equal cooperative attention. These demands emanate from different aspects of human nature. Any effort or attempt to study and address one aspect of human nature without regard for others will equally be counterproductive. It would amount to trying to subdue one aspect of human nature in favour of others and lead to what can be called psychic misbalancing. These ways of misapplication of reason are what can lead to imperial humanities. An illustration of this is that when emphasis is placed on the spiritual aspect of human nature at the expense of the material or vice versa, gains in understanding one domain of human nature may affect the need for similar gains in the other.

The current imperial character of the humanities also manifests in the nature of the discourse on globalisation. Globalisation emphasises the linkages among world communities to reflect the ethics of the globe from where the world finds its origin, but instead, it has become the redesigning of the world for the benefit of certain parts of the world at the expense of others. Whereas globalisation presumes to intensify the linkages of the world in such a manner that differences are narrowed in favour of mutual forms of social and cultural relations, in fact globalisation has largely come to mean the upliftment of the needs and values of certain parts of the world to the detriment of others, such that some parts of the world remain fringe players in the process. Consequently, there is an uneven interaction among the world community in areas of politics, economy and social relations, and the equality of gains of this interaction is questionable. While people from one part of the world migrate to the other as cleaners, mortuary attendants, drivers and candidates for other menial jobs, the other portion migrates to the other part of the world as experts. While arms are manufactured in one part of the world, they are

heavily applied in another for social destruction. While food is in excess in a certain parts of the world, hunger is in excess in other parts of the world. This nature of globalisation gives it an imperial character.

The imperial character of globalisation makes the ideology of globalisation a narrative of humanity seeking to reach new heights not as a group but as some citizens of the world forcefully leading others, who are compelled to follow them to an assumed goal to which they should all aspire. This has made globalisation an alienating and alienated phenomenon, an issue of class where some people are global leaders and are necessarily more global than others while others are global followers with unequal links and (inter)dependence. In the current culture of globalisation, market forces define and direct the future of mankind such that the financially powerful are the globally powerful and there is an unholy marriage between people, power and market. You are human to the extent that you are worth a huge price. Tastes, desires, wants, needs, preferences, cultures, attitudes, beliefs, etc. are reconstructed to serve the interest of a narrow population of economically powerful members of humanity whose power and influence are considerably technology-driven. In this culture of globalisation, what an animal eats in one part of the world may be more nutritious than what a family eats in another part of the world, yet the industrial globe on which the former operates needs the latter to function. The minimum on which the larger percentage of the human race functions is below what can be called the human minimum or 'capability minimum' in the words of Amartya Sen (1993). Thus, it might be just and proper to call the current culture of globalisation an inhuman globalisation, or globalisation against the globe.

To locate the imperial and deficient character of globalisation at the moment as well as the discourse that promotes it, I raise three questions to determine the strength and quality of globalisation:

(i) What is the goal of the current trend of globalisation?

(ii) In whose favour is a person considered to be global?

(iii) Does the culture of globalisation harbour any potential for a just world order?

In response to (i), I submit that the end to which globalisation functions is clear of ethical consideration outside the of long-running order and ethics of dominance. The goals and desirable outcomes of globalisation are nowhere clear as an articulated pan-world ideology whose measurable end can be determined. Indeed, from what can be glimpsed from the literature on the subject, including David Held, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt

and Jonathan Peratton (1999), Justin Rosenberg (2000), and Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson (1999), it is safe to suggest that globalisation has not been assigned specific ends or goals.

> As a concept that suggests a shift in the spatial form and extent of human organization and interaction to a transcontinental or inter regional level, globalization is neither a singular nor a linear process neither is it final and point of social change rather is best thought of as a multidimensional phenomenon applicable to a variety of forms of social action economic, cultural or sites of social activity like the environment. (Goldblatt et al. 1999: 271)

Whereas the project places emphasis on the intensification of linkage, the end which this linkage should serve is yet to be properly spelt out. For instance, if the aim of globalisation is to make the world better and healthier, it is not clear that the world has become significantly healthier as a result of the ideology. Indeed, the question can be raised: do we have a more peaceful world at the moment as a result of globalisation, and what percentage of the world is living in peace? In the era of globalisation, especially in its modern version, there are grounds to hold that the world has moved further from attaining peace, especially if we consider the view that the world has recorded a higher number of wars than before, even among human communities like those in Africa who hitherto could be said to have had a strong culture of peace (Ugwuanyi 2020).

From these positions, it can be seen that globalisation, as it is conceived at the moment, does not have the potential for a desirable world order. In essence, globalisation amounts to internationalisation or multi-nationalisation of human values and aspirations: universal networking of the human community through politics, economy and technology to what can be called a supra-territorial village of humanity. However, these cannot amount to any specific human good until the ends and goals of such human interactions are defined and articulated.

This position leads us to the second question: In whose favour is one considered to be global – what is the idea of the global person? It would seem from the foregoing that the person who is global is one who is in a position to participate in the networking of the human community through science and technology. Thus, to be global means to be a techno-citizen, that is, one who is involved in the global village and can connect and reconnect with the human community. However, this connection involves many demands, some of which could undermine one's taste, identity, culture and capacity. For instance, to be global demands that one has a sizeable amount of income to access information daily and to prioritise this over other basic needs, such as food or shelter, or to place all these at the same level of need.

The economic and socio-cultural demands of being global mean that not everybody has the capacity to be global or is well-placed to be global and that some populations of the world need to be economically upgraded and empowered to be global citizens.

The third question that I have outlined to highlight the weaknesses of globalisation at the moment is as follows: Does the culture of globalisation harbour any potential for a just world? If justice means fairness or allowing the best of something to be or, in the classical Socratic sense, means giving persons their dues in the right manner, globalisation does not have the potential to lead to a just world order since it does not respond to any of these notions of justice. Globalisation, as it functions at the moment, suggests an ethics of power and domination that makes the poor and weak vulnerable to the rich and strong. Whether as financial globalisation, cultural globalisation, globalisation of sports or religion, there is an unholy alliance between power, wealth and dominance through the ideology of globalisation, which cannot lead to a just world order. Globalisation promotes undue marginalisation of members of the human community through wealth and power. A clear example of this is the fact that McDonald's stores are found in some African cities, reconstructing people's consumption patterns and tastes. But few or nothing of what comes from African villages counter-penetrate the originating communities of McDonald's stores. Another illustration is when valuable cultural products of African communities, such as music, suffer extinction by other musical cultures, thereby creating cultures of consumption that do not promote the cultural capital of Africans.

In response to the weakness of globalisation as conceived now, several alternatives have been offered. These include glocisation and glo-fricanisation (Ugwuanyi, 2011). Glocisation, a concept which has a considerable Asian origin, recommends localisation of globalisation, that is, allowing human communities to adopt and adapt globalisation in the best manner that suits them, while glo-fricanisation suggests applying the instruments of globalisation to an African advantage by ensuring that Africa achieves a coalition that addresses its needs through the instruments of globalisation. These options are attractive and need to be considered. However, a more fundamental option can be explored in an effort to redesign globalisation. This can be achieved by exploring the idea of being human that foregrounds the theory of globalisation and by seeking to redesign globalisation through interrogating the concept and modifying it through this effort. I suggest that this can lead to a worthier notion of globalisation and a fresh notion of humanities scholarship on globalisation. I seek to explore this in the next section of this work.

Relocating Humanities through the African Idea of Humankind and Applying the same to Address Globalisation

In this part of the work, I interrogate the notion of humankind that foregrounds thought in African tradition. I then apply this to propose a fresh tradition of humanities in relation to globalisation.

There are reasons to hold that there is an idea of man (being human) harboured in African thought that has the potential to reconfigure the humanities in general and that when this is applied to the theory or ideology of globalisation, it will assume fresh and different meanings with a richer and worthier outcome. To articulate this, I note that the Africa implied in this claim is sub-Saharan Africa or what can also be called Bantu Africa – the portion of Africa that harbours people who live between the Sahara Desert and the Cape. I argue that, in the thought pattern of people in this area, the concept of man (being human) is both an ontological affirmation and a categorical moral imperative and has implicit norms that can drive globalisation differently. In this scheme of thought, being human is a moral demand that necessarily follows from the fact that one is a human entity and in a human community. The claim I make is that there is measured value attached to the meaning of man (being human), which is not exhausted by rationality but could be located in how rationality serves to reinforce the ethics and beauty of being human among a significant number of ethnocultural groups in Africa and that this is inscribed in the idea of humanity available in the thought-scheme of the people. I further submit that this has strong potential to redefine and redirect the idea of globalisation. One is not held to be human because of the property of rationality alone but because of the application of reason in relation to others. One is human by, for and through others. This intricate web of meaning implicated in the idea of being human has the potential to configure and humanise globalisation. The idea of man (being human) implied here emphasises morality as a categorical imperative in such a manner that it has the capacity to lead to an informed conscience. One is considered human on the basis of the quality of the response to the notion of being human. For this reason, this notion of being human has what it takes to lead to a worthier outcome by re-interpreting globalisation and infusing it with some values that can lead to a just world order.

To illustrate this claim, I shall make some abstractions from some ethnocultural nationalities of sub-Saharan Africa. I shall refer to the meaning and import of man (being human) among the Igbo ethnocultural group of Nigeria and among the Akan ethnocultural group of Ghana and support

this with concepts available in the thoughts of other ethnocultural groups, such as the Yoruba and Wolof of west Africa and the Shona and Zulu of southern Africa.

In Igbo thought, the concept of man (being human) translates to *madu. Madu* can be traced to the formation of two elements – the prefix *ma* and the suffix *du. Ma* or *mma* translates to 'beauty' while *du* is the verb 'to be'. So *madu* can be interpreted to mean 'there is beauty' (Edeh 1985:100). A variant of this interpretation suggests that *madu* translates to *mma ndu*, which can be interpreted to mean 'the beauty of life' (Williamson, ed., 1972:285). *Madu* is an ontological affirmation with categorical moral implications. Consequently, to be seen as *madu* implies that there is a measured meaning attached to the entity that is held to be human, which existed prior to the exercise of reason. This measured meaning demands exercising the beingness of the entity in favour of the good, the true and beautiful. Hence *madu* is expected to be an entity that should embody these values. It is for this reason that the Igbo would describe someone with strong humane and moral convictions as *Obu mmadu* – this is a human being. Because of the moral ontology that foregrounds the idea of *madu*, any deviation from this ethic could lead to such a question as *ibu madu ka ibu anioha*? – are you a human being or an animal?

This categorical moral imperative that foregrounds the idea of *madu* can be glimpsed in other ethnocultural thought patterns of African people. It is implicated in such concepts as *Taranga* (Wolof), *Pulaku* (Fulani), *Omoluwabi* (Yoruba), *Ubuntu* (Zulu), *Uhnu* (Shona), etc. These concepts affirm a notion of humankind that incorporates humanness and suggests that only the humane deserves to be held as human.

Among the Akan ethno-cultural group of Ghana, this ethic is an eloquent belief and is illustrated in a number of axioms and proverbs. Among the Akan, 'the values of the African people are not measured in terms of economic production' (Gyekye 2003:26). Rather, as the Akan maxims put it, 'it is the human being that is needed' and 'the human being is more beautiful than gold' (Gyekye 2003:25). Another maxim states:

> *It is the human being that counts; I call upon gold; it answers not,*
> *I call upon cloth; it answers not; it is the human being that counts* (Gyekye 2003:25).

These ideas of being human suggest a notion of human science that could motivate a fresh idea of globalisation. What are the implications of this idea of man (being human), assuming that human sciences were seeking to rethink globalisation through them? If this notion is applied to theorise and to direct globalisation, it would mean that the idea of globalisation

would assume the form of an ideology that ethically leads mankind to a humane world order. Globalisation under this paradigm would assume the feature of a town hall meeting of the human race, where they are bound and sheltered by nature, under one globe, a form of modern village square *where all human beings interact for the human ends of the entire human community.* Globalisation would amount to the idea that whatever is held to be a human achievement should promote the goodness of all mankind. Here, cultural products of globalisation could be (a) approved based on who needs them and (b) made available by who has them, with less of an eye for gain and interest. Globalisation would then not amount to a simple domination by science and technology but a loyalty to other factors and forces that define and direct the human community positively. *Globalisation through this formula would amount to a global humanisation of the world* with clearly defined goals and standards, such as how the beauty of being human comes out best among the human community. It would be more of a moral globalisation than political globalisation – globalisation that is driven by values that tend to locate mankind with the flowering of a collective ethics of the beauty of the human race and not one that is driven by power, dominance and marginalisation.

Globalisation driven by African humanities would lead to a form of globalisation that privileges the core values that define and direct the thoughts and cultures of African people. It will be one in which knowledge is driven more by consequence and not by cause only; driven and directed by *consensus and cooperation and not competition and conquest*, contrary to the current trend of globalisation, which amounts to the 'globalisation of European norms' (Hotep 2011) that advertises inequality and dominance. Globalisation, if and when driven by the African notion of humankind, would lead to 'man fare' or human welfare, which would reject marginality and exclusionism in favour of inclusion and egalitarianism and an incorporated humanity. When this obtains, the study of globalisation will not just be about any form of human interaction but about the quality of human interaction. The humanities would then be guided by a form of moral epistemology that places human essence as a core value and evaluates its gain by its ability to generate alternative knowledge that leads to this.

Conclusion

It is not surprising that despite a long history of investigating the human condition through a wide range of disciplines – philosophy, sociology, psychology, literature, history, cultural studies, etc. – a deficient understanding of human nature persists, leading to the persistent problems of humankind

that threaten the existence of the human species: racism, wars, genocide, xenophobia, discrimination, etc. This deficient notion of the humankind, or what I shall prefer to call a 'disunderstanding' of humankind, is one that produces knowledge that obstructs members of the human community from engaging with each other profitably. This work has attempted to address the theoretical foundations of this problem in relation to globalisation with the view that there is the need for a fresh paradigm in the notion of man (being human) that should drive the humanities. The work has applied this effort in relation to articulating how globalisation can be redesigned through a fresh notion of humankind that could be applied to drive the humanities. It is hoped that this effort will stimulate the search for an alternative approach to the humanities and stimulate more quality growth in the advancement of the humanities and the discourse on globalisation.

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Note

1. The author is aware that the term "man" is no longer an acceptable way to refer to humanity as whole because of its sexist and patriarchal implications, among other reasons. The term has been used in this article, where it became inevitable and in the sense of capturing the idea of being human, with no specific reference to a particular gender .

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Sociology of Knowledge in the Era of Academic Dependency in Africa: Issues and Prospects

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Abstract

In recent years, sociology of knowledge – especially in terms of knowledge production, circulation and consumption – has been dominated by the global North, leaving the Third World, Africa included, in a dependent position. Many scholars have described this continued academic dependence as part of overall colonial and postcolonial relations between the centre and periphery, where the former is seen as the thinker, actor and speaker for the latter. There have been various critical agitations for the indigenisation of (social science) knowledge in order to liberate the Third World from the academic dependence that has been in force since the period of African colonisation. This critical review article summarises major contributions and different dimensions of the academic dependency paradigm within the social sciences. The relevance of social science on the continent of Africa, the nature and origin of academic dependence, as well as key areas that require adequate attention for the emancipation of social science knowledge in Africa are discussed. A reinvention of African scholarship is vitally important for epistemic freedom from intellectual dependence. African countries should not give up their exclusive local practices and norms, and must document and preserve them for the present and future generations. They must generate ideas, terminologies and research technologies that are amenable to African social realities.

Résumé

Ces dernières années, la sociologie du savoir – notamment la production, la cir-culation et la consommation du savoir – a été dominée par le Nord global, lais-sant le Tiers-Monde, y compris l'Afrique, dans une position de dépendance. De nombreux chercheurs ont décrit cette dépendance académique continue

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comme faisant partie des relations coloniales et postcoloniales globales entre le centre et la périphérie, où le premier est considéré comme le penseur, l'acteur et le second, comme le locuteur le premier est considéré comme le penseur, l'acteur et le second, comme le locuteur. Diverses initiatives critiques pour l'indigénisation du savoir (en sciences sociales) tentent de libérer le Tiers-Monde de la dépendance acadé-mique qui en place depuis la colonisation africaine. Cet article critique passe en revue les contributions majeures et les différentes dimensions du paradigme de la dépendance académique dans les sciences sociales. Sont discutés la pertinence des sciences sociales sur le continent africain, la nature et l'origine de la dépen-dance académique, ainsi que les domaines importants qui nécessitent une atten-tion particulière dans l'émancipation des connaissances en sciences sociales en Afrique. Une réinvention de l'érudition africaine est d'une importance vitale pour la libération épistémique de la dépendance intellectuelle. Les pays africains ne devraient pas abandonner leurs pratiques et normes locales exclusives, et doi-vent les documenter et les préserver pour les générations présentes et futures. Ils doivent générer des idées, des terminologies et des technologies de recherche adaptées aux réalités sociales africaines.

Introduction

In recent times, the call for a sociology of knowledge (the study of the influences of prevailing ideas on societies as well as the connection between human thoughts and the cultural context where the thoughts emanate from) that can address both transnational social phenomena and international scholarly exchanges has been a key focus of scholars within the multi-paradigmatic discipline of social sciences. The call was a reaction to the unequal relationship between Western centres of social science and the global South, in addition to the wholesale application of Western methods of studying and learning social sciences to African settings without due adaptation.

There is yet to be a consensus on the possibility of the emergence of a truly internationalised social sciences disciplines. A number of scholars in the global South think that the field of sociology is full of colonial and universalistic premises; and subject to the legacy of Euro-American parochialism. The pervading assumption of mainstream sociology is that the types of knowledge produced in the West are superior and therefore worthy of emulation. The problems of imbalance in knowledge production, circulation and consumption between the West and the rest of the world are part of the academic dependency paradigm in the social sciences. This is often referred to as captive mind syndrome. This term indicates the application of Western methods of studying the social sciences to Third World settings 'without the appropriate adaptation of imported ideas and techniques' (Alatas 2006:30;

Gamage 2016; Onwuzuruigbo 2018). This kind of uncritical imitation of Western social science is described by Syed Alatas as a sign of continuing intellectual domination. It 'pervades all levels of scientific enterprise including problem-setting, analysis, abstraction, generalisation, conceptualisation, description, explanation, and interpretation' (Alatas 2006).

Academic dependence, as a theoretical tradition, has its roots in dependency theory and the cultural imperialism debate of the 1960s but it has continued to resonate in the works of scholars in the global South such as Akiwowo (1983), Alatas (2003), Cardoso and Faletto (1979), Dos Santos (2019), Frank (1967) and Omobowale and Akanle (2017), among others. These scholars have interrogated the question of the internationalisation of knowledge and the place of the global South's intellectual communities in the equation and have called for the incorporation of indigenous knowledge. Alatas, drawing from Dos Santos's (1970) definition of economic dependency, referred to academic dependency as:

> A condition in which the knowledge of certain scholarly communities is conditioned by the development and growth of knowledge of other scholarly communities to which the former is subjected. The relations of independence between two or more scientific communities, and between these and global transactions in knowledge, assumes the form of dependency when some scientific communities (those located in knowledge powers) can expand according to certain criteria of development and progress, while other scientific communities (such as those in the developing societies) can only do this as a reflection of that expansion, which generally has negative effects on their development according to the same criteria (Alatas 2003).

In Nigeria in the 1980s, Akiwowo mooted the indigenisation of sociological knowledge and social science knowledge in general through his postulation of a theory of sociation. However, this effort has yielded few dividends as inequality continues in the way sociology is practiced in the country in terms of teaching, research, publication, and knowledge construction in general.

The 'unpopularity' of Akiwowo's idea could also be attributed to the intellectual dependency of the periphery on the centre. Social scientists in general and sociologists in particular in the global South have a seemingly strong belief that knowledge from the world centre – where there is a concentration of technically trained personnel in the universities, corporations and state – is more 'authentic'. This reflects in practices such as academic travel, patronage and sponsorship, publication and the formation of research networks where the centre calls the tune. Consequently, the outcomes of such relationships in the form of ideas, knowledge, terminology and research technologies get exported from the metropole to the periphery.

In this article, I examine this theme in more detail in the context of sub-Saharan Africa, based on a review of relevant literature. This article examines academic dependency and its manifestations and gives an insight into how academic dependency can be overcome in the global South without discounting the benefits of academic globalisation. Sections explain social sciences in Africa; describe the nature and origin of academic dependency; identify contemporary issues requiring immediate attention and which are capable of showcasing the relevance of social sciences in Africa if well addressed; discuss the universalism and indigenisation debate; and finally, recognise key areas that need attention and correction for the emancipation of social sciences and the realisation of epistemic freedom in Africa.

Social Sciences in Africa

Generally, the focus of social science is on the behaviour of human beings in relation to their physical and social environment. Variations in social science across the globe are inevitable because human beings live in different environments and environment influences human behaviours. But the understanding of people in society can result in notable changes in a society. The study of society has enabled the adaptation of people in world societies.

The 'formal' study of human behaviour in Africa began when Europeans, led by the Portuguese, came to Africa in search of knowledge (and later raw materials for their growing industries). The coming of the Europeans in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was not without prior understanding of the indigenous people they encountered. Their understanding of African societies, in particular, was achieved through the works of ethnographers and explorers. However, social sciences as an interdisciplinary area of inquiry did not grow in African countries until few years before their independence. And many of the disciplines making up the social sciences were imposed, serving the interest of their European masters. After independence, many African countries, if not all, probably failed to align their curriculums with the uniqueness of African cultures.

The present hegemonic position of Western social science was not achieved in a day, but is the outcome of continuous subjugation of Africa and other disadvantaged continents of the world. This began right from the time Europeans set out to explore other continents of the world through 'voyages of exploration'. With this domination and marginalisation, the limited roles played by social sciences across the continent of Africa have been unevenly distributed. For example, South Africa is now the outstanding research leader in the region, and she has, by far, the highest research output of any country in Africa, well ahead of Nigeria in the West, Egypt in the North, and Kenya in the East (Andrews & Okpanachi 2012; Mouton 2010).

Nature and Origin of Academic Dependency

Academic dependency is the result of the uneven structure that undergirds the generation, production, circulation and consumption of knowledge within the global system. In this unequal relationship, the 'big powers' in terms of economic and social resources are also regarded as the core or 'big powers' in the social sciences (Arowosegbe 2008; Mkandawire 1997). The social sciences, which were created and championed by Western scholarship, are sources of academic and cultural dependency.

In a bid to understand the nature of knowledge production and consumption processes, one major paradigm has emerged in both academic and popular discourse in recent years. Scholars of the dependency paradigm have identified the United States of America (USA), Great Britain and France as the dominant knowledge countries (Omobowale et al. 2014). African social scientists have decried the existence of dependency, both in the structure and practice of social science disciplines in general and in sociology in particular. They have at different times joined voices with scholars from other countries in the global South to condemn the dominant Eurocentric mode of knowledge production and to call for the 'indigenisation' of social sciences instead. According to these scholars, any attempt to define academic dependency will result in discussion of a related idea – intellectual or academic imperialism (Alatas 2003; Fouad 2018). Academic imperialism was linked to economic and political imperialism, which refers to a policy and practice of domination through military conquest and subjugation of colonial subjects by more advanced nations since the sixteenth century. As long as the control and management of the colonised required the cultivation and application of various disciplines such as history, linguistics, geography, economics, sociology and anthropology in the colonies, academe too can be referred to as imperialistic (Alatas 2003).

An understanding of dependence is hinged on the origin of the social sciences. Generally, the expansion of social sciences in developing societies is influenced by and is a reflection of its development in the United States and to a lesser extent in Great Britain, France, Germany and Japan (Andrews & Okpanachi 2012; Gamage 2016). According to Onwuzuruigbo (2018), the bastion of orthodox social science, the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment, were entirely a European project and experience. This, to him, is a critical factor explaining why the existing corpus of social science knowledge has continued to arrogate power to Euro-American societies and cultures, which are expected to be emulated by all, both in structures and processes. Adopting the same historical analysis, Alatas (2003) indicates that academic imperialism began in the colonial period with the setting up and direct control of schools,

universities and publishing houses by the colonial powers in the colonies. He states that the political and economic structures of imperialism generated a parallel structure in the way of thinking of the subjugated people. Third World academic dependency means the dependency of ideas; technologies; theories and concepts; academic journals, aid; and investment in education on the Europeans and Americans. These dimensions of dependency have hindered the growth of scientific enterprise in the Third World.

Omobowale et al. (2014), writing on the 'dependence on western academic journals' as a dimension of academic dependence, stated that the structure of exchange between the West and the rest of the world ensures that the scholarly regulatory indices (e.g. impact factor and journal indexing) are dominated by the metropolis. The majority of the journals with impact factors and that are indexed in high-ranking databases are Western, while most of the journals in the peripheral countries are somewhat 'derecognised', making them 'sub-standard' and of 'low quality' in the Western-dominated global academic system. Having a number of publications in 'international journals' is one of the conditions put in place by universities' appointment and promotion committees in Africa. The desire for promotion makes some scholars choose to avoid the critical review processes of high-impact journals and to patronise instead fee-charging and low-quality 'offshore' journals (Omobowale et al. 2014).

Similar to this is the psychological dimension to dependency, where the dependent scholar is more a passive recipient of research agenda, methods and ideas from the social science powers. This is due to a sense of intellectual inferiority compared to the West. There is, therefore, a centre-periphery continuum in the social sciences that corresponds roughly to the North-South divide (Andrews & Okpanachi 2012; Fouad 2018; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2020). Because of the perceived superiority of works produced at the centre, knowledge from the centre commands more attention and acknowledgement than works produced elsewhere. The centre is therefore seen as a place from where influence radiates, from the nineteenth century through to the twenty-first century (Muller 2016; Schopf 2020). Today, emphasis has remained mostly on knowledge produced about countries of the global South rather than being considered as sites of knowledge production and theoretical debate.

According to Beigel (2011), academic dependency is nourished in the social studies of science, critical epistemology and ontological stance, as well as in comparative studies of higher education. It encompasses the unequal structure of knowledge production and circulation that has emerged historically along with the international scientific system. This structure comprises symbolic, material and institutional processes, mutually related, and

which have produced different paths of academia building. In the periphery, these combinations are the historical result of national and regional responses to internationalisation – particularly given the diverse roles played by the state in scientific development and higher education.

Contemporary Themes and Issues in African Sociology of Knowledge

Contemporary societies of the world have indeed achieved great things, especially in the field of science. Comparing twenty-first century achievements in the field of science with those in early modern society, one will find it easy to conclude that a 'better' society has emerged. For instance, the creation of a global world with the help of the Internet and other innovative technologies; the establishment of formidable academic discipline; and the emergence of international organisations, among others, are some of the achievements recorded.

However, further comparison of (social) problems of the present dispensation with earlier centuries will reveal the rise of new problems which are arguably beyond the control of 'science'. In other words, the coming of the 'new' science is not without corresponding problems that are social in nature. Good examples of these are internet fraud; the faster spread of (incurable) diseases; human trafficking and migration problems, all emanating from modern transportation; dependency on a world scale allowing the centre to feed on the periphery, making the latter dependent on trade with the former; coups d'état as an outcome of modern political structures; illiteracy and poverty being the outcome of Westernisation (or what is called modernisation); among many other social problems. Given these problems and their particular manifestations on the continent of Africa, the relevance of social sciences in Africa (an African sociology of knowledge) cannot be overemphasised. African social problems require African social science. It should be remembered that modern European social sciences emerged from the responses to many socio-political and socio-economic problems prevailing at the time, such as the Industrial revolutions. It is therefore vitally important to recognise that a formidable and relevant African sociology of knowledge is required for academic and social emancipation.

Universalism and Indigenisation Debates

Universalism and indigenisation debates arose in response to one of the most important epistemological questions in the social sciences and especially sociology, which is whether Western social or sociological theories and concepts are truly universal. The founding fathers of sociology prided

themselves in a discipline that would pursue universal theories and methods just as in the natural sciences. From this once dominant but now beleaguered standard, sociology has at least developed, if not 'matured', more in some societies than in others. This makes for different flavours of knowledge in diverse societies. According to Smelser (1998), this development may result in Western European Sociology, North American Sociology, Third World Sociology, Socialist Sociology, or a sociology associated with a specific country or nation such as France, China, Yoruba, or Zulu. Smelser considered the indigenisation of sociology unhelpful as it might engender a 'sociology of nothing', losing its initial focus. But these different levels of the development of sociology in different societies have generated difficulties in universalising scientific knowledge, leading to the indigenisation thesis.

The general consensus among the indigenisation school is that Western social science knowledge is laden with Western interests and values, limiting its universal applicability. Oommen (1992) stated that the internationalisation or universalisation of social science or sociology is more or less like the ongoing process of moderniation, and one rooted in the discipline's colonial origin. Far from accepting a single dominant methodological perspective, Oommen argues that indigenous knowledge has been, and continues to be, an important impetus for creating intellectual freedom in the social sciences.

While we cannot jettison the importance of colonialism in the establishment of sociology in Third World countries and its continued influence on the practice of the discipline, a call for the indigenisation of sociology must recognise and address the huge global inequalities in the production and consumption of sociological knowledge (Oyekola & Oyeyipo 2020). Writing on the study of sociology in Nigeria, Onwuzuruigbo (2018) stated that its history is in part the history of colonialism and the globalisation of Eurocentric social science as well as the history of decolonisation politics and the establishment of university education in Nigeria. This is true because most early departments of sociology were manned by expatriates or Western-trained Africans, who relied largely on Eurocentric curriculums. Hence, he argued for the indigenisation of sociological knowledge.

Need for Indigenisation of Social Science in Africa

A call for epistemic freedom or the indigenisation of social science in Africa continues to grow as social problems become increasingly multifaceted. Social science remains the hope for the emancipation of Africa. Many problems evident on the soil of Africa are peculiar to the continent and social in nature and require social remedies; there are levels of social relevance to be applied in solving African problems (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018a; Onwuzuruigbo 2018).

In other words, social sciences remain a viable tool for social reconstruction and development. There is a need for African social scientists to approach the discipline with the view to making it an instrument of social emancipation and development instead of extending its oppressive and colonial expansionist terrain. The following areas need consideration for the liberation of African social sciences from its oppressive and suppressive state.

Teaching: New Curriculums

Until African educational curriculums are designed primarily to understand and to meet the needs of African people, African emancipation is questionable. Educationally, much was accomplished by the Euro-Americans to change Africans' ways of thinking and to undermine Africans' dignity and pride. For instance, African students were taught that Africa had no past and that it was rescued from its dark state through the arrival of the European colonisers. Fuglestead (1992) quotes Hugh Trevor-Roper as saying, in the early 1960s, that Africa had no history until the arrival of the white people. African history was only the history of white people on the continent. Africans grew up to glorify the West and to look down upon African culture and consequently became inculcated with a permanent inferiority complex (Andrews & Okpanachi 2012; MacKenzie 2011). This notion needs to change by evaluating, upgrading, revamping and reinventing long-standing educational curriculums that not only praise the North but also downgrade Africa. This requires loyal intellectuals to design curriculums that suit the unique needs of Africans.

It can be said that the Third World nations of the past are the lucrative business empires of the First World. The story is true even today. Colonisation in its new avatar is persistent and it is never-ending. The developed world with its thirst for economic booty is all set to invade the developing and less-developed in newer forms by expanding its corporate academic schools. To avoid this, the education system in place for each Third World country should take into consideration the culture of its people. Culture should be seen as a resource because it is the base from which people form identities. If our students are still appreciating what is from the West above what constitutes their own, we will continue to be seen as lacking direction.

Serious steps toward improving the quality of education are vital. This can only be achieved if the didactic and one-sided teaching which is common at all levels in the Third World is discontinued (Andrews & Okpanachi 2012; Hountondji 1997; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018b). First, teachers need to be better trained, and monitored so that they do what they have been trained to do. Second, the provision of more and better learning materials in local

languages is required. Third, there is a need for the provision of libraries with supplementary learning material so that school pupils and college students can read around a subject, and learn to think for themselves. Libraries with a range of material that will encourage reading for pleasure and self-learning are essential elements in innovation. The starting point is getting all these materials written and published. Several interactive and innovative teaching methods have come into force. Yet the developing world is obsessed with monotonous, rigorous mugging-up methods that purely and painfully try to test the knowledge and memory levels, forgetting the reasoning, analytic, problem solving and interactive skills. This results in lack of leadership qualities, creativity, imagination and common sense among students. They are learning purely for the marks, grades and getting ready for the job market – but have meagre socialising skills. To get rid of this traditional system, we need to have a proper blend of theoretical and industrial course curriculums. There is a need to introduce both practical and theoretical aspects in assessing students.

Professional Mentorship

Some African scholars have made their mark both at the continental and inter-continental levels. Some notable ones are emerging with the hope of becoming internationally relevant. However, their relevance will live forever if they are able to transform their professional aspirations to becoming mentors to younger African scholars. African scholars are fond of being trained on the soil of Africa and delivering their services off the shores of the continent, not to serve their people but to serve the interests of their foreign employers. This 'brain drain' means Africa has lost many resources (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018b; Oyekola 2018). Instead, these highly known and upcoming scholars should think beyond the present by sacrificing what they can now for the sake of what later generations will become.

Research Relevance

It is important to differentiate between 'practical' and 'theoretical' social sciences. By practical, we mean social science that is capable of influencing policies, able to direct policies towards the right course and suitable in meeting the needs of people. On the other hand, theoretical social sciences are achieved through the publication of scholarly works, sometimes without minding whether they are relevant to the needs of the people or not. What is needed now is practical social science – the one that will enable scholars to come to terms with the challenges facing them and enable policy-makers to recognise the kinds of support needed and to redesign research co-

operation programmes where necessary. This will require the governments of African countries to collaborate with relevant bodies such as university authorities to make funds available for research that centres on discovering and understanding our own society and people from our own perspective and with our own interpretation of reality. In Nigeria, it has been observed that there have been no known federal government efforts since independence to commission indigenous scholars in the humanities to carry out an in-depth study of the culture and peoples of Nigeria in all its ramifications with the aim of using such information as a benchmark for nation-building (Sule 2008). This experience is not much different from other countries' experiences. There is a need for proactive and protracted efforts to tackle this. One way to address this is to approach it at the structural level where the solution lies in the awareness, will, and resolve of politicians, bureaucrats, and administrators. The structures of academic dependency cannot be dismantled. To decolonise knowledge and academia as a whole, south-south cooperation is a promising way of establishing a non-dependent academia. Rather than depending on the West, countries in the global South should intensify collaborative efforts in areas of research and development, idea building, publication outlets and increased investment in education.

Scholarly Publications

The area of scholarly publication also needs to be developed. Compared to the world standard, Africa's contribution to the world's publications is insignificant (Andrews & Okpanachi 2012; Mouton 2010). Mouton has documented Africa's share of world science as measured in papers published in ISI-indexes. The paper revealed that Africa's share has been declining steadily over the past decades. In his analysis, Tijssen (2007), shows how sub-Saharan Africa fell behind in its share of world science production from 1 per cent in 1987 to 0.7 per cent in 1996. And the little that is produced is not evenly distributed across the continent, with South Africa taking the lead (Mouton 2010). One of the possible reasons is that in Africa, until academics have been able to publish articles in the so-called Euro-American (or international) journals, they are less likely to be considered for promotion or higher positions. This has caused African journals, produced by the academics' own institutions, to be looked down upon. While there is not total disagreement with this method of promotion, it encourages foreign intellectual domination. A new orientation is required especially by encouraging African publishing houses. It is important to note that there are several worthwhile publishers that can be patronised on the continent thereby discouraging academic dependence and promoting African-centred scholarship (Andrews & Okpanachi 2012).

Summary and Conclusion

An attempt has been made to explain the relevance of social science on the continent of Africa, the nature and origin of academic dependence, contemporary themes and issues in African sociology of knowledge, the universalism and indigenisation debates, and the need for the indigenisation of social science in Africa especially in the areas of academic curriculums, professional mentorship, research relevance and scholarly publications.

This article argues that a rethink to reinvent African scholarship is important for epistemic freedom from academic dependence. This requires reformulating guidelines on the ontological and epistemological foundations of social science in Africa, training and encouraging mentors that will champion African scholarship on the continent and developing good management of research universities and institutions that will be most relevant to Africa and for Africans without mimicking the already established knowledge about the West. It also requires the introduction of a programme to indigenise the sociology of knowledge in Africa and untie it from the ideological imprisonment of Western theories. Lastly, it is necessary to learn African epistemological orientations in order to unlearn the dominating ideas of the West so as to relearn the sociology of knowledge that will be most relevant to and for Africans. This will allow the southern nations to explore and popularise their indigenous knowledge.

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Situating African Indigenous Ideas within Conventional Learning as an Impetus for Knowledge Construction in Africa

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Abstract

Literature regarding knowledge production reveals that Africa can do better than its present state through the exploration and installation of homegrown ideas detached from the Western hold on its academy. This article contributes to this debate by exploring the place of indigenous knowledge within the academy and the challenges facing its popularity within the continent. The article further provides suggestions on how indigenous and conventional orthodox knowledge can cohere towards a more pragmatic knowledge production that can propel Africa's development.

Résumé

La littérature sur la production de connaissances révèle que l'Afrique peut faire mieux par l'exploration et l'installation, dans son académie, d'idées lo-cales détachées de l'emprise occidentale. Cet article contribue à ce débat en explorant la place du savoir autochtone au sein de l'académie et les défis qui s'opposent à sa popularité sur le continent. En outre, l'article propose des manières d'harmoniser les connaissances orthodoxes autochtones et conventionnelles vers une production de connaissances plus pragmatique qui peut propulser le développement de l'Afrique.

Introduction

The concept of indigenous knowledge[1] was first used by anthropologists to explain the existence of other forms of knowledge when it comes to development assistance (Brokensha, Warren, Werner 1980; Lanzano 2013). Development agencies and international organizations picked

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interest in the subject matter to explain their homegrown development programs, more especially those ones working in emerging economies. Also, stakeholders in the areas of agriculture and environment utilized the concept to explain how local knowledge has been used to address peculiar challenges affecting them. However, academic debates regarding the subject matter in the academy began much later. What is obvious is that in spite of all that indigenous knowledge has to offer humanity, it has not gained the recognition it deserves. A number of question thus arise in this regard. Why is this so? What are the current realities regarding indigenous knowledge in Africa? What are the obstacles regarding its place in knowledge production, how can the subject matter be further explored and utilized for the benefit of Africans and the entire universe? Delving into this area thus becomes important in this discourse.[2] Alluding to Reij, Scoones and Toulmin's (1996:26) submission that "much effort is expended on designing and disseminating 'solutions', but too little time is spent on understanding the problem", paying attention to this area thus becomes critical. This article seeks to explore the realities regarding knowledge production in Africa as they relate to the issue of indigenous knowledge.

The methodology adopted involves content analysis of secondary data sources from textbooks, newspapers, journal articles and other peer-reviewed internet publications. The article argues that African indigenous knowledge has suffered neglect due to the impact of coloniality and postcoloniality which completely ignore the lived experiences of those in the global south. The article further sheds light on the importance of indigenous knowledge bringing its representativeness to the fore and serving as the moral compass for the collective. Finally, the article maintains that decolonization, as pointed out in the literature, still remains the major way by which indigenous knowledge can find its grip within the existing body of knowledge. However, achieving this involves focus, determination and resilience. Consequently, discourses around the subject should be properly coordinated and managed at the national, regional and continental levels.

Exploring Indigenous Knowledge in Africa

Until recently, indigenous knowledge had been the object of so much criticism and neglect. The perception was that indigenous knowledge was raw and unable to meet the complexities associated with modern thinking. Warren (1991) describes it as homegrown ideas which are different from western knowledge often found and generated from public institutions like the university research centres and the likes. Nyong, Adesina and Osman Elasha (2007:792) defined Indigenous Knowledge as 'institutionalized local knowledge that has been built

upon and passed on from one generation to the other by word of mouth'. Different terms have been used to capture indigenous knowledge in the literature; some of them include traditional knowledge, indigenous traditional knowledge, local knowledge, indigenous technical knowledge, traditional environmental knowledge, folk knowledge, people's science, ethnoscience, local science, traditional science, village science, peasants' knowledge and rural knowledge (Mercer 2012:98; UNEP 2008:21; Williams and Muchena 1991:52). Emegwali (2014) defined it as 'the cumulative body of strategies, practices, techniques, tools, intellectual resources, explanations, beliefs, and values accumulated over time in a particular locality, without the interference and impositions of external hegemonic forces'.

The uniqueness of indigenous knowledge is that it is a representation of people, is a summary of their experiences, whether past or present, and which in turn guide their mode of behavior.[3] Dei (2002), while discussing further the concept of indigenous knowledge emphasized on its relevance in shaping the community's relationship with their immediate environment. It is a combination of beliefs, concepts, perceptions and experiences of local people with their natural and human-built milieu. Such knowledge becomes what it is simply because it is a part of the societal survival means; it can be modified through new experiences and transferred from one generation to the other. Indigenous knowledge is a product of long-term habitation in a place by a group of people (Borda 1980); Roberts (1998:59) captures it better when he opined that knowledge is termed indigenous based on the fact that it was 'accumulated by a group of people, not necessarily indigenous, who by centuries of unbroken residence develop an in-depth understanding of their particular place in their particular world'. This is of course indicative of the rigor that went into its production in terms of diversity of ideas, unbiased analysis of such thoughts which in some instances may be bring dissenting views all in a bid to ascertain its validity and more importantly collaborative nature of nonconforming opinions.

Indigenous knowledge can be grouped into three as analyzed by Castellano (1999), namely; traditional knowledge, which is passed on from community elders and goes from one generation to the next. The second type he referred to as empirical knowledge, is a product of careful observation of the activities within the natural, socio-cultural environment. The last one he termed revealed knowledge, the type that comes through dreams, insight and revelation. Hoppers (2005) while explaining African Indigenous knowledge grouped them into two: the empirical and cognitive levels. The empirical level was grouped into the natural, technological architectural and socio-cultural domains. For the natural, he further

unpacked it into ecology, soil, agriculture, medicinal and pharmaceutical. He equally grouped the technological and architectural sphere into textiles, metallurgy and the rest. The socio-cultural domain includes music, art, and conflict resolution among others. The cognitive sphere captures "the co-evolution of spiritual, natural and human worlds" (Hoppers 2005: 4). All the above delineation point to the all-encompassing and dynamic nature of indigenous knowledge in addressing humans and their environment.

Dei (2002), while discussing the importance of indigenous knowledge highlights some basic features. The first one relates to its personalized nature; indigenous knowledge has no claims to universality in that they are personal. The second feature relates to trust in knowledge being connected to the speaker's integrity and perceptiveness. Others include the mode of transmission of such knowledge, which are usually through oral means and their sharing is directly related to considerations of the responsibility in the use of received knowledge. Besides these, Indigenous knowledge are a product of subject experiences and the inner interpretations of meanings and interpretations. Indigenous knowledge is also all-inclusive and interpersonal. They connect the physical to the metaphysical realms of life; they connect economic, cultural, political, spiritual, ecological and material forces and conditions. Also, indigenous knowledge provides the strength and influence in physical communication as they are expressive and narrative. Equally, they are symbolic in the use of proverbs, fables and tales. Lastly, indigenous knowledge sees collectivism as a manner of thought, highlighting the logic of belongingness with individuals and the land they share. It is not personalized and detached into a collective abstract. It is grounded in a society and a place.

Having explored what indigenous knowledge connotes, what then constitutes knowledge production? Conceptually speaking, knowledge signifies all forms of information production, including technological innovation, cultural creativity and academic advance. They are a set of actions and creativities taken to generate ideas. It is the application of complex and intermittent events and phenomena to address specific issues (Styhre and Roth et al 2002). It is the process involved in bringing out new ideas about an issue; it is an output of a process. It is the difference between what is understood and what needs to be understood for project success (Johnson 2002). The production of knowledge as a process reflects the ingenuities and actions embarked upon in order to come up with ideas (knowledge), new ideas or objects. Within the focus of this discourse, knowledge production captures the realities within higher institution of learning in terms of pedagogical knowledge and research. While the former

appears narrower than the former, both are intertwined to some extent and both are relevant for realizing the central aim of this discourse.

Indigenous Knowledge and the Academy: Some Constraints

Indigenous knowledge emerged within academic debate about thirty years back in spite of its long years of guiding the day to day experiences of Africans. This of course is a reflection of the neglect the subject matter has suffered over time. Nel (2008), attributed its recognition in recent times to the increased awareness of African cultural heritage, the need to situate science within the social and cultural realities of Africans, and failure of development plans in bringing the desired results. At the global level Indigenous knowledge has gained recognition among international organizations namely United Nations Civil Human Rights Movements and others. Within Africa, South Africa has issued policy documents regarding the relevance.[4] The subject matter has equally gained intellectual attention. Notwithstanding, the achievement is insignificant compared to what it ought to achieve.

The foundation of non-inclusion of indigenous knowledge within the academy is hinged on coloniality and postcoloniality which completely ignore the lived in experiences of the global South. Coloniality's emphasis unilinear and simplistic explanation of society has been cited as part of the undoing of indigenous knowledge. The overemphasis on the supremacy of Eurocentric values and norms such that all other lines of thought and development outside of this frame of thinking were anaesthetized. To the Eurocentric apologists, indigenous knowledge has no explanation to make in the order of ideas because it is crude, unreasonable and lacks rigour. The latter came to address some of the flaws inherent in the former, but it fell into the same error. Postcolonialism emerged as a sensible modification to the modern theories in the sense that it rejects the universal, simplified explanations of society which saw indigenous knowledge as being somewhat 'atavistic, primordial, and backward, and the quest for equity, dignity, respect, and accessibility, superfluous' (Emeagwali 2014:3). Consequently, the theory recognized the complex nature of human experience. Far-reaching oversimplifications may not be able to explain the complex nature of lived experiences of humans, there is need to understand the indigenous, detailed and up-to-date analysis that are beached in spatial and cultural settings (Seidman 1994; Dei 2002).

Postcolonial theory thus raises the issue of identity, variance and representation and the problem of decontextualized power; in a nutshell, it would challenge "consensual rationality, hierarchy and order" that would

act as "universal systems of thought" (Prah 1997:16). Slemon (1995) captures postcolonial discourse as a framework that perceives colonialism as 'an ideological and discursive formation... an apparatus for constituting subject positions through the field of representation' while the lived-in experiences of the Africans should be the centre focus of postcoloniality, it has been shifted to the side. 'Postcolonial theory has become a meta-theory by essentializing 'difference' and thus, risks idealizing and essentializing the human subject by privileging the individuation of the self' (Dei 2002: 6). What postcolonialism does is that it gives a false status to the issue of indigeniety through the enforcement of western ideals and principles on the southern realities thus depriving them any right of history and social interconnectedness. Postcoloniality has therefore numbed the history and identities of Africans such that what is left of them in terms of history and social realities is fragmented, heterogenous and vague (Dei 2002). This of course is obvious regarding the back and forth, indefinite and horrendous dispositions of stakeholders. Africans thus become dreadful in telling their stories, boasting of its feat in handling its affairs over the years have become a difficult task. The history has been made to appear unreal, because postcolonialism has taken over the socio-cultural and economic realities of Africans with explanations that do not in any way capture the realities around them. The academy has served as the platform for the entrenchment of these ideals. This was the submission of Shizha when he submitted that the epicenter of colonial hegemony, indoctrination, and mental colonization,' and that the decolonization process entails a process of 'reclaiming, rethinking, reconstituting, rewriting, and validating' indigenous knowledge, and by implication. Africa's history (Shizha 2010).

A fall out of the failures of modern and postmodern theories in conferring the needed recognition to indigenous knowledge is evident in a number of ways. One of such is that it has snuffed life out of indigenous ideas regarding the socio-economic and cultural ways of life. A handful of African theorists have postulated home grown ideas regarding the ways of life but they have not become popular as expected. The scholarly work of eminent sociologist, Akiwowo where he propounded the *Asuwada* Theory of Sociation as a contextual episteme for understanding African social knowledge is a case in point. For instance, a number of social interaction theories being overused by Nigerian students and scholars might not be necessary considering the contribution of Akiwowo's ideas to social interaction. The depth, rigor and relatability of this philosophy to the realities of social interaction in Nigerian culture and that of Africa give it an edge over western knowledge on the topic.

Other African scholars like Nyamnjoh, and others have equally come up with relevant indigenous explanations about African social lives which by now should have become the everyday paradigms for understanding African realities. However these have not gained the needed attention. What modern and postmodern explanations appears to have done in the long run was to create opportunity for inefficiency, poor policy and redundancy within the education sector for African academy and its managers. In Nigeria for instance, post-independence period marked the growth of educational policies meant to popularize and strengthen indigenous ideas. But the outcome of this noble cause was frustrated by neoliberal policies enforced on the policy makers. For example, the Nigerian policy on language education states that "Government will see to it that the medium of instruction in the primary school is initially the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community and, at a later stage, English". (NPE para.15 (4): Primary Education). The reason was to ensure that African children appreciated their indigenous languages, and equally understand whatever knowledge being passed across to them. This policy has suffered serious setbacks; apart from the fact that the policy did not state precisely the 'later stage' when the child should change from mother tongue to English, the policy has not in any way been enforced. A number of education administrators didn't see any reason to enforce these decisions. Teaching children in indigenous language by elites and middle class was seen as barbaric, antisocial and parents patronized private schools where their children would be taught in English language as a sign of elitism. Omojuwa (1997) stresses that the minimum basic requirements for a language to be used as a medium of teaching was not met by many African languages. These challenges became aggravated with the failure of the policy makers to fund education adequately. The popularization of liberal and neo-liberal policies across the globe further justified the corruption tendencies of African governments. They cut funding to certain segments of education and diverted it to some unknown sectors. Africa accounts for only 0.6 percent of Global Gross Expenditure on Research and Development, with South Africa's share representing as much as 90 percent of this contribution. Consequently, the admission growth within university education continued to outstrip available funding capabilities; unproductive application of funds by both government and higher education institutions began to put pressure on available funds, there was a cumulative waning in public spending per student and ultimately, research and quality investment became unrealistic (Shabani 2013; Okebukola 2015).

One major blow postcoloniality dealt the higher institution also relates to the suffocation of some core fields of humanities within the institutions of higher learning in certain parts of the continent. In some parts of the

continent where such disciplines hold strong influence, contentions along race, what ought and not to be studied and how it should be also constitute a challenge. Disciplines like history, anthropology and the rest having a core understanding of indigenous knowledge lost their influence significantly. Anthropologists and historians have played enormous roles in providing the needed guidance and information for colonialists within the continent and elsewhere (Mafeje 1998; Adesina 2011; Nyamnjoh 2012). In this dispensation, the contributions of these disciplines are needed more than before to further the interests of African indigenous knowledge, unfortunately, this may not be so due to the influence of postmodern discourses. The interests of young people in the study of Anthropology and history in West Africa for instance is not encouraging. Crave for statistical data by development agencies and policy makers to justify postmodernism further made the discipline suffer much attack. In Nigeria for instance, history had to be flavored with other nomenclature like "international relations" to make it appealing to the students, teachers of history had no option to leave the country thus making a study of indigenous ideas for knowledge production more challenging. Africa has institutions and centres within the universities and research centres devoted to the study of African realities, the present realities regarding their proliferation and influence on African academic for knowledge production leaves much to be desired. The centres were created to continuously cross-examine epistemological, methodological, and theoretical lines to the study of Africa, presenting Africa and its people as the focus of such discourses as themes, rather than mere items. Some of these centres in recent times appear to be appendages of social science epistemology that promote western knowledge. The establishment of African studies centres within higher education in the global north is understandable and justifiable; in my opinion, the existence of African studies centres within the higher education on African soils seems not to be fully achieving this aim; they appear to serve as avenues to further strengthen western episteme. This is evident in the continued proliferation of the centres within institutions of higher learning in Africa without its direct influence on western oriented disciplines.

Linking Indigenous and Orthodox Knowledge for Nuanced Knowledge Production

Extant literature has pointed to decolonization as the sole means by which indigenous knowledge can find its footing within the existing body of knowledge. This discourse has been interrogated under different thought patterns ranging from Fanon's ground breaking work that emphasized on

understanding the historical process of colonization as a means of changing the order; to Ngugi' wa Thiong'o' s emphasis decolonizing the mind (Fanon, 1963; Ngugi, 1986). Dei (2000), for example emphasized the need to challenge imperial ideologies and colonial relations of production, that normally characterize and shape academic activities; removing indigenous knowledge from the academy makes room for the (re)colonization of knowledge and cultures in local milieu and settings (Dei 2000:13). Battiste (2005), while postulating on the linkage between indigenous knowledge and academy also emphasized that 'educators must reject colonial curricula that offer students a fragmented and distorted picture of Indigenous peoples, and offer students a critical perspective of the historical context that created that fragmentation' (Battiste 2005:225). Emerging from these trajectories over the years relates to the need to decolonize the academy, especially the curriculum. However, what has become clear is that decolonizing this sector is no mean feat; the recent happenings in South Africa regarding *fee must fall and decolonizing education* further attests to this. As a matter of fact 'the decolonization of the African Academy remains one of the biggest challenges, not only in terms of the curriculum, teaching strategies, and textbooks, but also in terms of the democratization of knowledge, and the regeneration and adaptation of old epistemologies to suit new post-colonial realities' (Emeagwali 2014). This of course does not suggest that it is impossible. It only calls for a consistent and pragmatic approach. One must take into cognizance that decolonization is a process; this was corroborated by the argument of Laenui (2000) that it is in phases namely the process of recovery of identity, artifacts, language, and cultural information; a process of mourning for what is being lost; dreaming, reformulation, and invocation of other possibilities for research; commitment to including silenced voices; and action that includes strategies for social transformation (Laenui 2000). Understanding this will therefore go a long way in deploying the appropriate tools and strategies.

In view of the above, it is pertinent to note that decolonization cannot be achieved overnight; it didn't come brusquely, it was a planned, calculative event spanning a period of years before it had its toll on the target community; as such, addressing it must equally follow the same trend, though with a more dogged approach. Second, the spread of decoloniality through indigenizing knowledge for knowledge production within the continent of Africa is lopsided; indigenous knowledge appears to gain ground within spaces where racism holds sway. Other parts of Africa where there is no physical presence of racism appears to exhibit a false consciousness about it. Indigenous ideas pervade the nooks and crannies of the continent, what however is lacking is the appreciation and support. In the same vein, a

complete decolonization of knowledge may not be feasible at the moment as no idea can exist in isolation, what is desirable is the coexistence of western and indigenous ideas. Consequently, debates within the academy regarding the decolonization project must first create the needed awareness that will culminate into a strong identification with the subject matter among academics; currently, this appears lacking. There is a continued reproduction of western knowledge without a recourse to the indigenous ideas. Changing the curriculum is good no doubt, it may continue to meet brick walls when policy makers and education managers do not see the need for it. Achieving this can only be possible through a consistent gradual process. The mind must be decolonized and this happens when there is a strong and consistent debate around the subject matter. Knowledge thrives when there is communication. A situation in which the emerging academia in Africa are not aware of the giant strides Africans in time past have taken in all facets of life for survival and to move their society forward is dangerous for African identity and existence within the global world both now and in the future. Obviously, debates have been ongoing; it is however sectional. Many of the studies on the topic appears to be concentrated in Southern Africa and global south; this of course does not preclude the contributions of scholars from other regions of Africa.[5]

Therefore, interrogations around indigenous knowledge should be properly coordinated and managed at the national, regional and continental levels. Revolution at the level of the academy and in the situation of indigenous implies transformation, not only in the curriculum, but also in instructional plans, so that a more collaborative mode of instruction and knowledge balances the teacher-centered approach (Emeagwali 2014). This will be achievable through the moral and financial support of stakeholders. Education funding is generally poor in sub-Saharan Africa, studies on popularizing local ideas thus need the necessary financial support to conduct research and teaching on the subject. Funders sympathetic of this course must be contacted and encouraged to fund research in these areas. Also, academic activities like seminars and lectures within higher education should be geared towards debates around indigenous knowledge. Pan African think tanks in Africa must coordinate and manage activities and debates around these themes at various levels. Workshops and conferences on different themes should be organized by these bodies to bring together scholars on this subject areas in order to network and strategize on the importance of the subject. It must be noted that Africans are the ones to project their ideas, nobody will be sympathetic of their cause. Institutions and centres devoted to the study of indigenous knowledge need to partner the more with higher education. This can be done through seminars and

workshop in partnership with these institutions. The sole aim is to create the needed awareness in the academia, they should set up special funds for researchers and graduate programmes to stimulate interests in this area.

Concluding Remarks

Undoubtedly, Africa has a rich knowledge base. One thing that is clear and needs to be addressed relates to the sense of ease and smugness in the attitude of scholars within African academy to the use of conventional approaches to knowledge production. This in itself has limited Africans in their ability to play a critical role in knowledge production based on the fact that these approaches in itself do not in most instances explain our realities as it ought to. Aside this, the global world usually feels they have nothing new to learn from us if what we keep sending to them what they already know. While conventional knowledge is a product of colonial influence, what is however critical relates to our failures especially in the social science and humanities to break free from these grips, or as the case may be, encourage and situate our home grown ideas into the conventional knowledge. Consequently, what is needed is a strong drive to pool these massive knowledge together primarily for the benefit of Africans and then for the global benefit. This will only occur when there is a concerted efforts at making African appreciate the value. African scholars need to talk more about their indigenous knowledge. Younger generations must be made to appreciate this. Scholars and African institutions have important roles to play in this. Western knowledge has come to stay in the continent indigenous knowledge must equally stay and the academy has an important role to play in this.

Notes

1. Can be referred to as traditional knowledge and sometimes referred to as local knowledge, as the case may be.
2. According to the World Economic Forum, Africa produces only 1.1% of global scientific knowledge. The continent has just 79 scientists per million of inhabitants compared to countries like Brazil and United States where the ratio stands at 656 and 4,500, respectively. https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2015/oct/26/africa-produces-just-11-of-global-scientific-knowledge.
3. Some of the major areas of indigenous knowledge identified in the humanities include written and oral sources: Documents written on papyrus and parchment, inscriptions on tombs, tombstones, walls and doorways, and graphic representations, pictographic or ideographic writing systems oral narratives poetry, songs, legends, proverbs, interviews etc. They symbolize collective subjects and experiences of human existence. See Emegwali, (2014).

4. See: https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwi47qH0vorwAhVxuHEKHbxFBUkQFjAJegQIJRAD&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.wipo.int%2Fedocs%2Fmdocs%2Ftk%2Fen%2Fwipo_grtkf_ic_9%2Fwipo_grtkf_ic_9_11.doc&usg=AOvVaw0rXsYxvTydP3wB5JhfFzSU
5. For current works see Ndlovu-Gatsheni *Epistemic Freedom in Africa Deprovincialization and Decolonization,* Routledge, 2018*; Decolonization, Development and Knowledge in Africa Turning Over a New Leaf*, Routledge, 2020.

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Skills or Credentials? Comparing the Perspectives of Degree- and Non-degree-holding Ghanaian Graduates on the Value of Higher Education

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Abstract

The massification of higher education, fuelled in part by demand from young people and their families, has coincided with more competition in the graduate labour market. This article seeks insight into the interpretative framework through which graduates view the relationship between higher education and the labour market. Specifically, given evidence of diminishing employment opportunities for graduates, the study examines the relative strengths of human capital theory and credentialism in explaining the value that young people continue to place on higher education. Using survey data from a sample of 2,036 Ghanaian higher education graduates, the article investigates the relative value students accord to skills and credentials through analysis of two self-report measures: satisfaction with their higher education experience, and, second, labour market expectations in respect of employment and income. Overall, non-degree holders self-assessed as having more skills training. Nonetheless, degree-holders generally were more satisfied with their educational achievements and had higher labour market expectations than those without degrees. These findings imply that young people value higher education less in terms of the skills they acquire and more in regards to the face-value of the qualifications they obtain, indicating a credentialist perspective that is in marked contrast to the human capital approach which undergirds policymaking on higher education in Ghana and much of the African continent.

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Résumé

La massification de l'enseignement supérieur, alimentée en partie par l'exigence des jeunes et de leurs familles, a coïncidé avec une concurrence accrue sur le marché de l'emploi des diplômés. Cet article cherche à éclairer le cadre interprétatif à travers lequel les diplômés perçoivent la relation entre l'enseignement supérieur et le marché de l'emploi. Plus précisément, selon les preuves sur la baisse des opportunités d'emploi pour les diplômés, l'étude examine les forces relatives à la théorie du capital humain et à l'accréditation pour expliquer la valeur que les jeunes continuent à accorder à l'enseignement supérieur. À l'aide de données de recherche provenant d'un échantillon de 2 036 diplômés ghanéens de l'enseignement supérieur, l'article étudie la valeur relative que les étudiants accordent aux compétences et aux diplômes par l'analyse de deux mesures d'auto-évaluation : d'une part, la satisfaction à l'égard de leur expérience dans l'enseignement supérieur et, d'autre part, les attentes du marché du travail en matière d'emploi et de revenu. Dans l'ensemble, les non-diplômés s'auto-évaluent et considèrent qu'ils ont plus de compétence professionnelle. Cependant, les titulaires d'un diplôme étaient généralement plus satisfaits de leurs résultats scolaires et avaient des attentes plus élevées sur le marché de l'emploi que ceux qui n'ont pas de diplôme. Ces résultats démontrent que les jeunes accordent moins d'importance à l'enseignement supérieur en termes de compétences acquises et plus à la valeur nominale des qualifications obtenues, ce qui indique une perspective en matière d'accréditation qui contraste fortement avec l'approche du capital humain qui sous-tend l'élaboration des politiques de l'enseignement supérieur au Ghana et sur la plupart du continent africain.

Introduction

Formal education changes aspirations and life prospects. The experience of formal education transforms young people's knowledge, capacities and values, shaping how they see themselves in the present and where they see themselves in the future (see Kingston *et al.* 2003). Normatively, education also improves life chances, notably through employment, which in turn facilitates other life transitions necessary for independent adulthood (Honwana 2012; Cieslik & Simpson 2013).

On the African continent, the valorisation of education as a vehicle for social mobility has a long history. In the late pre-colonial and colonial periods, Western education offered new pathways to wealth and social status, primarily through expanded opportunities for employment in nascent formal economic and political systems (Lord 2011; Ahlman 2012;

Tsikata & Darkwah 2013). For African countries that gained independence from colonial rule in the late 1950s and 1960s, these aspirations were reinforced by a policy rhetoric of education as 'the master determinant of all aspects of change' for nation-states in transition to a 'modern' society (Coleman 1965:3, quoted in Abu-Laban & Abu-Laban 1976). This change would happen at both individual and national levels; education was to be the making of the nation through changes to the *skills* and, the mindsets, of the population. Institutions of higher education,[1] in particular, held pride of place as a symbol of a modernising nation expected to produce graduates with the skills to support socio-economic development (Ajayi, Goma & Johnson 1996; Morley, Leach & Lugg 2009).

However, the assumption that higher education credentials denote the possession of skills is challenged by studies in which employers point to a scarcity of employable skills among graduates of higher education (Brown & Hesketh 2004; Moreau & Leathwood 2006; Bawakyillenuo *et al.* 2013). The evidence from Ghana (e.g. Adu-Amoah 2008; Bawakyillenuo *et al.* 2013) and elsewhere (e.g. Purcell, Morley & Rowley 2002; Brown & Hesketh 2004; Moreau & Leathwood 2006) suggests that employers increasingly attach less importance to formal academic credentials and more to skills.[2] In other words, employers discriminate between skills and credentials.

Do young people likewise place differential value on the skills and credentials obtained through higher education? We know much more about policy-makers' and employers' perspectives than those of young people because there are few studies in African contexts that explore their understanding of the relationship between education and the labour market and of themselves as (prospective) workers (Moreau & Leathwood 2006; Leavy & Smith 2010; Ismail 2016). This is a significant area of neglect since trends in education and the labour market are not only the result of actions by governments and by employers but also of the aggregate decisions of young people and their families.

This article investigates the differential weight that higher education graduates accord to skills and credentials in assessing the ways in which their higher education experience translates to labour market success. It is based on survey data from 2,036 graduates of Ghanaian higher education institutions interviewed during the one-year mandatory national service period which, for many, precedes their first or full entry into the labour market. The study compares holders of degrees (the majority university graduates) and holders of non-degree qualifications (the majority graduate of polytechnics) on two dimensions: their evaluation of their higher education experience, including a self-assessment of skills acquired; and their

employment expectations. While non-degree holders assessed themselves more highly on skills training, degree-holders expressed more satisfaction with their educational achievements and more optimism about their labour market prospects. Moreover, the overwhelming majority of graduates, across all higher education institutions and qualifications, regardless of self-report of skills obtained, expressed a desire to obtain higher credentials. These analyses suggest that graduates place a higher premium on obtaining credentials to get work than on acquiring skills to do work.

Literature Review

The article is grounded in two perspectives on the relationship between higher education and the labour market: the human capital theory and the credentialist perspective. These do not operate in a mutually exclusive manner nor are they exhaustive. However, they represent two dominant frameworks in the literature on the higher education-labour market nexus (Tomlinson 2008). To use Tomlinson's 2008 heuristic, the human capital framework is about 'the skills and knowledge… needed to *do jobs*' while the credentialist perspective is about 'what is needed to *get jobs*' (p. 50, italics in original).

As is true for many post-colonial African countries, Ghana's educational policy-making has been underpinned by human capital theory (Assie-Lumumba 2006). The theory proposes that the more years of education an individual has, the more knowledge and skills they acquire and, consequently, the greater the returns they obtain in terms of employment opportunities, earnings and career progression. During the era of economic reforms in African countries in the 1980s commonly referred to as the structural adjustment period, the World Bank's policy prescription of drastic reductions in public expenditure on higher education was based on human capital theory, and specifically on studies that suggested that higher education yielded higher returns for the individual than the society (Samoff & Carrol 2003; Teferra & Altbach 2004). Other studies have indicated that private returns from higher education are greater than primary education. This relationship is especially strong for African countries (see Montenegro & Patrinos 2014; Psacharopoulos & Patrinos 2018). Despite these inconsistencies in its empirical support, human capital theory has persisted as the ideological basis for educational policy-making in many countries on the continent.

In Ghana, the association of education with the acquisition of employable skills has consistently been articulated in policy discourse since the first post-independence government. Moreover, it was explicitly stated as the goal of educational reforms in the 1980s, one of the most comprehensive in the

country's history (Anyidoho, Kpessa-Whyte & Asante 2013). Three decades later, in 2012, the Ministry of Education described its mandate thus:

> to provide relevant and quality education for all Ghanaians especially the disadvantaged to enable them acquire skills which will make them functionally literate and productive to facilitate poverty alleviation and promote the rapid socio-economic growth of the country (emphasis added).[3]

In 2021, the website of the same ministry has a statement of purpose that focuses more on the individual's work prospects rather than national development and retains a focus on skills acquisition.

> The MoE is committed to ensuring that all Ghanaians are prepared to succeed in the world of work. It achieves this through the development of an educational system that focuses on promoting problem solving and creativity and building critical skills through academic, technical and vocational programs (emphasis added).[4]

These policy statements are especially pertinent for higher education; if education is meant to impart employable skills, then individuals who complete higher education would be among the most highly skilled in society and, according to human capital theory, the most rewarded in the labour market. Indeed, in contemporary development discourse and practice, higher education is presented as 'a central site for facilitating the skills, knowledge and expertise that are essential to economic and social development' (Morley, Leach, & Lugg 2009:56).

In the Ghanaian context, human capital theory is called into question by evidence that graduates of higher education institutions have higher rates of unemployment than the general youth population (see Ajayi & Anyidoho 2021), in a country in which economic growth has consistently outpaced employment rates and job creation (Aryeetey & Baah-Boateng 2016). In particular, the formal sector – the traditional and preferred destination of higher education graduates – has become more constrained; formal sector jobs have been growing by an average of 1.3 per cent while the increase in the populations of graduates has been much higher (Baah-Boateng 2015).

Young people in Ghana and, indeed, on the rest of the continent, are aware of the diminishing value of a graduate degree in terms of employment prospects. Even while they expect higher education qualifications to open doors for them through secure employment, they recognise that such credentials do not have as much value as they did in terms of work and general life prospects (Honwana 2012). From a human capital perspective, one explanation is that higher education may not be providing young people the skills needed to obtain and to do work. There is some support

for this in the fact that both Ghanaian employers *and* graduates complain that higher education graduates lack the right set of skills for available jobs (Tagoe 2009; Bawakyillenuo *et al.* 2013; Acquah 2016).

To the extent that young people perceive skills acquisition as a determinant of labour market outcomes, one would expect that they would show a preference for programmes and institutions that are seen to convey employable skills. Polytechnics in Ghana are public institutions that are set up to train young people with industrial and technical skills that are presumably in demand by the labour market. With the framing in Ghanaian public discourse that degree programmes are theory-bound and that diploma programmes in polytechnics and professional institutes offer more 'practical' and work-relevant skills (Acquah 2016), one might expect that young people would place more value on polytechnic education. On the contrary, polytechnics have acquired a reputation as a backup option for students who are unable to gain admission to degree programmes in universities (Amaniampong 2014). Universities, on the other hand, have experienced an increase in admissions that cannot be explained solely by the increase in population size (SAPRI 2001; Anyidoho, Kpessa-Whyte & Asante 2013; Anyidoho 2014; Anyidoho 2019).

There are evidently limits to the extent to which the human capital approach can explain the demand for forms of higher education that both graduates and employers claim do not provide employable skills. The credentialist perspective offers an alternative set of explanations. Credentialism is a concept with a long history used here to describe the demand for higher education as the pursuit for a ticket into the labour market (and attendant social status) rather than the attempt to acquire the skills with which to do a job. From a credentialism perspective, credentials are less indicators of work skills than markers of socio-cultural position and advantage (Mincer 1974; Bourdieu 1986; Brown 2001; Jonasson 2006).

Credentialism is not a new phenomenon in higher education. Credentials have always been prized for their symbolic value and as 'a legitimation of advantages that empower degree holders in occupational and organisational recruitment' (Brown 2001:20). However, there are indications that the phenomenon is more prevalent in contemporary times and is a major driver of the expanded demand for and participation in higher education worldwide (Jonasson 2006). The diminished value of a higher degree in the graduate labour market is partly the result of increased participation in higher education; as more people gain a higher education qualification, it becomes less of a marker of distinction than a basic requirement for a professional job (Harvey 2000; Brown & Hesketh 2004; Tomlinson 2008;

Wilton 2011). This means a higher education qualification does not convey as much competitive advantage as it used to – a phenomenon that is sometimes referred to as 'credential inflation', where jobs that did not previously, and may not strictly, require a higher education qualification are hard to attain without a higher education qualification.[5] People are thus compelled to acquire more credentials to stay competitive in the job market without necessarily adding to the capacity that they need to do work competently.

Credentialism could, therefore, potentially offer an explanation for the preference of Ghanaian students for degrees and for degree-granting universities over non-degree qualifications offered by polytechnic and other institutions that offer professional or technical skills. Even the body set up to oversee education concludes that young people appear to be more attracted to the social status that goes with being a degree-holding university graduate (Ministry of Education 2014; also Dasmani 2011). Indeed, there is the suggestion that the policy announced in 2016 (shortly after data collection for this study had been completed) converting polytechnics into degree-granting technical universities in Ghana may have been a populist response to the privileging of university degrees over non-degree qualifications ('Conversion of polytechnics into technical universities' 2016; Nunyonameh 2016).

The foregoing suggests that it is important to understand young people's configuration of the relationship between higher education and the labour market. In this study, we are specifically interested in which of the two theories of interest (with their differential emphasis on skills and credentials) better captures young Ghanaian graduates' understanding of the value of higher education for job market success. This study is a response to the gap in the literature on the interpretive frameworks through which graduates view the labour market and themselves as workers (see Tomlinson (2007) and Tymon (2013) as exceptions). Moreover, it adds to the sparse literature that explores young people's perspectives on policy discussions of youth employment and unemployability on the African continent (Ismail 2016).

Research Methods

Sampling and Data Collection Methods

The article is based on a survey of graduates of higher education institutions within one year of completing school. Respondents were from both public and private institutions, including universities, university colleges, polytechnics, and institutes of professional studies. Respondents were interviewed between October and November 2015, during their one-year participation in the National Service Scheme (NSS) which is mandatory for all higher education graduates under 40 years of age.

The 2015/2016 cohort, from which this sample is drawn, was made up of 75,000 graduates working in public and private institutions all over the country. As we were unable to obtain 2015 data from the NSS, data from 2014 was used to derive a sampling frame of institutions to which national service persons were posted. The study randomly selected 1,020 establishments in three of ten administrative regions: Greater Accra, Ashanti and Northern Regions. Given resource constraints, the three regions were chosen to represent geographical spread, being respectively in the southern, middle belt and northern regions of Ghana. The three regions (which also have the three largest urban centres) also absorb 60 per cent of all national service personnel.

In each establishment, national service persons (NSPs) were invited to complete a 45-minute interview with trained research assistants. Respondents, therefore, self-selected into the study. A maximum number of 10 respondents per establishment was set so that none of the establishments were over-represented in the sample. (The 2014 dataset on national service persons indicated that each establishment had between 1 and 10 national service persons.[6]) The eventual non-random sample comprised 2,036 graduate NSPs from 454 establishments.[7]

Respondents were informed about the goals of the study and completed a consent form prior to taking part in the survey.[8] They were informed about their right to opt out at any point in the interview.

In addition to questions about family and educational background, the structured questionnaire elicited responses about their secondary and higher education programmes and performance, including their assessment of the extent of their skills training. Additionally, they were asked about their labour market expectations.

Sample Composition

The final sample was non-random and biased towards establishments that had NSPs in 2014. It was also biased towards individuals available and willing to participate in the survey during the period of data collection.

The data set consisted of 2,036 graduates from higher education institutions in Ghana. The sample was made up of 57 per cent males and 43 per cent females. The 1,180 degree-holders (almost all of whom were university graduates) made up 58 per cent of the sample, with the other 856 (42 per cent) being recipients of Higher National Diplomas (HND) and other non-degree credentials (Table 1).

Table 1: Sample composition

	Universities and other non-polytechnic institutions	Polytechnic	TOTAL
Non-Degree	242	614	856
	28.3%	71.7%	100%
Degree	1,178	2	1,180
	99.8%	0.2%	100%
	1,420	616	2,036

Analysis

The statistical differences between degree- and non-degree holders were analysed using t-tests and chi-squared tests. Both probit and multivariate linear regressions were used to determine the contribution of other variables that might be related to the decision to pursue degree or non-degree programmes.

Findings

Assessment of Experience of Higher Education

Overall satisfaction with higher education

The question of young people's satisfaction with higher education is a measure of the value they accord to it. The entire survey focused on the transition to and prospects for work, and so graduates' self-reported satisfaction can be assumed to be with primary reference to the opportunity higher education provided them for employment (see Honwana 2012).

An overwhelming majority (94 per cent) of the sample – irrespective of programme of study, type of institution, or terminal credentials – expressed satisfaction with the education they had obtained. As further confirmation, about 95 per cent of the sample affirmed that, if they had it to do all over again, they would still choose to get a higher education qualification.

Table 2: Would respondents select the same or different institution/course?

	Frequency	Percentage
Different course at different institution	314	16.26
Different course at same institution	210	10.88
Same course at same institution	943	48.83
Same course at different institution	463	24.03
Total	1,931	100.00

Beyond this broad evaluation, graduates were asked specifically to evaluate the programmes or courses they had done and institutions in which they had studied. Of the 95 per cent of the sample who confirmed their choice to get a higher education, about half (49 per cent) stated they would choose to do the same course at the same institution (Table 2). Another 40 per cent would choose a different institution and 27 per cent would choose a different course. What is noteworthy is that nearly a quarter (24 per cent) of these students would have preferred to do the same course but at a different institution. In other words, they discriminated between the content of the course and the credential (a degree or alternative qualifications given by a specific institution).

Table 3 displays the responses to the same set of questions but with differences between degree and non-degree holders highlighted. The results of a series of chi-squared tests indicated no significant difference in the expression of overall satisfaction between graduates with degrees and those without. However, degree-holding graduates (99.8 per cent of whom attended university) were more likely to affirm *both* their programme of study and institution. On their part, non-degree holders (the majority of whom were polytechnic graduates) were more likely to say that they were happy with their course but would have wanted to be in a different institution. Further, out of the 221 diploma-holding graduates of polytechnic institutions who said they would elect to do the same course but in a different institution, 40 per cent gave as their reason that they would want to go to university to get a degree or to get a 'better' or 'higher' credential.[9] This tally may be an underestimate as it includes only those responses in which an explicit desire for a degree or for university admission is stated; it is probable that similar preferences were implicit in further responses that expressed a wish to explore other institutions or environments. The desire to do the same course (implying a general satisfaction with the knowledge and skills acquired) but in a different institution appears to fit with the credentialist perspective that says that students may place more emphasis on the face-value of the qualifications than the content of their programmes of study.

Self-assessment of Skills Training

The survey elicited students' assessment of skills training they had acquired in the course of their higher educational careers. Specifically, respondents were asked about the extent of training in a number of skill sets. The list of skills presented to respondents is not exhaustive and, admittedly, there is little agreement on the set of skills necessary for the graduate labour market or about their operational meanings (Tymon 2013). Nonetheless,

the list is indicative of the skills that the literature suggests are important to employers. Consequently, it skews towards intra- and interpersonal ('soft') skills relative to technical skills, as the literature suggests the former is more valued by employers (Tagoe 2009; Bawakyillenuo *et al.* 2013).

Table 3: Satisfaction with higher education

	Non-Degree	**Degree**	**Diff.**
Very unsatisfied	0.051	0.058	-0.007
			[0.010]
Somewhat satisfied	0.421	0.425	-0.005
			[0.022]
Very satisfied	0.528	0.516	0.012
			[0.022]
Would still choose to pursue higher education	0.960	0.938	0.022
			[0.010]**
a15==Different course at different institution	0.164	0.162	0.002
			[0.017]
a15==Different course at same institution	0.040	0.160	-0.120
			[0.014]***
a15==Same course at same institution	0.462	0.508	-0.046
			[0.023]**
a15==Same course at different institution	0.334	0.171	0.164
			[0.019]***

Between 60 per cent to 70 per cent of respondents in each category believed they had 'the right amount' of training in each skill set, with the notable exception of technology or IT skills (Table 4).

There were differences between degree and non-degree holders in the assessment of skills gained, but with few consistencies in the extent and direction of the differences. Out of the eight skills categories assessed, a significant difference was observed for five; in four cases degree-holders reported that they had received less training than they needed for the job market and in three cases non-degree holders stated that they had received *more* training than they needed. Overall, degree holders were likely to rate themselves as having less skills training.

Table 4: Skills training

Skills	Non-Degree	Degree	Diff.
Teamwork==Less training than needed	0.116	0.114	0.002
			[0.014]
Teamwork==Right amount of training	0.679	0.676	0.002
			[0.021]
Teamwork==More training than needed	0.206	0.210	-0.005
			[0.018]
Leadership==Less training than needed	0.166	0.202	-0.036
			[0.017]**
Leadership==Right amount of training	0.598	0.595	0.003
			[0.022]
Leadership==More training than needed	0.236	0.203	0.033
			[0.019]*
Motivation==Less training than needed	0.132	0.173	-0.041
			[0.016]**
Motivation==Right amount of training	0.606	0.620	-0.014
			[0.022]
Motivation==More training than needed	0.262	0.207	0.055
			[0.019]***
Ability to learn==Less training than needed	0.078	0.106	-0.028
			[0.013]**
Ability to learn==Right amount of training	0.612	0.609	0.003
			[0.022]
Ability to learn==More training than needed	0.310	0.285	0.025
			[0.020]
Problem solving==Less training than needed	0.159	0.160	-0.001
			[0.016]
Problem solving ==Right amount of training	0.625	0.610	0.015
			[0.022]
Problem solving ==More training than needed	0.216	0.230	-0.014
			[0.019]
Communication==Less training than needed	0.089	0.117	-0.028
			[0.014]**
Communication ==Right amount of training	0.623	0.630	-0.007
			[0.022]
Communication ==More training than needed	0.289	0.253	0.035
			[0.020]*
Analytical skills==Less training than needed	0.155	0.154	0.001
			[0.016]
Analytical skills==Right amount of training	0.657	0.642	0.015
			[0.021]
Analytical skills ==More training than needed	0.188	0.204	-0.016
			[0.018]
Technology or IT ==Less training than needed	0.350	0.318	0.033
			[0.021]

Technology or IT ==Right amount of training	0.460	0.499	-0.039
			[0.022]*
Technology or IT ==More training than needed	0.189	0.183	0.006
N: non-degree holders = 856 856, degree holders = 1180			[0.017]

These findings should be interpreted cautiously because of the limited set of skills surveyed. Nonetheless, they do lead to two interesting conclusions: First, despite employers' complaint that young people lack the appropriate 'soft skills' for work, on all seven measures, a majority of graduates (60 per cent or more) assessed themselves as having received the right amount of training. This is at odds with employers' evaluation of graduates (Tagoe 2009; Bawakyillenuo *et al.* 2013). Second, given the accepted wisdom in Ghana that university degree programmes are more 'theoretical' and technical programmes such as those offered by polytechnics are more 'practical', it is interesting that degree-holders from universities were slightly more positive about their IT training than non-degree holders, 78 per cent of whom attended polytechnics.

Internships and other such experiences help students to acquire work-relevant skills as well as improving their job-search and job-retention skills (Tymon 2013), the lack of which is a disadvantage to young people in the job market (Baah & Achamoka 2007; ILO 2010). The survey, therefore, asked graduates if they perceived that their institutions had provided them adequate opportunities for work experience (Table 5). While roughly half of each group of respondents (and slightly more for degree-holders) reported an optimum amount of such work experience, non-degree holders reported having received *too much* of such experience compared to about 20 per cent for degree-holders, while 21 per cent said they had received *too little*, compared to 27 per cent of degree holders. Here again, by their own self-assessment, degree holders would appear to have less work experience (and, by implication, less opportunity for acquiring work-ready skills) in the course of their higher education than non-degree holders.

Table 5: Work experience by type of credential

	Non-Degree	**Degree**	**Diff.**
			[0.017]
Attachment/work experience==Less training than needed	0.206	0.269	-0.063 [0.019]***
Attachment/work experience==Right amount of training	0.454	0.535	-0.080 [0.022]***
Attachment/work experience==More training than needed	0.340	0.197	0.143 [0.019]***

Desire for additional certifications

Respondents were asked about their desire to acquire further qualifications. These figures must be interpreted cautiously given that aspiration and intent do not automatically result in action. Nonetheless, it is remarkable that almost the entire sample (that is, 96 per cent) expressed a desire for further higher education qualifications, with no difference between degree and non-degree holders (Table 6). Not surprisingly, non-degree holders had a significantly higher desire for a bachelor's degree compared to degree holders who already had this qualification. What is more interesting is that non-degree holders were significantly more likely to report a desire for a master's degree.

Table 6: Desire for additional qualifications

	Non-Degree	**Degree**	**Diff.**
Would like additional higher education qualifications	0.963	0.965	0.008
			[0.008]
Highest qualification desired			
Bachelor's degree	0.158	0.012	0.146
			[0.011]***
Master's degree	0.417	0.339	0.078
			[0.022]***
Doctorate degree	0.388	0.614	-0.227
			[0.022]***

The survey did not elicit the motivation behind this desire for further qualification. However, when interpreted against the backdrop of the difference between degree and non-degree holders in their self-assessment of employable skills training, these results indicate that skills acquisition may not be the primarily incentive for additional credentials. Indeed, the fact that 61 per cent of degree-holders and 39 per cent of non-degree holders would want a doctorate degree is reasonable evidence that some other calculations are behind their responses, given that there are few available jobs that require the specific skills that doctorate training would offer. The more likely explanation is 'credential inflation' where young people believe that even higher qualifications may give them an advantage in a crowded job market.

Labour Market Expectations

The survey provided information on three indicators of labour market outcomes. The first variable is based on respondents' simple self-assessment of the odds of earning an income within the first six months after national service, either through a job or self-employment (on a scale of 1 to 10, with 0 being 'no chance at all' and 10 indicating certainty). For the entire sample, the mode for this ordinal variable was 5 out of 10 (effectively a 50-50 chance) and the median was 7 out of 10 (Figure 1).

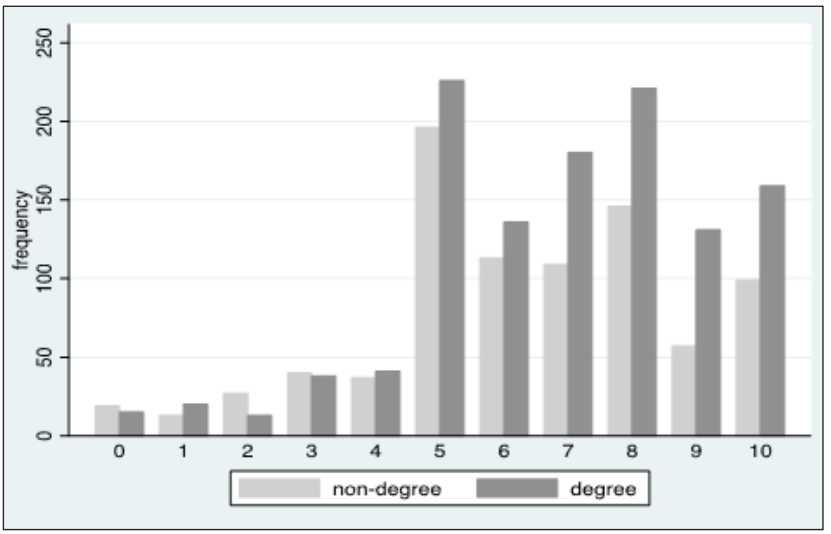

Figure 1: Chance of earning income within 6 months of national service

Regression analyses were conducted to determine if there were statistically significant differences between degree and non-degree holders in their labour market outlook, and also to explore alternative explanations for these differences. Table 7 shows the results of a probit regression for the self-reported chance of earning income within six months of completing national service and a multivariate liner regression for minimum and expected monthly earnings respectively (reported in Ghanaian cedis). Degree holders reported a significantly higher expectation on all three variables (equations 1, 2 and 3).

Degree holders' higher labour market expectations held up even with the introduction into the models of variables that might be expected to influence both labour market expectation and self-selection into degree programmes and degree-granting institutions, given research that shows that economic

and social advantage is associated with admission into degree-granting universities (Addae-Mensah 2000). The variables included the demographic characteristics of sex and age; a self-esteem measure using the Rosenberg self-esteem index (Rosenberg 1965);[10] educational background, including programme of study and self-reported grades on the nationwide Secondary School Certification Exam (SSCE), a standardised and uniformly graded national examination that largely determines admission into higher education institutions; family background variables (including parents' education, parents' work with government and family's political connections) as proxies for socio-economic status and social capital; and, finally, paid work experience since secondary school. Out of these variables, self-esteem was consistently significant, indicating that, regardless of qualification, graduates with higher reported self-esteem tended to be more confident about their prospects in the labour market. Programme of study also proved to be significant across all the models; compared with students in all other programmes, including business, students in STEM were more optimistic about their chances of employment and their income levels. SSCE scores were significant in explaining the differences between degree and non-degree holders, but only in relation to income. Sex, age, previous work experience and family background variables proved to be significant, but not consistently so.

In sum, despite reporting lower work-related skills training and work experience, degree holders generally had higher labour market expectations, suggesting again that the type of qualification matters to graduates in evaluating their chances of labour market success.

Table 7: Type of qualification and labour market expectations

	(1)	(1A)	(2)	(2A)	(3)	(3A)
	Chance of Income	Chance of Income	Minimum Acceptable Income	Minimum Acceptable Income	Expected Income	Expected Income
Degree	0.263***	0.153**	251.565***	159.702***	435.545***	244.582***
Demographic characteristics						
Sex (female)		-0.073		-49.438		-135.159**
Age		0.006		10.535**		8.644
Socio-emotional attribute						
Self-esteem score		0.407***		132.719***		238.209***
Programme of study						
SSCE standardised score		0.045		67.506***		111.100***
Tertiary field of study = STEM		0.137*		170.617***		293.774***
Tertiary field of study = Business		0.044		17.653		8.737
Family background						
Father completed primary		0.006		-125.012***		-180.479**
Father completed secondary		0.108		-74.232		-40.552
Father completed tertiary		0.052		-86.755		-90.302
Mother completed primary		0.018		-22.803		-106.221
Mother completed secondary		0.028		37.124		60.300
Mother completed tertiary		0.242*		135.511		229.395
Father ever worked for government		0.107*		31.258		99.931
Mother ever worked for government		-0.061		-36.080		-95.914
Family member in political office		0.228**		55.649		288.529*
Work experience						
Work experience since secondary school (work for profit/pay)		0.107*		-43.436		-69.757
Constant	-0.049	-1.658***	1,018.115***	418.579**	1,534.531***	703.469**
Observations	2,036	2,036	2,036	2,036	2,036	2,036

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Conclusion

Although the expansion of higher education is partly fuelled by the personal ambitions of individuals and their families, policy discourse and research on higher education pivots around the perspectives and interventions of governments and employers. Young people's experiences are underexplored, which implies that very little of their voice is filtered into policy (Ismail 2016). This article provides insight into the interpretative framework that young people apply to the relationship between the higher education and labour market participation. Specifically, it examines the relative strengths of the human capital theory and of credentialism in explaining young people's demand for higher education.

Compared to degree holders (the majority graduates of universities), graduates with non-degree qualifications (the majority graduates of polytechnics) self-assessed as having more skills training as well as attachments, internships and other experiences that would be expected to provide work-relevant skills. If students held to the human capital theory that posits that skills acquisition is rewarded with labour market success, then non-degree holders would be more optimistic about their employment prospects. On the contrary, the study found that non-degree holders expressed less satisfaction with their education, with many explicitly stating a preference to have a degree and/or to attend university, even if they were to maintain the same programme of study. This desire by non-degree holders for alternative institutions and programmes, despite higher self-assessment of their skills training, may indicate that students place more importance on the face-value of credentials than on skills. Moreover, almost all graduates stated a desire to seek further higher education qualifications, with little difference in the two groups of graduates in the extent to which they expressed this desire. One may see further evidence of credentialism in the fact that degree-holders generally had higher labour market expectations (in terms of employment opportunities and earnings) than graduates without degrees, again despite the former self-reporting lower work-related skills training. Statistical analyses indicate that the differences in labour market expectations between degree and non-degree holders proved to be significant, but were associated with other dimensions of educational and social advantages (see Addae-Mensah 2000). This is consistent with the theory of credentialism that proffers that educational qualifications both signify and deepen social advantage (Mincer 1974; Bourdieu 1986; Brown 2001; Jonasson 2006).

Our findings also suggest a disconnect between two important stakeholders in the graduate labour market – graduates and employers. Ghanaian employers complain about the lack of work-ready skills of

graduates, particularly in regard to generic skills (Adu-Amoah 2008; Bawakyillenuo *et al.* 2013) but the Ghanaian graduate students in our study generally believed their education had provided them with adequate training in the skills desired by the job market. They were also generally sanguine about their employment and earnings prospect, a finding that is consistent with research in both African and non-African contexts (De Graaf & Van Zenderen 2013; Mahama *et al.* 2013; Tymon 2013). Their apparent bent to credentialism and optimistic employment outlook – both of which appear to be at odds with the objective situation of a labour market that values skills over credentialism – suggests that young people may be working on a different model of the relationship between higher education and the graduate labour market than policy-makers who, by and large, subscribe to a human capital approach. This implies a need for greater attention to young people's subjectivities in research and policy-making around youth employment and employability.

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Notes

1. I use the term 'higher education' in its broadest sense as referring to post-secondary education. In this way, it is used synonymously with 'tertiary education' in this article (see https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/tertiaryeducation). In Ghana higher education institutions include universities, polytechnics, technical and vocational schools, teacher training colleges, nursing schools and distance learning centres that award academic degrees, professional qualifications and diplomas (World Bank 2021; Leach *et al.* 2008).
2. It should be noted that the shift described – from credentials to skills, and from 'hard' to 'soft' skills – is less observed in specialist and technical programmes and occupations (Purcell *et al.*, cited in Moreau & Leathwood 2006).
3. Homepage of the Ministry of Education, http://www.ghana.gov.gh/index.php/governance/ministries/331-ministry-of-education. 30 October 2012.
4. Ministry of Education website. https://moe.gov.gh/about-us/. 30 June 2021.
5. Tholen identifies the related phenomenon of 'graduatisation' – 'an increase in the share of labour entrants with university degrees into previously non-graduate occupations' (p. 1071).

6. Based on NSS data, each establishment had received between 1 and 10 national service personnel in 2014, with an average of 2 per establishment, yielding a target sample of approximately 2,000 respondents if we had perfect response rates and if the numbers of national service persons (NSPs) posted to selected establishments remained constant.
7. We do not have full information from the field on response rates.
8. The nature of the survey was explained to respondents beforehand. The consent form said: 'The project will study tertiary graduates who are beginning their National Service this year. The goal is to collect information on the education, training, and work experience of young adults in Ghana in order to understand the employment issues facing today's youth. We are asking you to take part in this study because you are a tertiary graduate and we would greatly appreciate you completing the survey questions.'
9. This finding is based on a simple coding of open-ended responses (e.g. 'I want to enjoy a university education too' and 'My former institution did not run a degree program').
10. We define self-esteem as an individual's 'overall sense of worthiness as a person' and we measure it using the Rosenberg self-esteem scale (Morris Rosenberg 1965). The questionnaire prompted respondents to: 'Please indicate for each of the following ten statements which response best describes you'. We then read a list of statements and asked respondents to indicate whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each one. Examples included 'On the whole, I am satisfied with myself" and 'I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on equal level with others'. We coded responses from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. We constructed an index score by reversing the scoring on responses 2, 5, 6, 8, and 9 and then calculating the mean score for the ten responses so that the self-esteem index score ranges from 1 to 4. Schmitt and Allik (2005) examine the cross-cultural performance of the Rosenberg self-esteem scale using data from a sample of 16,998 respondents in 53 nations. Their sample includes six African countries: Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Morocco, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. They find that the scale generally has similar psychometric properties across cultures and conclude that their study "provides evidence of the structural equivalence of global self-esteem across cultures, supporting the notion that a person's overall evaluation of self-worth is a universally quantifiable human characteristic' (p. 637).

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Globalisation, Decoloniality and the Question of Knowledge Production in Africa: A Critical Discourse

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Abstract

Globalisation entails the process of production and exchange at the planetary level, making the world a global village. At global epistemic levels, it has been dominated by Eurocentrism and Western knowledge production paradigms and platforms. Characterised by asymmetrical and superior-inferior relationships between the global North generally and global South, in Africa in particular, virtually all facets of knowledge production, utilisation and transfer have been dominated by the West. In Africa, the process of knowledge production has been muddled, supplanted and ultimately made subservient to orthodox Western education forms and structures of colonial authorities. The global political economy of knowledge production has consigned indigenous knowledge to being regarded as traditional, unscientific and value-laden. Using philosophical logical reasoning and secondary data, the article critically engages with these issues, especially those that pertain to decolonisation of knowledge production in Africa in the age of globalisation. It provides an examination of pedagogical issues, especially teaching and learning methodologies. It also interrogates the knowledge of culture, mind, and self in knowledge production in Africa within the global context. In addition, it appraises research methodological platforms that inhibit Africanist solutions with global applicability. This is with a view to suggesting interventions that demonstrate the applicability of alternative frameworks of knowledge production in Africa.

Résumé

La mondialisation implique le processus de production et d'échange au niveau planétaire, faisant du monde un village planétaire. Aux niveaux épistémiques

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mondiaux, elle a été dominée par l'eurocentrisme et les paradigmes et plate-formes de production de connaissances occidentales. Caractérisée par des relations asymétriques supérieur-subalterne entre le Nord global en général et le Sud global, en Afrique en particulier, pratiquement toutes les facettes de la production, de l'utilisation et du transfert des connaissances ont été dominées par l'Occident. En Afrique, le processus de production de connaissances a été brouillé, supplanté et finalement asservi aux formes d'éducation occidentales orthodoxes et aux structures des autorités coloniales. L'économie politique mondiale de la production de connaissances a relégué les connaissances autochtones à être perçues comme traditionnelles, non scientifiques et chargées de valeurs. Utilisant un raisonnement logique philosophique et des données secondaires, l'article aborde, de manière critique, ces questions, en particulier celles de la décolonisation de la production de connaissances en Afrique à l'ère de la mondialisation. Il fournit un examen des questions pédagogiques, en particulier des méthodologies d'enseignement et d'apprentissage. Il interroge également la connaissance de la culture, de l'esprit et de soi dans la production de connaissances en Afrique dans le contexte mondial. En plus, il évalue les plateformes méthodologiques de recherche qui inhibent les solutions africanistes d'applicabilité mondiale. Ceci dans le but de suggérer des interventions qui démontrent l'applicabilité de cadres alternatifs de production de connais-sances en Afrique.

Introduction

Globalisation entails the process of production and exchange at the planetary level, making the world a global village. Global epistemology has been dominated by Eurocentrism and Western knowledge production paradigms and platforms. Characterised by asymmetrical and superior-inferior relationships between the global North generally and the global South, particularly in Africa, virtually all facets of knowledge production, use and transfer have been dominated by this relationship. In Africa, the process of knowledge production has been muddled, supplanted and ultimately made subservient to the orthodox Western education forms and structures established by colonial authorities. These 'imposed' forms and structures of Western knowledge production have been maintained by conscious but subtle cultural changes effected by Western-led philosophical justifications, notably in language, translation, methods, equivalence and conceptualisation (Afolabi 2017).

Given that globalisation runs on the fulcrum of ideas, values and principles that privileges the North over the South (Mimiko & Afolabi 2012), the global political economy of knowledge production has

consigned indigenous knowledge to being traditional, unscientific and value-laden. Western knowledge has been prioritised over traditional means of knowledge acquisition. Western relics, forms and values – products of continuous and sustained domination of Africa and its intellect, especially in knowledge production – are regularly justified and sustained by petty African intellectual bourgeoisie.

This has led to Western knowledge being seen as 'normal' with the continuous production of African intellectuals through the Western education grid, with resulting outputs unable to understand Africa's social realities and offer solutions to its problems (Afolabi 2020a). The problems of Western globalisation of ideas and knowledge are felt more in the humanities and social sciences, especially in the social construction of the individual and social realities of Africans. This is because Western ideas are culturally incongruent with African social realities. To argue that colonisation has no effect on the sociology of knowledge is to ignore the enforced knowledge acquisition mandated by the colonial authorities. The very basis of such ignorance, doubt and argument, especially by African academics, shows the success of the embedded liberal ideology and knowledge entrapment of colonialism. The current domination of knowledge production in Africa is sustained by and steeped in the idea and practice of globalisation, an offshoot of capitalism. Knowledge is seen as a commodity that can be sold and bought. This, in essence, is the commodification of knowledge. The commodification of knowledge has been championed by Western financial institutions and adopted in several ways within Africa's educational systems, particularly with the introduction of exorbitant school fees and the rationalisation of academic staff.

World Bank loan conditionalities (Structural Adjustment Programmes then and now) are founded on the same commodification of knowledge and are the principal vehicles to achieve the institution's objectives, an abnormality within the African context. It is the abnormality and dysfunctional issues in liberal knowledge production in Africa that this paper engages with and seeks answers to. The paper is divided into six sections. The first is this introduction, followed by attempt to situate knowledge production between globalisation and decoloniality. The third section examines epistemicide and the disarticulation of knowledge in Africa, and the following section looks at African scholarship towards knowledge production. The next section presents the drivers of knowledge production systems in Africa, while the final section provides a conclusion by examining the possibility and feasibility of Africa breaking the dominance of Western knowledge production in a globalised world.

Situating Knowledge Production between Globalisation and Decoloniality: Establishing the Linkages

The idea of globalisation references the interconnectedness of economies, states and cultures. It is a process that connects and integrates people, governments and other non-state actors. While primarily economic in nature, globalisation is driven by liberal ideas and knowledge of how the world should be shaped. This fits in with Nazombe's definition of globalisation as the 'interlocking of national economies into an interdependent global economy and the development of a shared set of global images' (1995:2). This set of global images is conditioned and promoted by Western values and ideas that are taught and instilled in Western and non-Western societies as natural (localised) orthodox knowledge production systems. The direct relationship between globalised economic systems and dominated African knowledge enterprises is best seen in the works of Harvey (2004), who believed that land dispossession lies at the root of capital accumulation.

While land dispossession and forceful occupation of African societies were the initial efforts (forays) of globalisation in Africa (colonialisation); continued economic exploitation of African economies has been made possible by dominated African epistemologies (Hall & Tandon 2017) through Western knowledge production in Africa.

In view of the history of Africa, concepts such as colonialisation, decolonisation and decoloniality reflect the lived and shared experiences of Africans. Colonialism, as used in this study, refers to a forceful subjugation and occupation of a territory by another state or political power which imposes its will and administration on that territory, known as a colony. In knowledge production, colonial authorities imposed their preferred method of education on the colonised territories, principally through Western missionaries and colonial administrators/paid educators. Decolonisation is needed to eradicate the effects of colonialisation. Therefore, decolonisation involves doing away with the structures, values, and vestiges of colonialisation. It is apt to state from the onset that issues of colonialisation and decolonisation are steeped in controversy and are affected by ideology, race, culture, history and knowledge. This is in turn affected by different societal nuances and mediations that shape the conception and production of knowledge. However, decoloniality goes beyond decolonisation as it argues that coloniality still exists, must be understood in its modern form (coloniality) and must be dismantled for the global South to develop. Associated with Mignolo (2011), the concept of decoloniality has come to be associated with various structures, forms and vestiges of coloniality that continually shape African images of self, identity and memory. Therefore, 'decoloniality is born out of a realisation that ours is

an asymmetrical world order that is sustained not only by colonial matrices of power but also by pedagogies and epistemologies of equilibrium that continue to produce alienated Africans who are socialised into hating the Africa that produced them, and liking the Europe and America that rejects them' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013:11).

While decoloniality does not subscribe to a single school of thought, it is however premised on three ideas. First is the concept of coloniality of power. This explains the construction of the current 'global political' order and the international power structure. Second is the idea of coloniality of knowledge that interrogates epistemological issues, knowledge generation politics and the source, basis and purpose of knowledge. Third is the idea of coloniality of being, emphasising questions of who an individual is, subjectivity versus objectivity, colonised versus coloniser, with answers in the negative for Africans (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013). This negativity is seen in the commodification/objectification of Africans within the global production system of knowledge, economies and development. Decoloniality seeks to 'epistemologically transcend, decolonise the Western canon and epistemology' (Grosfoguel 2007:211). Decoloniality is a platform and indeed an Africanist agenda that seeks to transform various methods, pedagogies and socio-cultural influences that render Africans second-class citizens in a globalised world.

Epistemicide and Knowledge Disarticulation in Africa

Every tribe, race and nation has its own epistemic foundation on which its values, ideas and educational systems are founded. Whether called traditional or modern, value-free or value-laden, the reality is that each society is run based on the knowledge system to which it subscribes. But that is more theoretical than practical. In Africa, through formal colonialism and informal coloniality, Western knowledge system dominance has resulted in the debasement and near extinction of African knowledge systems. Indigenous knowledge systems in Africa have been relegated to second-class because of Western pretensions about epistemic diversity and the insistence on its knowledge system as being scientific, universal and monolithic (Musila 2017). For Achille Mbembe, the Western knowledge system is encased in the Eurocentric canon that "attributes truth only to the Western way of knowledge production. It is a canon that disregards other knowledge traditions' (Mbembe 2015:9). The Western knowledge system views African knowledge production as primitive, barbaric and descriptive.

The effect of this has been to downgrade African epistemologies during the colonial era and, through what we have earlier referred to as the coloniality of knowledge, to actively create knowledge disarticulation in African knowledge

systems. Disarticulation of knowledge or knowledge disarticulation occurs when the main activities of knowledge and its end products such as enlightenment and development are contradictory to and divorced from learners' social realities. In most cases, disarticulation of knowledge results in irrelevant knowledge that is disassociated from the needed trajectories of development in Africa. Disarticulation has continued apace as

> African Studies frequently neglects to conduct serious investigations into the origins of disciplines, into epistemicides, into how knowledge has been used to assist imperialism and colonialism and into how knowledge has remained Euro-American centric. Endogenous and indigenous knowledges have been pushed to the margins of society. Africa is today saddled with irrelevant knowledge that disempowers rather than empowers individuals and communities (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013:11).

Beyond this is the argument that:

> The relational dichotomy that colonialism and imperialism has engendered has not only been racial and psychological (black and white, as in South Africa), but produced a class structure that is not only well developed, but also found among Africans of different classes, influenced by access to and cordiality with coloniality and imperialism (Afolabi 2020a:220).

Epistemological foundations in Africa were also destroyed by the continuous denial of the suitability and usefulness of African knowledge systems. Enforced knowledge production became the acceptable way of life through cultural assimilation and the labelling as unscientific of indigenous knowledge systems. This created a colonised 'power of knowledge' relationship where the values and ideas of Euro-American systems were in an asymmetrical superior–inferior nexus with African systems. Having created this demarcation between possessors of knowledge and ignoramuses, through the force of conquest, an unequal relationship developed and has been nurtured by acts of neo-coloniality. It was easy to demonise and condemn other knowledge bases as irrelevant, bad and in many cases, superstitious. This rhymes with Hall and Tandon (2017:8), who posit that:

> The act of creating Oxford and the other medieval universities was an act of enclosing knowledge, limiting access to knowledge, exerting a form of control over knowledge and providing a means for a small elite to acquire this knowledge for the purposes of leadership of a spiritual, governance or cultural nature. Those within the walls became knowers; those outside the walls became non-knowers. Knowledge was removed from the land and from the relationships of those sharing the land. The enclosing of the academy dispossessed the vast majority of knowledge keepers, forever relegating their knowledge to witchcraft, tradition, superstition, folkways or, at best, some form of common sense.

The evils of disarticulating African knowledge systems are still prevalent today as African traditional philosophies are seen as inferior as well as viewed with suspicion and disdain by mentally colonized Africans and the West. This shows the importance of decoloniality to Africa's emancipation from its dominated position in a globalised world. The economics of globalisation have played a prominent role in maintaining the epistemicide of African knowledge and its usefulness. Even when efforts are made to challenge the epistemic enterprise of Western scholars by launching a philosophical inquiry into the usefulness of all knowledge systems, such efforts are rebuffed by both local intellectuals who are ignorant of the dynamics of the power relations of knowledge between the global North and South and by Western scholars who describe such efforts as unscientific, lacking in universality and, therefore, sub-standard.

African Scholarship Towards Knowledge Production

It is noteworthy that knowledge production is not all about gloom and a bleak future. Africans have contributed immensely to charting a new course in knowledge production discourse within the continent. This is evident in the abundance of scholarly works on African knowledge production; there is a plethora of scholars committed to the pursuit of indigenous production of knowledge, including the late Abiola Irele, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Simon Gikandi.

Some academics believe that the turning point for African knowledge production happened at the time of the meeting of worlds in which one subordinated or eviscerated the other. Hountondji (1995:2) believes that the shortcomings of scientific and technological activity as practiced in Africa today can be traced back to the history of the integration and subordination of traditional knowledge to world systems of knowledge. Olufemi (1993:893) corroborated this, saying that knowledge production existed in Nigeria's remote past before the advent of the alien historical movements which disrupted their capacity for autochthony. Autochthony here denotes the condition of originating knowledge in a natural setting. Against this background, it is established that the mode of African knowledge production is not a new or emerging concept. Some contributions of African scholars to the production of African knowledge are discussed below.

Pio Zirimu and Austin Bukenya's Orature

The term oral literature denotes forms of oral art such as folktales, epic poems, songs, myth spells, proverbs, riddles etc. which are transmitted orally. Ugandan scholar Pio Zirimu and his student Austin Bukenya coined the term Orature in 1977 to describe the use of utterance as a means of literary expression.

This presupposes that literature is fluid and can be verbal. Pio Zirimu's contributions to the production of African knowledge are also evident in his efforts to bring about the curricular legitimation of African literature as an academic discipline at the Makerere University in Uganda (Bukenya 2020).

Micere Githae Mugo: *African Orature and Human Rights* (1991)

In her 1991 paper, Micere Githae Mugo attempted to establish a nexus between African orature and human rights. Mugo believes that orature is a tool used by Africans, especially peasants and workers, and is the product of a socio-economic and philosophical environment. She uses the Agikuyu people of Kenya as a model to explain the composition and structure of orature and the emergence of human rights. She uses the example of the right to education and connects it to how non-formal education employed orature as a medium of knowledge transmission. The basic argument in Mugo's paper is that orature conveys the human experience, which also includes human rights concerns.

Chiekh Anta Diop: *Pre-Colonial Black Africa: a comparative study of the political and social systems of Europe and Black Africa, from antiquity to the formation of modern states* (1987)

Diop's book is a magnifying lens through which Africa can be reimagined outside of the colonial gaze. The book decolonises the history of Africa while stressing that Africa is not a product of Western imperialism. It offers instead an African-centred gaze into the narratives of pre-colonial Africa and its societal structures in which great kingdoms of Mali, Songhai and Ghana were urban centres of civilisation. What Diop has done is to construct the evolution of African history in tandem with European history. This is monumental because African history has always been in the shadows of the West and is almost always a victim of Eurocentricity. The caste system as conceived by Diop can be likened to the European bourgeoisie and proletariat system or that of feudal lords and the serfs. The difference in the African caste system and in its European counterpart was that the superior caste had a duty towards the lower caste in which they were not expected to materially exploit them (Diop 1987).

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o: *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (1981)

Ngugi's book marks his final departure from writing in English. The central theme of the book is language. Ngugi believed that language has a dual

character. It is a means of communication and also a carrier of culture (1981:15) and both are products of each other. Language, particularly through orature, carries culture and culture carries language, with both transmitting the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world (1981:15-16). African languages have long assumed the role of 'the other' in relation to the English language which has become the standard of communication between and among cultures in African society. Many individuals who received their education in Africa can attest to the depiction of African languages as 'vernacular' in relation to the English language. Ngugi believes that language, the English language, is a legacy of colonialism. Ngugi's book is persuasive in its message of decolonising language in the African setting; but it also provides a deeper understanding of how in the past the colonial languages drew an invisible barrier between the colonialists and Africans, and how in the present that barrier exists between educated, literate Africans and those who cannot read, write or speak in those languages. While accepting the importance of Ngugi's return to his linguistic roots, one is tempted to ask if in doing so, he is not also marginalising other Africans who cannot understand his Gikuyu language. Additionally, will he not also run the risk of having his writings decontextualised in the process of translation to English?

Biodun Jeyifo: ***The Nature of Things: Arrested Decolonization and Critical Theory*** **(1990)**

Biodun Jeyifo's work focuses mainly on the emergence of African literature as an academic discipline and the traditions of critical discourse on African literature which we have inherited – the traditions whose premises, frames of intelligibility and conditions of possibility have been yoked to foreign historical perspectives. Jeyifo writes that a decolonisation of African literature has taken place in which African literature has emerged from the woodwork into the academic curriculum in African universities and schools. However, this has led to the emergence of two distinct groups of scholars: the nationalists and the Africanists. The nationalists emphasise extra-literary and non-literary concerns and argue that African literature has to go through a three-stage process where it takes on an apprentice role in European traditions: protests, romanticisms and idyllic nostalgia; and a revolutionary phase of fighting literature. (1990:43). The Africanists on the other hand are ideological and are concerned with objectivity, rigour, formalism and literary norms of evaluation. Jeyifo writes that the Africanists have become the purveyors of African literature and that African literature emerging from the decolonisation processes has mostly catered

to the foreign gaze. As Simon Gikandi attested in an interview with *Brittle Paper*, African writers living in Africa often believe that validation of their writings must come from outside, not from within the continent (Jefferess & Gikandi 2005).

Arjun Appadurai: *Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy (1990)*

Arjun Appadurai's essay looks at the world through a single system with complex subsystems. He believes that the problem of globalisation is the tension between homogenisation and heterogenisation. Appadurai's global world consists of five main 'scapes' of global culture which are interdependent and influence each other in fundamental ways: ethnoscapes, technoscapes, finanscapes, mediascapes and ideoscapes. Each scape, Appadurai believes, represents a particular dimension of global flows which are at the same time disjunctive, interdependent and interrelated. The term ethnoscapes describes the flow of ethnicities; technoscapes refer to the flow of technology; finanscapes looks at the fluidity and flow of capital; mediascapes and ideoscapes describe the flow of images, symbols and ideas in the context of entertainment and enlightenment respectively. However unlike the three scapes, mediascapes and ideascapes build on the disjunctions of the others. The flows are not only disjunctive but also chaotic in character.

V.Y. Mudimbe: *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and The Order of Knowledge* (1988)

Mudimbe's contribution to African knowledge production is his famous work *The Invention of Africa* which examines the foundations of African philosophy as constructed by the West and appropriated by African critics and scholars within the continent. The book poses fundamental questions: What does it mean to be African? Is philosophy an African concept? Over the course of five chapters, he traces the history of African religion and philosophy from Herodotus to Western history, missionary rhetoric, anthropology and contemporary developments. His major thesis identifies African philosophy as gnosis, that is, methods of inquiry and knowing which emphasise a higher and esoteric knowledge under specific procedures for its use as well as transmission (1981:9). He challenges the Western discourse by Western and African scholars on African worlds which attempts to distort African modalities through the use of non-African languages.

Henry Odera Oruka: *Sage Philosophy: Indigenous Thinkers and Modern Debate on African Philosophy* (1990)

This project analyses the role of individual thinkers in the historical development of African thought. For Oruka, sage philosophy is the expressed thoughts of wise men and women in any given community and is a way of thinking and explaining the world which fluctuates between popular wisdom (well-known communal maxims, aphorisms and general common sense) and didactic wisdom (an expounded wisdom and the rational thoughts of given individuals within a community). The folk sage represents the former while the philosophic sage is a symbol of the latter. Oruka's work is geared towards the preservation of African indigenous thought which is why he separated the philosophic sage from other sages. He believed that the philosophic sages are the reservoirs of the indigenous intellectual integrity of African heritage. What Oruka has tried to do is decolonise the concept of philosophy away from the Western thinkers and to show that African philosophy and philosophers have always existed. It might be reductive to limit sage philosophers to the pre-literates in the traditional community. Does it mean that an educated African philosopher does not qualify as a sage because of his/her Western links?

Simon Gikandi: *African Literature and the Colonial Factor* (2000)

Simon Gikandi offers an extensive overview of the interconnectedness between African literature, colonialism and decolonisation. Gikandi writes that modern African literature is a product of colonialism. This is because modern African writers who established the tradition of what is known as African writing – both in indigenous and European languages – were trained and nurtured by colonial institutions. Gikandi's essay highlights the existence of pre-modern African literature which did not come in contact with colonial institutions. These existed in oral literature or better put, orature, and precolonial writing in Arabic, Swahili and other African languages. Gikandi believes that this points to the existence of a thriving literary tradition in precolonial Africa. However, modern literature, which is now considered the heart of African literature, has its identity tied around the traumatic encounter between Africa and Europe. Why is it so? Founders of modern African literature were not only trained by colonial institutions, they were also colonial subjects and this informed their worldview. This is why colonialism and decolonisation has occupied a central theme in African literature discourse.

Globalisation, Coloniality and Drivers of Western Knowledge Production Systems in Africa

It is necessary to point out that the Western knowledge system has its drivers in Africa and many parts of the global South, without which it could not have been sustained. This, as explained, is referred to as coloniality or neo-colonial structures and values in the continent after Africa's so-called independence. The structures and values of coloniality come in different forms and include socio-cultural associations such as the Commonwealth for Anglophone Africa and *Communauté français* (French Community) for Francophone Africa. This is in addition to other Western-led financial and economic organisations to which Africa belongs. In the beginning, colonial authorities imposed their preferred method of education on the colonised territories (Mart 2011). We talk of the colonisation of knowledge, or Western education in Africa after independence, as being the basis of neo-colonialism in Africa. The period after independence has since metamorphosed into the continuation of dominance through the production of Western values and knowledge. The neo-colonial dominance (coloniality) of the West over African knowledge production has continued and even accelerated due to globalisation (modernity) in a number of ways, especially in Africa's ivory towers. The following are the drivers:

a) Journals and publishing firms are classified and rated in a way that imposes Western and capitalist standards. The works of non-Western scholars that do not meet these ideological standards – that is, works that are critical of the West and put forward a socialist perspective are often rejected for publication on the basis of non-conformity with the journal's ethos.
b) The preference of some foreign institutions to establish African research institutes and centres outside Africa, mostly headed by non-Africans. These institutions often hide behind unfounded superiority over African research centres, believing that the generous funding they receive from their home countries gives them the platform to dictate how knowledge is generated, produced and used on the continent.
c) Research funding that creates incentives to produce knowledge that does not understand nor proffer solutions to African realities. Often, such knowledge production is out of touch with Africa's needs in terms of poverty alleviation, reducing child and mother fatality, development, communal cooperative economic growth, and 'space for Africa's own thinking' (CODESRIA 2002).

d) Reliance on Western research methodologies that are tools of gate-keeping (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013). Much of the data generated, using Western developed tools, are adopted and used uncritically in Africa. For instance, scholars in Africa have used Western knowledge production methodology ethics which fail to take cognisance of African cultures and peculiarities, such as communalism and extensive social networks. This renders it unable to provide useful explanations of and solutions to Africa's problems (Afolabi 2020b; Onimode 1988).
e) Methodologies that are inappropriate for understanding African problems through faulty research/data gathering methodologies that miss the cultural, linguistic and conceptual contexts in Africa. This includes the problems of language, teaching, communication, abstraction and interpretation (Owusu-Ansah & Mji 2013). Western methods of gathering data, communicating and imparting knowledge present a challenge.

In essence, these drivers have served to sustain the structures of coloniality or neo-colonialism in Africa. However, more than this is the realisation that the solutions put forward by Western knowledge production systems, by Western scholars and their African academic collaborators, are often ideologically coloured and bear little or no resemblance to individual and social realities. Solutions prescribed and offered are mostly unable to address Africa's problems as they are out of touch with African realities. They therefore provide little or no solution towards Africa's development. In knowledge production, this failure is traceable mainly to the adoption of Western curriculums, its methodologies and the teaching of these in African universities (Mbembe 2016). The interlink between the old colonialism and the modern ways of dominating Africa and much of the global South through coloniality has served to ensure and preserve the continuities between the colonial and the post-independence periods through the commodification of knowledge and objectification of humans outside the Western knowledge systems. Hence, neo-colonialism/coloniality points to a new form of colonisation that is maintained even after colonies gained formal independence. Old colonial powers continue to dominate former colonies (now independent) in economic, political, cultural and educational spheres with the aid of globalisation that has tied African economies to the dictates and influences of the Western economies in what could be argued is an associated dominated relationship. The associated dominated relationship only permits knowledge production that reflects the West dominant epistemologies and not Africa's dominated and much deride philosophies.

Africa in a Globalised World: Concluding Remarks

As earlier pointed out, decolonisation has to do with the conscious and deliberate dismantling of colonial structures and values, while decolonisation of knowledge is at the core of this endeavour. Neo-colonialism/coloniality is maintained through the continued teaching and production of Western orthodoxy. Therefore, the question of Africa reviving its fortunes and breaking free from the stranglehold of Western knowledge systems raises the issue of the possibility, seriousness and restructuring of knowledge production platforms in Africa. To answer the question of whether Africa can break from its dominated state, one would first need to acknowledge the dominated state of the continent in a globalised world. Second, we must acknowledge the continued coloniality of self, knowledge and identity. The seriousness of this quest it appears to be modest, as most of the issues of knowledge production are buried in the politics and economics of survival. These modest signs of serious intent diminish the prospects of restructuring. With African governments devoting less than 3 per cent of their combined budgets to education, it is not yet *uhuru*. More worrisome is the lack of government investment in and commitment to education and knowledge production through research encouragement and funding. There is, however, some hope of the possibility of engaging in epistemic discussion of the havoc wrought by Western knowledge systems on knowledge production in Africa with the epistemic pursuits of why and how knowledge is produced on the continent.

While South African universities and colleges have imbibed this possibility, and have focused on decolonisation, particular on decolonising the curriculum, there is not much activity in this regard in other African countries. The decolonisation effort in reshaping the curriculum in South Africa is both welcome and desirable. But, examined deeply, even this amounts to a scratch on the surface, as implementation is poor (Idowu 2021, forthcoming in this issue). Beneath this effort are questions of what is taught, what we learn, as well as the question of how we learn and research – the question of methods, methodology and research ethics. These questions are germane to as seek a decolonised knowledge production in Africa. The efforts by African scholars and writers in engaging in and espousing various ideas of indigenous knowledge production is a step in the right direction and showcase robust African interventions in the decolonised knowledge production debate.

When thinking about decolonising methodology, we need to consider methods of gathering data (Smith 1999), teaching environment (Orion, Hofstein, Tamir and Giddings 1997) and language of instruction (Taylor

& Coetzee 2013). For example, is the classroom setting the best space to impart knowledge, given the superior-inferior teacher-student relationship (Bovy 2015)? Indeed, the globalised practice of teacher-student hierarchy as an economic transaction of sellers and buyers in the stratified marketplace of knowledge has denied access to many Africans who do not have the economic power to transact money for knowledge. Such individuals have been alienated from the process of self-discovery and knowledge acquisition by the monetised nature of Western knowledge production systems. Greater still, for those who can afford it, or who have been afforded the opportunity of education, the knowledge acquired has served to alienate them from their African roots through epistemicide and incomplete Eurocentric knowledge that promotes Western orthodoxy, while demonising African knowledge systems as superstitious, primitive and barbaric. At present, African languages are seen as vernacular and are taught as such to African students. Thus, African languages as mother-tongues are forbidden within many school premises, at the pain of punishment, especially in many primary and secondary schools across Africa.

There is also the need to critically engage more in questioning the philosophical foundations of orthodox methodologies in Africa. For instance, are Western methodologies, particularly ethnography, appropriate instruments of data gathering, given its noted problems (Owusu 1978) of reliability, validity and cultural relativism? When we examine pertinent questions of globalisation and coloniality in Africa, as has been done in China and Japan (examples in Asia) and in Brazil in Latin America, then we can start the process of creating enabling environments and frameworks for knowledge production that are beneficial for Africa's development. This should be the starting point of the discussion on Africa disentangling itself from its dominated state in a globalised world. The feat of decolonising African knowledge production systems is achievable and in fact present efforts in this regard can build upon past works, in spite of the current situation on the continent.

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Propos sur un « Bandoeng » épistémique : l'Afrique, le Sud global et la production des savoirs au XXIe siècle

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Résumé

La mondialisation repose sur un socle de production des savoirs dont l'analyse géopolitique démontre la polarisation autour de certains États et/ou peuples, en l'occurrence « le Nord ». Ces acteurs maintiennent leur position dominante en multipliant plusieurs dispositifs qui sont autant de leurres destinés à pérenniser le rapport inégal dans l'acte de penser. Au demeurant, Susan Strange a bien saisi les contours de ce jeu des nations en démontant les ressorts et les sites constitutifs de la puissance dans sa dimension structurelle (1988). Le savoir et la circulation de l'information font partie de ces sites en tant que vecteurs de l'hégémonie. Dans cette partition planétaire de la production des savoirs, l'Afrique est dans une mauvaise posture qui la loge sous le signe de la dépendance complexe. Celle-ci est mieux rendue par la « colonialité épistémique ». Cet article entend analyser ce que fait l'Afrique dans la quête de la libération dans le domaine de la production des savoirs en sciences sociales. À la suite d'un courant de pensée dit de la décolonialité épistémique, nous voulons démontrer que l'Afrique devrait se lancer dans ce travail libérateur à travers un « Bandoeng » sur le plan épistémique.

Mots-clés : mondialisation, savoir, colonialité épistémique, Sud global, production du savoir, décolonisation des sciences sociales.

Abstract

Knowledge production is among the pillars of globalisation. Through the lens of geopolitics it is worth understanding that knowledge production field is marked by the hegemony of few States and peoples, let us say the North.

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This hegemonic stand is kept thanks to diverse devices that are as such pitfalls and decoys aimed surreptiously at keeping the uneven balance within the act of thinking. Susan Strange displayed the game nations play in the field of power and she forged the "structural notion of power" (1988). Knowledge and knowledge circulation remain important as the vectors of the global hegemony. The global partition of knowledge production makes Africa lagging while being under strains of complex dependency. Africa's posture is labelled "epistemic coloniality". This article aims at analysing what Africa's scholars are doing so as to free themselves at the epistemic level in the domain of social sciences. Following the paths of epistemic decoloniality we try to grasp what Africa is undertaking through the new spirit of Bandoeng at the epistemic front.

Keywords: globalisation, knowledge, epistelic coloniality, Global South, knowledge production, decolonisation of social sciences.

Introduction

La fin de la guerre froide peut se lire sur le plan discursif comme un moment ayant mis fin à la camisole de la double pensée unique, pensée uni-verselle dont chaque camp voulait imposer la légitimité de son récit/ses récits ici et ailleurs. Cette double pensée se réfère à la confrontation idéologique que chacun des deux camps, de l'Est et de l'Ouest, a déployée entre 1945 et 1990. Cette double pensée participait, en fait, à une confrontation entre des acteurs à l'intérieur d'un même monde, « le monde atlantique » (Mignolo 2002), un monde dont la volonté de puissance imposait qu'il se mît en position de dominer les autres. Alors que planait sur le système international cette guerre froide, se mettait en mouvement l'initiative de contestation de ce monopole épistémique. Cette résistance épistémique dans le champ du savoir n'est pas seulement le propre de ceux de la périphérie, soit du Sud : nous en trouvons des traces aussi au Centre. Michel Foucault en retrace les linéaments lorsqu'il parle de la difficile tâche d'échapper à Hegel en cherchant à l'évacuer du piédestal de la pensée philosophique en Occident (Foucault 1971). Cette contestation proviendra des chemins de la pensée que vont emprunter les gens occupant une position de dominés et dont la voix était inaudible.

Chez ces derniers, ce travail a commencé d'abord sur le plan politique avec la quête de l'indépendance à travers l'entreprise dénommée décolonisation. Sur le plan scientifique, la décolonisation a commencé tôt dans le Sud global avec des aléas divers. Dans cette trajectoire pour se défaire de « l'odeur du Père » (Mudimbe 1982), plusieurs pistes se sont offertes et des voix se sont fait entendre. De telles voix sont nombreuses en Afrique, comme celle de Frantz Fanon, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Samir Amin, Mudimbe, etc. ; en Amérique latine, comme celle de Walter Mignolo, etc., et en Asie comme

celle de Partha Chatterjee ou de Dipesh Chakrabart (Gordon 1982 ; Amin 1988 ; Mignolo 2002 ; Amselle 2008 ; Ngoie 2017). Les penseurs précités ont dégagé le diagnostic de ce malaise dans le savoir. Ce diagnostic va être l'énonciation de « la captivité de la pensée » (Alatas 1995:90) ou de « l'eurocentrisme » (Amin 1998) tandis que pour Paulin Hountondji, le mal à extirper est « l'extraversion de la pensée » (cité par Patel 2014:605). « La colonialité épistémique » (Mignolo 2014:588) devient la camisole qui, dans le champ du savoir, enferme subrepticement le sujet colonisé dans des manières de faire qui le conditionnent et l'affectent autant dans ce qu'il pense que dans la manière dont il pense.

Ayant pris la mesure de cette « occidentalisation du monde » (Mignolo 2014:586), l'Afrique s'est engagée dans cette tâche d'en sortir en s'engageant dans un processus dynamique fait d'avancées et de rétropédalages. En fait, dans les années 1990, le Conseil pour le développement de la recherche en sciences sociales en Afrique (CODESRIA), à la suite d'une entreprise de réflexion sur la décolonisation des sciences sociales en Afrique, a produit un rapport ayant un titre évocateur, *Un programme inachevé* (CODESRIA 1997). L'épithète « inachevé » donne la mesure de l'étendue de la tâche à entreprendre. Peut-on subsumer le sort de l'Afrique sous cet inachèvement ? Une telle passe d'armes est-elle une œuvre qui prend des « chemins qui ne mènent nulle part » (Heidegger [trad. 1962] 1986) ?

Ce texte continue ce débat pour analyser ce que fait l'Afrique dans la quête de la libération dans le domaine de la production du savoir en sciences sociales. Ainsi, nous voulons commencer par cerner la signification du savoir et de la production du savoir. L'Afrique ne peut participer à la production du savoir que si ce savoir est nettoyé de la gangue qui en fait des « langages en folie » (Mudimbe, cité par Kä Mana 2018:68) ; cet exercice de découverture du savoir est fait dans la deuxième section. À la suite du courant de pensée de la décolonialité épistémique (Gordon 2008 ; Mignolo 2014), nous voulons démontrer que l'Afrique devrait se lancer dans ce travail libérateur tout en en appelant à un Bandoeng sur le plan épistémique. Bandoeng en 1955 a été un moment fondateur dans la matérialisation de la solidarité et du réveil des peuples des « Trois A » (Afrique, Amérique et Asie), moment qui leur a permis de se faire entendre et de déclencher le combat conduisant à la décolonisation sur le plan politique, ce qui constitue la matière de la troisième section. La reconnexion entre les parties prenantes du Sud global ne résout pas tous les défis sur ce champ du contrôle, de la production et de la circulation des connaissances, surtout qu'en cette ère de la globalisation digitale, la production de la connaissance étend ses horizons : tenir compte de ces limites fait l'objet de la dernière section.

De la production de la connaissance : les mots et la chose

En distinguant les mots de la chose, nous voulons prendre la mesure du décrochage qui se crée lorsqu'à travers les mots on veut définir la réalité : cette dernière peut avoir une densité que les mots ne sauraient rendre à leur juste valeur. Tâchons néanmoins de procéder au nettoyage conceptuel de ces deux expressions, dont le contenu s'étend actuellement. Qu'est-ce que la connaissance ? Et qu'est-ce que la production de la connaissance ? Pour Rufus Pollock (2009) *« la connaissance est ici utilisée au sens large pour signifier toutes les formes de production d'informations, y compris celles qui sont liées à l'innovation technologique, à la créativité culturelle et au progrès universitaire »*[1]. Ainsi, la connaissance élargit l'horizon du possible ; tel est le cas de l'information générée par la découverte et qu'on applique dans différents domaines de la vie, comme en mécanique, en médecine ou en informatique. De même, la connaissance concourt à l'accumulation des matériaux théoriques et méthodologiques en tant qu'outils de l'acte du savoir. La connaissance et le savoir participent, en fait, à un même socle étymologique en latin[2]. Considérant cette homologie des termes, il n'est que de passer à la définition de la deuxième expression, celle de la production de la connaissance/savoir. La production du savoir se déploie sous la forme des discours qui portent sur des objets et se dénouent en disciplines. « Formations discursives », développements « disciplinaires », tels sont les constituants de la connaissance, du savoir (Foucault 1969:44-48). Ces constituants vont se manifester sous i) une dimension instituée, ii) en ayant des dispositifs propres à eux, et iii) en recourant à des circuits dont les canaux vont se multiplier grâce à des kits « technétroniques » (Brzezinski 1975).

La dimension « instituée » du savoir découle du fait qu'en notre époque, ce n'est pas dans les bosquets que l'on trouve le savoir. Ce dernier est produit à travers certaines institutions universitaires et non universitaires. Il y a actuellement une compétition dans la production de la connaissance entre les institutions universitaires (écoles, facultés, centres de recherche) et des institutions non universitaires comme les institutions financières internationales (la Banque mondiale, le Fonds monétaire international), certaines institutions publiques ou privées et des organisations non gouvernementales. Aux États-Unis, il existe des bureaucraties de recherche, en fait des think tanks ayant pignon sur rue, capables de produire du savoir-action (*policy-oriented research*/ Recherche axée sur les politiques). C'est le cas notamment de la Rand Corporation ou du Council on Foreign Relations (Whitley 2000).

Si le savoir est institué, il est de bon aloi de retenir qu'il y a une catégorie de professionnels qui ont mandat de l'énoncer et de le produire. Cette professionnalisation se manifeste par la création d'associations savantes

et de métiers de recherche. L'Association internationale de sociologie, l'Association internationale de science politique ou l'Association des études internationales[3] deviennent ainsi des organisations portées à conserver la tradition disciplinaire dans ses continuités et discontinuités.

La deuxième dimension du savoir renvoie à des dispositifs propres qui en sont des rampes. Ces dispositifs participent ainsi à des questions ontologiques, méthodologiques et épistémologiques devenant des marqueurs pour chaque discipline et permettant d'établir des passerelles entre diverses disciplines. Foucault en dit quelque chose lorsqu'il écrit : « Une discipline se définit par un domaine d'objets, un ensemble de méthodes, un corpus de propositions considérées comme vraies, un jeu de règles et de définitions, de techniques et d'instruments » (Foucault 1971:35). Cette dimension est liée aux modalités d'expression, sinon de communication, car le savoir produit doit se transmettre et c'est en circulant qu'il joue son rôle. La troisième dimension, subséquente à la deuxième, est relative à des circuits de communication et de circulation du savoir. Ces circuits deviennent de plus en plus complexes, appuyés par des kits « technétroniques » que l'on utilise dans la production et la circulation du savoir. En cette ère de la digitalisation, on produit le savoir lorsqu'on est capable de publier des livres et des articles dans des journaux évalués par des pairs à forte audience internationale ; on produit le savoir lorsqu'on le fait à travers des publications dont les auteurs bénéficient de partenariats de collaboration avec des chercheurs d'autres pays ou d'autres régions du monde. Enfin, ces publications doivent être cotées non en Bourse, mais sur des sites propres, ce qui va influer sur la visibilité de l'université. Des notions d'« effet d'impact », de *rankings*, d'index de citations sont propulsées dans la littérature et donnent lieu à une compétition aveugle, la recherche étant devenue une marchandise qu'on offre sur le marché. « La scientométrie » et « l'analyse bibliométrique » deviennent ainsi des pratiques objectives dans le processus de la production de la connaissance (Beigel 2014:618). Dans cette « influence globale de la recherche », le rôle de l'anglais en tant que *lingua franca* du savoir est de plus en plus prégnant (Hanafi & Arvanitis 2014:723-742). La production du savoir se résout dans des publications dans des revues avec des pairs évaluateurs[4]. Le syndrome de *Publish or perish (Publier ou périr)*, devenu un cauchemar pour des chercheurs individuels dans les pays développés, se répand à l'échelle mondiale et s'empare de la vie des universités et des nations.

Si, actuellement, tous les chercheurs du Nord et du Sud sont engagés dans le savoir en sciences sociales, à la production duquel ils s'efforcent de contribuer, il suffit de rappeler que ce savoir a d'abord été produit quelque

part pour quelque chose. La découverte de ce lieu d'émergence des sciences sociales, soit l'Occident, permet de considérer que ce savoir n'est pas neutre : il a été et est au service d'« une énergétique d'un devenir » (Kä Mana 2018:67) pour accompagner la volonté de la conquête du monde. Walter Mignolo dit mieux quand, à ce sujet, il écrit :

> Que l'émergence des sciences sociales en Europe au cours du XIXe siècle, précédée par la pensée sociale européenne pendant le siècle des Lumières, est déjà largement connue et acceptée... Les sciences sociales se sont répandues dans le monde entier. Elles sont devenues les compagnes de l'empire... Elles ont fait partie intégrante de la construction de la civilisation occidentale et de l'expansion impériale occidentale concomitante[5]. (Mignolo 2014:585-586)

Ainsi considérées, la connaissance et la production de la connaissance dans le monde globalisé continuent à soulever des questions sur la contribution de l'Afrique dans ce domaine et sur la pertinence de ce savoir dans l'affranchissement et l'*empowerment* (autonomisation) de ce continent. Aborder ce questionnement conduit à parler de la « colonialité épistémique » (Mignolo 2014:588) des sciences sociales.

Sortir de la colonialité épistémique : état des lieux

La colonialité épistémique est la gangue subreptice et silencieuse qui obstrue tout effort de développement du savoir et surtout de production du savoir dans les sciences sociales en Afrique, un savoir qui soit porté à éclairer la société pour son devenir assumé. Qu'est-ce que la colonialité épistémique? Avant de répondre à cette question, il importe de noter que cette expression est utilisée dans une synonymie avec les termes « eurocentrisme » (Amin 1988), « métrocentrisme » (Go cité par Patel 2014:606) ou « pensée captive » (Alatas 1995:90). Tous ces termes renvoient à un même soubassement, sinon à un même piège : celui qui consiste à enfermer la manière de penser dans l'interprétation du monde taillée sur la mesure déterminée depuis le siècle des Lumières par les Européens, ceux du « monde Atlantique ». Selon Samir Amir, la colonialité épistémique est l'expression de l'eurocentrisme, c'est-à-dire « de l'universalisme tronqué des propositions offertes par l'idéologie et la théorie sociale » (Amin 1998:10). Pour Lander (cité par Mignolo 2014:584) :

> Le problème de l'eurocentrisme dans les sciences sociales ne réside pas seulement dans le fait que ses catégories fondamentales ont été créées en fonction d'un temps et d'une place particuliers et par la suite ont été utilisées de manière plus ou moins créative et rigide pour étudier d'autres réalités… Le problème réside dans l'imaginaire colonial sur lequel les sciences sociales occidentales ont construit leur interprétation du monde.

Les ravages de la colonialité épistémique sont importants sur les sciences sociales en Afrique. Ils se manifestent par l'empilement des asymétries sur le plan du savoir et de sa circulation. D'abord, il se dessine une division du travail scientifique par laquelle une partition des tâches se met en mouvement : à des chercheurs du Nord revient la tâche de producteurs des théories et des méthodes ; ils bénéficient des appuis financiers de leurs centres de recherche (Heilbron 2014), et sont capables aisément d'effectuer des recherches sur le terrain, situé dans le Sud global ; des chercheurs du Sud, on attend qu'ils récoltent des données de terrain et qu'ils appliquent, testent, sinon reproduisent des théories et des méthodes élaborées outre-Atlantique. Un autre versant de cette partition se lit à travers le fait que les chercheurs du Nord peuvent écrire sur les pays du Sud global et en devenir des experts ; rarement, les experts du Sud global peuvent publier sur des questions du Nord et en devenir des experts écoutés.

Ensuite, il y a lieu de parler du silence que l'on maintient sur l'Afrique. L'Afrique est absente dans la problématique de la modernité, à laquelle on pense qu'elle n'a en rien contribué (Patel 2014 : 606). Un autre silence découle du fait que les grands auteurs (les *top writers*) euro-américains sont indifférents aux auteurs africains qu'ils ne citent qu'à peine dans leurs écrits, alors que dans les écrits des Africains, c'est la compétition, sinon une course effrénée que l'on fait pour citer des références des auteurs euro-américains. Pour le cas de ces auteurs, les *top writers*, il suffit de rappeler Michel Foucault, Samuel Huntington, Francis Fukuyama, qui citent à peine quelques auteurs africains[6]. Enfin, il suffit de citer le piège de l'enchantement créé chez les chercheurs du Sud global en quête de publications dans des revues internationales bien cotées sur le plan global, ce qui relève de l'effet impact. Ces revues, à l'exemple des *Cahiers d'études africaines*, *Revue Tiers Monde*, *Archives européennes de sociologie*, *Review of International Studies, African Affairs, Politique africaine*, etc., appartiennent aux centres dominants du savoir situés dans le monde atlantique. Elles sont cotées par ceux-là mêmes qui exercent subrepticement le contrôle hégémonique sur les canons du savoir, position qui leur permet de filtrer les productions des prétendants et prétentieux chercheurs du Sud global. Analysant le ravage de l'envie d'entrer dans la cour des grands que l'on trouve dans la communauté des chercheurs au Nigeria, Omobowale, Akanle, Adeniran et Adegboyega ont démonté cette mécanique d'attraction que les publications extérieures payantes et prédatrices ont induite sur cette périphérie ; paradoxalement, les chercheurs nigériens se font duper et n'accèdent pas à des avancées significatives en fait de recherche (Omobowale *et al*. 2014:666-684).

De nombreux chercheurs africains, évoluant dans des universités africaines et manifestant leur désobéissance épistémique dans des activités scientifiques organisées par le CODESRIA, ne cessent de faire état des méfaits de la colonialité épistémique. Cette contestation crée une configuration discursive dont la tonalité est de sortir de cette camisole. Par l'écriture, l'approche pour insuffler les marques de la «décolonialité» et de «la désoccidentalisation» (Mignolo 2014:589) sur ce front est à la fois individuelle et collective. Les individualités, en Afrique, sont nombreuses. Il y a des auteurs connus et célèbres et d'autres moins connus. Point besoin de les citer tous ici. Beaucoup d'auteurs africains cités dans ce texte ne participent-ils pas à ce travail lent, mais profond, de «désobéissance épistémique» (Mignolo, cité par Taylor 2012:389)? En effet, des écrits individuels contestant l'épistémè «atlantique» dominante ont été vulgarisés dans les colonnes et les séries de publications du CODESRIA.

Au Congo-Kinshasa, il y a un auteur que l'on cite à peine, c'est Mabika Kalanda, qui a écrit un livre au titre provocateur, *La remise en question : Base de la décolonisation mentale*[7]. Mudimbe a publié sur cette question dans les années 1970 (1972). Samir Amin a publié un essai sur ce front (1998). On peut également citer bien d'autres comme Paulin Hountondji, Arche Mafeje ou Nzongola Ntalaja (Amselle 2008: 65-80). Le Sénégalais Ousmane Kane publie aussi une étude provocante sur *Les intellectuels non europhones* (2003). Dans la littérature africaine, le Kenyan Ngugi wa Thiong'o ou le Nigérian Wole Soyinka, entre autres, ont participé à ce débat (Gordon 2008). Au niveau collectif africain, le combat pour le «border thinking» va se déployer à travers le site et le forum que le CODESRIA va offrir en ce continent dès sa création, en 1973. Le rôle de ce centre panafricain, bien disséqué par Jean-Loup Amselle (2008:65-110), va se condenser, certes, autour des publications (*Séries de livres du CODESRIA*, *Revue africaine des relations internationales*, *Revue africaine de sociologie*, revue *Afrique et Développement*, *Bulletin du CODESRIA*, *Afrika Zamani*), mais aussi autour des manifestations scientifiques telles que des assemblées générales et des instituts organisant des sessions annuelles sur des thématiques ouvrant des réflexions et des pensées neuves. Les penseurs africains ne se retrouvent pas seuls dans cette quête d'autres savoirs. Ils ont bénéficié d'une convergence parallèle dans des initiatives des pensées entre les chercheurs des «Trois A».

L'Afrique et le Sud global : conversations pour une connaissance globale et multiple

Sur le front de la lutte contre la colonialité épistémique, les chercheurs africains se dotent du CODESRIA, une plate-forme devenant une passerelle pour des opportunités d'échanges et de collaboration avec des chercheurs

de l'Asie et de l'Amérique latine. En Asie comme en Amérique latine, les préoccupations de la quête de la décolonialité étaient au centre de la discursivité des intellectuels et des chercheurs. C'est en Amérique latine que, déjà dans les années cinquante, Raul Prebisch élabore une analyse expliquant le sous-développement du tiers-monde à l'aide d'un cadre conceptuel du centre et de la périphérie. Ce cadre conceptuel sera récupéré par l'égyptien Samir Amin qui développera la théorie du développement inégal (Amselle 2008). En Asie, des auteurs variés développeront des analyses pertinentes portant sur la remise en cause des généalogies des pensées occidentales étouffant les pensées et les récits locaux. À ce sujet, on peut citer Partha Chatterjee, dont un texte sur *Our Modernity* (1997) sera publié conjointement par le Sephis et le CODESRIA. Un autre Indien mérite d'être cité : il s'agit de Dipesh Chakrabarty qui popularisa un courant d'analyses portant sur la compréhension de la dynamique des exclus de la société qu'on dénomme les *Subaltern Sudies*. Ce dernier auteur a publié un livre fort intéressant intitulé *Provincializing Europe* : « Il énonce dans cet ouvrage la thèse majeure du mouvement subalterniste indien, à savoir la mise en question de la prétention de l'Europe à gouverner le monde au nom de la raison universaliste, et la nécessaire provincialisation qui en résulte, c'est-à-dire sa réduction au statut d'une aire culturelle quelconque » (Amselle 2008:149-150).

Des conversations stratégiques sur les savoirs entre les Africains et les autres partenaires du Sud global pour réduire les effets et les illusions du monde atlantique vont se multiplier et prendront les chemins de la coopération institutionnelle durable. Une sorte de commission tri-continentale[8] sera créée : ainsi, le CODESRIA signera des accords de collaboration avec le Conseil latino-américain des sciences sociales (Clacso) basé à Buenos Aires et avec l'Association asiatique des Études politiques et internationales (Apisa : Asian Political and International Studies Association) dont le siège est à Kuala Lumpur en Malaisie (voir aussi Amselle 2008:114). Entre le CODESRIA et le Clacso, vont être organisées des activités scientifiques autour des thématiques qui conduisent à la tenue des conférences intercontinentales. Sur ce chapitre des initiatives mutuelles, il importe de citer l'appui qui sera apporté au CODESRIA et à d'autres plates-formes du Sud global engagées dans la décolonialité épistémique par un programme financé par les Pays-Bas : c'est le Sephis (South-South Exchange Program for Research on the History of Development) (Amselle 2008:115-116).

Sur cette lancée, il est tout indiqué de relever les percées que les intellectuels africains et du Sud global ont réussi à faire en « pénétrant » les cercles du savoir dominant. Cette pénétration a été opérée lorsqu'en 2006, l'Association internationale de sociologie a organisé son Congrès à

Durban. Cette épopée est narrée par Sitas lorsqu'il parle de la détermination des sociologues africains à inscrire un agenda pour la mise en œuvre « d'un projet de sociologie globale de l'Afrique » (2014:457-471).

Portée et limites d'un Bandoeng épistémique

Bandoeng épistémique est déjà une réalité : il est issu de la convergence objective de la communauté des chercheurs originaires des « Trois A ». Cela explique les différentes initiatives que le CODESRIA a engagées pour nouer des partenariats avec les pairs de l'Amérique latine et de l'Asie. Même au Nord, il y a ceux qui militent en s'opposant à la colonialité. C'est le cas de Sephis, un programme financé par le gouvernement hollandais. La mise en mouvement de ce Bandoeng épistémique répond à une contrainte objective, celle dégagée par Gordon Lewis lorsqu'il affirme que dans le processus de la décolonisation, on ne peut réussir que si tous les concernés vivant dans cette situation se déterminent à agir ensemble et dans le même sens (2008).

Ce Bandoeng épistémique a permis de porter haut le flambeau des formations discursives fustigeant la colonialité épistémique et en appelant à une décolonialité épistémique en vue des pensées alternatives. Ce « border thinking » traverse actuellement plusieurs domaines du savoir : en relations internationales ou en sociologie en Afrique. Dans la discipline des relations internationales, l'eurocentrisme est encore l'horizon théorique incontournable. Que ce soit le concept de la souveraineté, de la puissance, de l'intégration ou même de l'État, le champ constitutif de ces termes repose sur des « généalogies occidentales » (Mignolo 2014) excluant celles de l'Afrique, de l'Amérique latine et de l'Asie. C'est la tâche à laquelle s'attachent des auteurs différents comme Amitav Acharya (2016:4-15), Yaqing Qin (2016:33-47) et Melisa Deciancio (2016:106-119). Deciancio a déconstruit le mythe sur lequel s'appuient les études des relations internationales lorsqu'elles s'appliquent à analyser les États de l'Amérique latine (2016:106-110). En sociologie, les chercheurs du Sud global ont élevé leurs voix et ont investi certains cercles où on parle de la sociologie à travers les voix des maîtres du monde dont ils tentent de contester la portée discursive ; c'est le cas de Archie Mafeje (+), Mignolo, Sitas ou Patel (Amselle 2008). Ils ont réussi à en appeler à un projet de sociologie globale. De même, ils ont réussi à faire inscrire dans des problématiques légitimes des questions concernant la vie réelle des peuples africains (Sitas 2014).

La prise de conscience de la nécessité de la décolonialité est évidente. Ce travail herculéen continue. Les limites de ce Bandoeng épistémique découlent du rapport de forces dans l'économie politique internationale du savoir : les ressources financières sont un ingrédient dont il faut prendre la mesure.

Avec la digitalisation dans l'industrie des écrits, la dépendance technologique de l'Afrique a besoin d'être corrigée. L'Amérique latine se dote d'outils de publications à travers tous les gadgets technétroniques pour un espace propre des publications sur le Web avec des possibilités sur « l'Open access » (Vessuri *et al.* 2014:647-665). L'Afrique éprouve encore des difficultés pour avoir l'espace d'autonomie pour ses propres publications : elle dépend en grande partie des partenariats scientifiques (financiers) du Nord.

Conclusion

La connaissance et la production de la connaissance évoluent dans un environnement dont la géopolitique du savoir démontre une partition des rôles entre un Nord s'imposant, constitué de plusieurs centres de savoir dominants, et un Sud global consommateur, sinon reproducteur des idées d'autrui. Cette situation se traduit par une colonialité épistémique. Sortir de cette colonialité est une tâche qui a commencé depuis longtemps. Cette tâche se déroule avec des aléas de toutes sortes, mais avec détermination, dans le Sud global. Commencée en Amérique latine et en Asie, cette résistance épistémique a trouvé des échos en Afrique, dont des auteurs ont entrepris la contestation de la persistance « des langages en folie ». Lorsque le CODESRIA, une fois créé, s'offre comme une plate-forme de discussions et de production de connaissance, il inaugure des synergies avec des plates-formes d'autres continents du Sud global pour chercher à créer d'autres lieux et espaces de production de connaissance. Ce Bandoeng épistémique est en marche : son épopée est en train de se dérouler avec des aléas divers. La communauté des chercheurs africains cherche à jouer un rôle ; mais ce rôle trouve ses limites dans des contraintes financières et technétroniques. La dépendance de l'Afrique sur ce double plan ne saurait lui permettre de se déployer de manière autonome dans le champ de la production de la connaissance. Mais l'avenir est ouvert : il appartient à l'Afrique d'engager des moyens pour appuyer les ressources humaines, qui sont nombreuses, de sorte que les circuits de la production et de la circulation de la connaissance aient une énergétique propre à ce continent.

Notes

1. 'knowledge is here used broadly to signify all forms of information production including those involved in technological innovation, cultural creativity and academic advance' Rufus Pollock (2009).
2. Le terme de connaissance vient du verbe latin *cognoscere* ; le savoir, du verbe latin *scire*. En fin de compte, cette approche étymologique est un piège qui relève de « la colonisation épistémologique » que Lewis Gordon nous enjoint d'éviter (2008).

3. L'Association internationale de sociologie a une anagramme en anglais, ISA qui ressemble à celle de l'Association des études internationales (International Studies Association).
4. Beigel note qu'à l'ère de la globalisation du système de publications, les revues à évaluation par les pairs déclassent les livres. Les chercheurs se ruent pour se faire publier ainsi dans des revues. Par ailleurs, le système de publication a introduit la fonction « d'indexeurs », remplaçant celle des « catalogueurs » (Beigel 2014:617).
5. 'That the social sciences emerged in Europe during the nineteenth century, preceded by European social thought during the Enlightment, is already widely known and accepted… The social sciences expanded around the world. They became the empire companion… They were part and parcel of building Western civilization and the concomitant Western imperial expansion.' (Mignolo 2014:585-586)
6. Dans le livre de Samuel Huntington, *Le choc des civilisations*, dans l'index, nulle mention n'est faite de l'Afrique subsaharienne. On y mentionne l'Afrique du Sud et quelques autres pays africains, le nombre des citations (et de pages) dépassant à peine dix. Point de référence à Cheik Anta Diop ni à Senghor tandis que Leo Frobenius est cité (Huntington 1997).
7. "Mabika Kalanda wrote several books on different topics, ranging from the intra-ethnic conflict between the Lulua and Luba-Kasai to mythology, but his most important book with respect to postcolonial Africa is *La remise en question : base d'une décolonisation mentale* (1967), in which the author calls for mental decolonisation in Africa by the calling into question of ideas, values and behaviour inherited from colonialism. The manuscript was sent to the publisher in 1965, but the book did not appear until two years later. By the time Mabika Kalanda began writing it in 1964, he had already dropped using his 'Christian' or 'European' name of Auguste, nearly eight years before Mobutu launched his 'recourse to authenticity' drive in February 1972, which ordered his compatriots to use African names only and to promote African culture. Before that, in 1963, Mabika Kalanda had written a book in Tshiluba, one of the four national languages in the DRC, entitled *Tabalayi*, or open your eyes, for the Lulua and Luba-Kasai who are not fluent in French, but who share the same mother tongue, to resist the manipulations of ambitious politicians who were stoking the fires of division and war for their own interests. Today, when you go into academic forums in the United States and in Anglophone Africa, you hear scholars heap praise on the distinguished Kenyan writer and academic Ngugi wa Thiong'o, formerly James Ngugi, as the person who first came up with the concept of mental decolonisation in his book *Decolonizing the Mind* (1986), although Ngugi himself gives a lot of credit to Frantz Fanon for this idea. Unfortunately, both Anglophone and Francophone scholars in Africa know little or nothing about Mabika Kalanda and his work. One can understand why Anglophone scholars could not have heard of him in the absence of translations. In the case of Francophone scholars, on the other hand, the main issue is the

fact that we seem to notice great African intellectuals only after they have been discovered by Europeans or Americans", "A People's Historian: an interview with Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja," by *Review of African Political Economy*, April 20, 2021, See https://roape.net/2021/04/20/a-peoples-historian-an-interview-with-georges-nzongola-ntalaja/

8. Sur le plan de la géopolitique mondiale, un affrontement s'est réalisé entre les pays développés organisés en une Commission trilatérale (USA, Europe et Asie) et les pays du tiers-monde qui ont créé la Commission tri-continentale dans les années 1970. Si cet affrontement avait une forte connotation politique, il va prendre la forme d'un combat intellectuel avec ce que font le CODESRIA, le Clacso et l'Apisa pour instaurer un front pour des pensées alternatives.

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