

Knowledge production, research ethics and authorship in African contexts

DATE: 13-14 NOVEMBER 2023

SILENT VOICES
data management
collaborations
POWER
good practices
partnership
FREEDOM
international
predation
new paradigms
ethics
publication market
bias
research
access
DECOLONIZATION
non-academic stakeholders
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power
writeshops
FIELDWORK
scholarly production
CHALLENGES
EDUCATION

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PROGRAMME

MONDAY 13 NOVEMBER 2023

9h00 Welcome coffee

10h00 Opening by Fiona Moolla, Deputy Dean Research Faculty of Arts & Humanities, UWC and Guido Van Huylbroeck, former Director for Internationalisation, Ghent University [Room 110]
Livestream: <https://bit.ly/49wQrRk>

10h15 Words of welcome by the presidents of the Africa Platform and co-organisers UWC [Room 110]
Livestream: <https://bit.ly/49wQrRk>

10h30-12h00 Individual Oral Presentations - Session One

	Inequality in publishing – 1 Facilitator: Amaury Frankl Room: 110 Livestream: https://bit.ly/49wQrRk	Ecocriticism & ecofeminism Facilitator: Aja Marneweck Room: 111 Livestream: http://bit.ly/3MDf3h8	Lessons from collaborative research Facilitator: Lwando Scott Room: 109 Livestream: https://bit.ly/3MxNUw8
10h30	Silas Parowa Mangwende & Blessing Zari (Women's University in Africa) in person Fostering access of publication markets by disadvantaged researchers in the Global South	Maria Martin de Almagro Iniesta (Ghent University) online "Incorporating' experiential knowledge to Sustaining Peace: Exploring Indigenous and Ecofeminist perspectives on UN knowledge production initiatives	Ahmed Shaikjee (University of the Western Cape) & Gry Ulstein (Ghent University) in person Fostering Collaborative Interinstitutional Infrastructure for Joint PhDs: Administration as a Facilitator, Not a Barrier
11h00	Josaphat Musamba (Institut Supérieur Pédagogique Bukavu & Ghent University) & Christoph Vogel (Ghent University & Ebuteli) in person Metrics are no zero-sum game. A practical guide to researching and publishing together	Jacob Odeny (Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology) online Echoes from the Ancestral Grove: Agikuyu Folk Narratives as Ecological Chronicles, Illuminating the Menace of Foreign Resource Plunder and its Environmental Ramifications	Alexander De Soete (Ghent University), Stef Slembrouck (Ghent University) & Quentin Williams (University of the Western Cape) in person Professional-Academic Development over Here ... and There: Three Perspectives on North-South Collaboration and Joint PhD Research
11h30	Addisalem Tebikew Yallow & Rajendra Chetty (University of the Western Cape) in person Publishing in English and multilingual scholars in African contexts: quality-related concerns	Inge Brinkman (Ghent University), James Wachira (University of Nairobi), Peter Wasamba (University of Nairobi) & Teshome Mossissa (Jimma University) online Rainbows in Eastern African folktales: oral narrative as ecocritical model	Nega Jibat (Jimma University) online Trajectory of Jimma University Clinical and Nutrition Research Center (JUCAN): Lessons for establishing resilient south-north research collaboration

12h00-12h15 Words of welcome by Tyrone Pretorius, Rector and Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Western Cape [Courtyard]

12h00-13h00 Lunch break

13h00-14h30 Keynote lecture by Mamadou Dia (University of Virginia): *Filmmaking today: what can we learn from oral traditions?* [Room 110]
Livestream: <https://bit.ly/49wQrRk>

14h30-16h00 Panel Presentations - Session One

<p>When we follow the plants we constantly meet their people: Thoughts on decolonizing the vegetal world through the theory and ethnography of plants</p> <p>in person</p> <p>Facilitator: William Ellis (University of the Western Cape) Room: 110 Livestream: https://bit.ly/49wQrRk</p>	<p>Taking international research collaborations to the next level. The case of the Academic Network for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (ANSER)</p> <p>online</p> <p>Facilitator: Emilie Peeters (Ghent University) Room: 111 Livestream: http://bit.ly/3MDf3h8</p>	<p>Learning to unlearn. Feminist research approaches with South African communities dismantle power relations in knowledge systems</p> <p>in person</p> <p>Facilitators: Sanelisiwe Nyaba and Nicole Paganini (University of Cape Town & TMG Think Tank for Sustainability, Berlin) Room: 109 Livestream: https://bit.ly/3MxNUw8</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sara Lagardien Abdullah (Department of Anthropology, University of the Western Cape) - Denisha Anand (Department of Anthropology, University of the Western Cape) - Rhoda Deers (Department of Anthropology, University of the Western Cape) - William Ellis (Department of Anthropology, University of the Western Cape) - Tihana Nathen (Department of Anthropology, University of the Western Cape) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emilie Peeters (Ghent University) - Hanani Tabana (University of the Western Cape) - Nafissa Osman (Universidade Eduardo Mondlane) - Tammary Esho (AMREF International University) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bonang Libuke (Food Agency Cape Town (FACT)) - Aqeela Singlee (Food Agency Cape Town (FACT))

16h00-16h30 Coffee Break

16h30-18h00 Individual Oral Presentations - Session Two

	Questioning positionality – 1 Facilitator: Karen Büscher Room: 110 Livestream: https://bit.ly/49wQrRk	Inequality in publishing – 2 Facilitator: Alexander De Soete Room: 111 Livestream: http://bit.ly/3MDf3h8	Knowledge sharing in agricultural research Facilitator: Michelle Smith Room: 109 Livestream: https://bit.ly/3MxNUw8
16h30	Constanze Blum (Leipzig University) in person “When your grandfather came to Africa”: Reflections on positionality and how to navigate perceptions when studying the African Union	Thabile Mbatha (University of Zululand), Thelma Mort (University of South Africa) & Jane Tozama Mthembu (Tshwane University of Technology) in person Rebuilding the things that fall apart: PrimTED’s English language stream develops a framework to enhance educational standards	Branwen Peddi (Ghent University), David Ludwig (Wageningen University & Research) & Joost Dessein (Ghent University) - online How do knowledge politics influence community-based actions in food and agriculture? A case study in Forikrom, a community in the transition zone of Ghana
17h00	Monika Motylińska (Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space) in person Unequal Measures and Counter-Investigations. Conducting Collaborative Research on the History of the Built Environment in sub-Saharan— Perspectives from Germany	David Mills (University of Oxford) online Surviving in a global citation economy: Dispatches from sub-saharan Africa	Sylvia Bursens (Ghent University & Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, Rome), Zofia Mroczek , (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, Rome), Nejib Ajili , Mohamed El Amrani (National School of Agriculture of Meknes), Eugen Chiabur & Nevena Alexandrova (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, Rome) in person Knowledge sharing and co-creation to strengthen advisory agricultural services
17h30	Ashenafi Tirfie Tizazu, Ilse Derluyn & Ine Lietaert (Ghent University) online Ethnic Federalism, Internal Boundaries and the Researcher’s Positionality: Fieldwork Inquiry in Ethiopia	Aneth Bella David (University of Dar es Salaam), Mohamed Zahir Alimohamed (Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences), Grantina Modern (Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology), Obadia Shadrack Buhomoli (University of Dodoma) & Paul Muneja (University of Dar es Salaam) online Knowledge and practices of open science among scholars and researchers in Tanzania	Sintayehu Yigrem Mersha (School of Animal and Range Sciences, College of Agriculture, Hawassa University), Ajebu Nurfeta (School of Animal and Range Sciences, College of Agriculture, Hawassa University), Zelege Mekuriaw (International Livestock Research Institute, Addis Ababa) & Nargiza Ludgate (Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida) online Strengthening and Accelerating Institutional Linkages among Research, Learning, development and Business Institutions: Lessons from a collaborative projects in Ethiopia

18h00-20h00 Ghent Africa Platform Lecture in Honour of Nelson Mandela, by Premesh Lalu, Centre for Humanities Research, UWC: *The future of post-apartheid education* [Room 110]
Livestream: <https://bit.ly/473GkBv>

20h00-22h00 Reception and informal celebration of *Undoing Apartheid*, by Premesh Lalu, with comments by Rustum Omar (Dullah Omar Foundation), Nikita Vasi (former student leader, joint SRCs) and Heidi Grunebaum (CHR Director)

TUESDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2023

9h00-10h30 Individual Oral Presentations - Session Three

	Decolonising knowledge production Facilitator: Valmont Layne Room: 109 Livestream: https://bit.ly/476HpIV	Listening to silent voices Facilitator: Koen Vlassenroot Room: 110 Livestream: https://bit.ly/49nwigp	Closing the knowledge gaps Facilitator: Gillian Mathys Room: 111 Livestream: https://bit.ly/3u1VzMK	Questioning positionality – 2 Facilitator: Karen Büscher Room: 104 Livestream: https://bit.ly/3MDxjqJ
9h00	Miriam Bartelmann & Viviana García Pinzón (Arnold-Bergstraesser-Institut) online Confronting epistemic hierarchies? The virtual encyclopaedia as a way of re-centring the pluralities of knowledge in peace and conflict studies	Dorothy Ruth Queiros (University of South Africa) in person Reflections on research in rural South Africa: lessons from a PhD journey	Leona Morgan (University of the Western Cape & Ghent University), Sarajini Nadar (University of the Western Cape) & Ines Keygnaert (Ghent University) in person 'Stay with the Body' – Establishing Embodied Care Pathways for Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Trauma	Marte Beldé (Ghent University) online Ethnographic research on Jihadist groups: navigating constant disruptions in the field
9h30	Julia Glaser & Eunice Amboka Likoko (Wageningen University & Research) online Epistemic injustice in international development cooperation: a case study of a research institute's knowledge strategy	Zaib Toyer (University of the Western Cape) in person A material culture analysis of representations of Day Zero in Cape Town, South Africa	Sarah De Smet (Ghent University), Smaranda Boroş (Vlerick Business School), Charlene Zietsma (University of Michigan), Claire Maréchal (Artevelde University of Applied Sciences) & Karijn Bonne (Artevelde University of Applied Sciences) online Disempowerment from within: The perpetuation of othering at the intersection of entrepreneurship, gender and ethnicity	Tutu Lawrence Faleni (University of South Africa) in person A critical literature review of emancipatory ethnographic research in the context of Africa traditional healing
10h00	Fabricio Rodríguez (Arnold Bergstraesser Institute (ABI) Freiburg) online Knowledge(s) in dialogue? Epistemic hierarchies and the knowledge/policy nexus in peace and conflict	Wolbert G. C. Smidt (Jena University / Mekelle University) online The challenge of quoting African "informants" in European academia from the 17th to 20th centuries - a suggestion to critically reconsider bibliographical paradigms regarding African writers and scholars (with examples from North Eastern Africa)	Sarah Vaughan & Meaza Gidey Gebremedhin (independent researchers) online Knowledge production and 'ungrievable lives' during Ethiopia's Tigray war	Tessa Ubels (Radboud University) online 'North-based' research in a 'South-based' humanitarian setting. Aiming for sustainable impact in Nakivale settlements, Uganda

10h30-11h00 Coffee Break

11h00-12h30 Keynote Lecture by Aymar Nyenyezi Bisoka (Université de Mons): *Le projet politique des « écritures africaines du soi » : où en sommes-nous un siècle plus tard ?* [interpreting services will be provided] [Room 110]
Livestream: <https://bit.ly/49nwigp>

12h30-13h30 Lunch Break

13h30-15h00 Panel Presentations - Session Two

Invisible Voices in the Production of Knowledge – Lessons from the Bukavu Series in person Facilitator: Koen Vlassenroot (Ghent University) Room: 109 Livestream: https://bit.ly/476HpIV	Opportunities and challenges of interdisciplinary research collaborations across the North-South nexus in person Facilitator: Stef Slembrouck (Ghent University) Room: 110 Livestream: https://bit.ly/49nwigp	Strengthening Digital Inclusion and Social Innovation through Belgian-South African Research Collaboration: Considerations regarding Knowledge Production in person Facilitator: Leona Craffert (University of the Western Cape) Room: 111 Livestream: https://bit.ly/3u1VzMK	Interactive writing workshop – part one in person (pre-registration required) Room: 104 Livestream: https://bit.ly/3MDxjqJ
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Godefroid Muzalia (Groupe d'Etudes sur les Conflits-Sécurité Humanitaire (GEC-SH), Institut Supérieur Pédagogique de Bukavu, DRC) - An Ansoms (Université Catholique de Louvain-la-Neuve (UCL)) - Koen Vlassenroot (Ghent University) - Aymar Nyenyezi Bisoka (Université de Mons) - Josaphat Musamba (Groupe d'Etudes sur les Conflits-Sécurité Humanitaire (GEC-SH), Institut Supérieur Pédagogique de Bukavu, DRC & Ghent University) - Vedaste Cituli (Anganza Institute & Institut Supérieur de Développement Rural de Bukavu, DRC & Université Catholique de Louvain-la-Neuve) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lee-Shae Scharnick Udemans (University of the Western Cape) - Kris Rutten (Ghent University) - Maurits Van Bever Donker (University of the Western Cape) - Stef Slembrouck (Ghent University) - Quentin Williams (University of the Western Cape) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leo Van Audenhove (Vrije Universiteit Brussels) - Koen Ponnet (Ghent University) - Wouter Grove (University of the Western Cape) - James Njenga (University of the Western Cape) - Carlynn Keating (University of the Western Cape) - Humphrey Brydon (University of the Western Cape) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lebogang Mokwena (University of the Western Cape) - Gillian Mathys (Ghent University) - Fernanda Pinto de Almeida (University of the Western Cape)

15h00-15h30 Coffee Break

15h30-17h00 Individual Oral Presentations - Session Four

	Involving stakeholders beyond academia Facilitator: Heidi Grunebaum Room: 109 Livestream: https://bit.ly/476HpIV	Ethical and ethics... Facilitator: Maurits van Bever Donker Room: 110 Livestream: https://bit.ly/49nwigp	Interactive writing workshop – part two in person (pre-registration required) Room: 104 Livestream: https://bit.ly/3MDxjqJ
15h30	Makia Christine Masong (Catholic University of Central Africa, Cameroon) online <i>Co-producing knowledge in health research for stakeholders beyond academia: Participative methods in collecting and disseminating information in the control of Female Genital Schistosomiasis in Cameroon</i>	Rebecca Tapscott (University of York) online <i>Procedural ethics for social science research, 1974 - 2020: Introducing the Research Ethics Governance Dataset</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Lebogang Mokwena (University of the Western Cape) – Gillian Mathys (Ghent University) – Fernanda Pinto de Almeida (University of the Western Cape)
16h00	Ashenafi Tirfie Tizazu, Ilse Derluyn & Ine Lietaert (Ghent University) online <i>Harnessing Social Networks: The Role of Traditional Community Organizations in Forced Returnees' Social Reintegration in Rural Ethiopia</i>	Jan Nyssen (Ghent University), Boudewijn Roukema (Nicolaus Copernicus University), Gebrekirostos Gebreelassie (Radboud University Nijmegen), Alex De Waal (Tufts University) & Mistir Sew (Pseudonym, Alumni of Ethiopian Universities) online <i>Shortcuts on the thesis publication market: the case of Abiy Ahmed et al. at AAU (Ethiopia)</i>	
16h30	Diana Miryong Natermann (University of Hamburg) online <i>Digitalising colonial photographs and the question of whether this process can reverse cultural genocide on a visual level amongst concerned constituencies</i>	Amaury Frankl (Ghent University) in person <i>Research Collaborations and Ethics Amidst the Turmoil of War</i>	

17h00-17h30 Closing of the conference [Room 110]

17h30-19h00 In honour of Archbishop Tutu: Launch of the UNESCO Chair Sport, Development, Peace and Olympic Education and Panel Discussion *The Importance of Sport for Development and Peace in Africa in relation to the SDGs* [Room 110]
Livestream: <https://youtube.com/live/u-WrUkJxnVc?feature=share>

19h00-20h30 Festive reception – Theme: We are Africa

ABSTRACTS
KEYNOTE SPEAKERS
AND PUBLIC LECTURE

Filmmaking today: what can we learn from oral traditions?

Mamadou Dia

(University of Virginia – rhs4yt@virginia.edu)

In this talk, I will explore ideas of knowledge production, ethics and authorship based on my experience working for over fifteen years as a video journalist and filmmaker in Senegal and across the continent. As I have moved across fields and genres, I have delved into the tension between fact and fiction, and learned to question the content and understanding film can generate about Africa, and for which audience. I have returned, like many artists before me, to oral traditions, both as a source of knowledge and a method that resists Western capitalist logics. Who is the author of some of those Fulani songs Baaba Maal rearranges? Who is the copyright holder for the stories griots recount and reinvent? Do existing funding structures and streaming platforms protect or deny ownership and authorship to some creators? I am invested in exploring the various ways knowledge is produced and negotiated in Senegal, whether through oral tradition, filmmaking, writing, where they meet and where they collide.

Mamadou Dia is a Senegalese film director, writer and cofounder of the production house Joyedidi. He obtained his MFA in Directing/Writing from New York University, Tisch School of the Arts where he wrote and directed his short film *Samedi Cinema*, which opened at the Venice and Toronto International Film Festivals in 2016 and received numerous accolades. His first feature film *Baamum Nafi* (Nafi's father) premiered at the Locarno International Film Festival in 2019 winning the best first feature award and the Golden Leopard in the section "Filmmakers of the Present." The film has been shown in over 80 festivals worldwide including at MOMA/Lincoln Center's 2020 New Directors/New Films and it was Senegal's official entry for the Oscars 2021. With Joyedidi, he toured Senegal with an inflatable screen to show the film, which also had theatrical release in France. In 2020, Mamadou joined the University of Virginia as Assistant Professor in the Departments of French and Media Studies. In 2023, he was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship for his third feature film, *Augustus*, a period piece on the African-American photographer Augustus Washington, who opened the first known photographic studio in Senegal in 1862.

Le projet politique des « écritures africaines du soi » : où en sommes-nous un siècle plus tard ?

Aymar Nyenyezi Bisoka

(Université de Mons - Aymar.NYENYEZIBISOKA@umons.ac.be)

Je pars de l'hypothèse que le sujet qui va nous occuper pendant deux jours au Cap nous oblige à revenir à la vieille question philosophique des « écritures africaines du soi » (Mbembe, 2001). Il s'agit d'un débat dont les fondements ont été posés il y a exactement un siècle dans la tradition afrocritique d'expression française. Je soutiendrai que (i) ce « questionnement perpétuel » (Fanon, 1952) de l'écriture africaine doit être abordé à partir de la condition noire comme un a priori épistémologique. (ii) Par conséquent, parler de « production de connaissances, d'éthique de la recherche et d'autorship en Afrique », c'est poser la question de la subalternité noire et de sa reproduction dans le projet eurocentrique de production de connaissances. (iii) Je conclurai en montrant qu'une lutte politiquement productive contre ce projet ne peut être posée en termes dialectiques. Il ne s'agit pas de répondre dans les mêmes termes que les énoncés critiqués (Sarr, 2016). Il s'agit au contraire de s'appuyer sur des désirs disqualifiés pour pouvoir parler et écrire l'Afrique et le monde d'une manière qui préfigure la dignité de l'Afrique – qui est nécessairement celle de l'humanité à venir.

Aymar N. Bisoka est docteur en sciences politiques et sociales et professeur à l'École des sciences humaines et sociales de l'Université de Mons en Belgique. Il est également juriste et politologue, spécialisé dans l'anthropologie du droit et l'anthropologie politique. Ses recherches se concentrent sur quatre problématiques sur lesquelles il travaille depuis plusieurs années à travers plusieurs collaborations sud-nord : (i) le développement d'une approche subjective du pouvoir et de la résistance en relation avec l'accès aux ressources naturelles ; (ii) la formulation d'une socio-anthropologie de l'Anthropocène local et des transitions vernaculaires en Afrique ; (iii) la reformulation de la question paysanne dans les études sur les conflits violents en Afrique ; et (iv) le développement d'une perspective afrocritique dans les sciences sociales. Ces dernières années, Aymar a enseigné dans plusieurs universités en Afrique et en Europe. Avant d'entamer sa carrière de chercheur, il a travaillé pendant dix ans dans le secteur de la coopération au développement en Afrique et en Europe et continue de collaborer dans ce secteur sur des questions de 'développement', de gouvernance, de droits humains et de sécurité. Aymar a également reçu plusieurs prix internationaux, notamment du UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy (USA, 2023), de l'African Studies Association (USA, 2019), du CODESRIA (Dakar, 2018) et de la Review of African Political Economy (2016). Il a récemment été élu pour plusieurs bourses de visite prestigieuses, notamment à l'Université d'Oxford (au St Antony's college en 2019) et à l'Université de Cambridge (à Emmanuel College en 2020 et à Wolfson college 2022).

Where are we now, a century after the political project of “African modes of self-writing”

Aymar Nyenyezi Bisoka

(Université de Mons - Aymar.NYENYEZIBISOKA@umons.ac.be)

I begin with the hypothesis that the issue before us during our two-day stay in Cape Town calls for a revisiting of the old philosophical question of “African modes of self-writing” (Mbembe, 2001). This is a debate whose foundations were laid about a century ago in the francophone Afrocritical tradition. I argue that (i) this “perpetual questioning” (Fanon, 1952) of African writing must begin with an understanding of the black condition as an epistemological imperative. (ii) Consequently, to speak of “knowledge production, research ethics and authorship in Africa” is to raise the question of black subalternity and its reproduction in the Eurocentric project of knowledge production. (iii) Finally, I will show that any politically effective opposition to this project cannot be conceived in dialectical terms. It is not a matter of responding along the same lines as the statements being criticized (Sarr, 2016). Rather, it is about drawing on discredited desires to speak and write about Africa and the world in a way that anticipates African dignity – one which will inevitably be that of all future humanity.

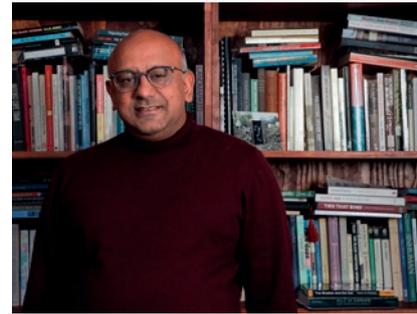
Aymar N. Bisoka holds a Ph.D. in political and social sciences and is a professor at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Mons, Belgium. He is also a legal expert and political scientist, specializing in anthropology of law and political anthropology. His research revolves around four themes on which he has been working for several years with partners from both the South and the North: (i) the development of a subjective approach to power and resistance in relation to access to natural resources; (ii) the development of a social anthropology of the local Anthropocene and vernacular transitions in Africa; (iii) the reformulation of the peasant question in studies of violent conflict in Africa; and (iv) the development of an Afrocritical perspective in the social sciences. In recent years, Aymar has taught at several universities in Africa and Europe. Prior to his academic career, he worked for ten years in the development cooperation sector in Africa and Europe and continues to work in this sector on issues of development, governance, human rights and security. He has received several international awards, including from the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy (USA, 2023), the African Studies Association (USA, 2019), CODESRIA (Dakar, 2018), and the Review of African Political Economy (2016). He has recently been awarded several prestigious visiting fellowships, including at Oxford University (St Antony’s College in 2019) and Cambridge University (Emmanuel College in 2020 and Wolfson College in 2022).

Ghent Africa Platform Lecture in Honour of Nelson Mandela

The future of post-apartheid education

Premesh Lalu

(University of the Western Cape – premeshl@gmail.com)



In this lecture, I offer a reading of two contemporary texts, Seamus Heaney's *The Cure at Troy* and Richard Rive's *Emergency Continued*, both published in 1990 to coincide with the release of Nelson Mandela from prison and the much-celebrated end of the Cold War.

Both texts reflect on the incessantly violent experience of partition as a political rationality, which shifted the meaning of race from a civilisational discourse to the terrain of the manipulation of sense perception in the age of communication and control.

I turn to the motif of the Trojan Horse in Heaney and Rive to consider their cathected interests in making educated choices in the wake of partitioned worlds, to step out of the overwhelming shadows of mythic violence brought about by the combined power of neoliberal capitalism and nationalism in their orchestration of collisions between the human and technology that defined the experience of apartheid.

Professor Premesh Lalu is a researcher and former director of the Centre for Humanities Research at the University of the Western Cape. He is co-editor with Patricia Hayes and G.Arunima of *Love and Revolution in the Twentieth Century Colonial and Post-colonial World* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021) and director of a recent documentary film, *The Double Futures of Athlone* [54 Mins], recently premiered at the Encounters International Documentary Film Festival in Cape Town and Johannesburg, and screened at the Durban International Film Festival in 2022. His latest book, *Undoing Apartheid* (2022) is published by Polity Press in the UK.



ABSTRACTS INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATIONS

Publishing in English and multilingual scholars in African contexts: quality-related concerns

Addisalem Tebikew Yallew

(University of the Western Cape – addisalem.yallew@gmail.com/ 3743398@myuwc.ac.za)

Rajendra Chetty

(University of the Western Cape – rchetty@uwc.ac.za)

Developments related to the knowledge economy and knowledge society have made universities and their research function central concerns worldwide. Though there has been a noted increase in the volume and diversity of research and publication from various institutions and contexts, academic research and publishing remains largely monolingual. This proposal, which is part of an on-going study, investigates the implications of using English for research in multilingual contexts in Ethiopia and Mozambique with a specific focus on exploring implications for quality-related concerns. The study qualitatively and critically interrogates the language for publication question and its ramifications for quality intellectual engagement. The study adopts a multiple case study methodology examining two public flagship universities located in contexts where English is not the primary language of day-to-day communication. The data informing the study is gathered primarily through semi-structured interviews with researchers across disciplines and academic ranks. The findings of this transdisciplinary study shed light on dimensions that have received little scholarly attention in sociolinguistics, sociology of knowledge and higher education studies.

Keywords

Research, Publishing, Language, English, Quality, Mozambique, Ethiopia

Fostering Collaborative Interinstitutional Infrastructure for Joint PhDs: Administration as a Facilitator, Not a Barrier

Ahmed Shaikjee

(University of the Western Cape – ashaikjee@uwc.ac.za)

Gry Ulstein

(Ghent University – gry.ulstein@ugent.be)

In the twenty years that the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and Ghent University (UGent) have been partners, one of the ways in which we have deepened our strategic collaboration is through setting up joint PhDs. A joint PhD or cotutelle doctorate is a doctoral degree awarded by two (or more) institutions that share the responsibilities of supervising and coordinating a researcher's PhD trajectory and organize a joint examination procedure. And while this form of collaboration brings about excellent benefits for PhD candidates, supervisors, and institutions alike, the road to a successful joint graduation is long and beset with obstacles. These obstacles usually consist of or result from various administrative hurdles at two different higher education institutions that follow different regulations and policies, work by different administrative structures or timelines, and either of which must adhere to different national legislation. In this presentation, two members of, respectively, the central administrations of UWC and UGent offer perspectives on challenges and opportunities related to navigating such obstacles. We will discuss how we might improve the synthesis of our processes to establish and maintain a sustainable inter-institutional infrastructure for our joint PhD candidates and their supervisors.

On the surface, a PhD awarded in South Africa is the same as a PhD awarded in Belgium. It has the same recognition globally as the highest academic degree and carries with it similar expectations of excellence, originality, and independence. But as anyone who has done (or supervised) a joint PhD will know, this superficial similarity says very little about the average candidate's experience – not just because of the institutional and legislative differences mentioned above, but also due to cultural and social differences that can be difficult to adapt to or anticipate in administrative processes. Building on our experience and expertise, as well as our knowledge of the history of the partnership between UWC and UGent and the feedback we have received from our stakeholders, we will suggest three broad strategies for implementing smaller and larger changes to our administrative and regulatory practices:

1. Communication (internal and external)
2. Flexibility (in policy and attitude)
3. Collaboration and Innovation

By systematically addressing communication, flexibility, and collaboration and innovation, we wish to create a well-rounded method for improving administrative and regulatory practices within our educational institutions. Together, these strategies aim to enhance internal operations, strengthen external relationships, and foster a culture of adaptability and innovation. At the heart of this is a collective goal to make the lived experience of our joint PhD candidates and their supervisors more transparent, efficient, and ultimately rewarding.

Keywords

Administration, Communication, Innovation, Joint PhD, Partnerships

Professional-Academic Development over Here ... and There: Three Perspectives on North-South Collaboration and Joint PhD Research

Alexander De Soete

(Ghent University – Alexander.DeSoete@UGent.be)

Stef Slembrouck

(Ghent University – Stef.Slembrouck@UGent.be)

Quentin Williams

(University of the Western Cape – qwilliams@uwc.ac.za)

This paper develops inter-related perspectives on North-South collaboration, with a particular focus on joint PhD research. This is illustrated by means of a specific – but perhaps atypical – case, in which the doctoral student is located and collects data in the global North but is co-advised by supervisors from both Ghent University (Belgium) and the University of the Western Cape (South Africa) in the context of a strategic inter-institutional partnership between two universities. The paper explores how the research project is inserted in three interdependent trajectories (that of the candidate, and those of the two supervisors) and attends to crucial questions about academic cooperation which connects institutional, geographic, and socio-cultural settings. Is joint research only a matter of academic collaboration with relevant expertise? How does the project connect to the pressing challenges of knowledge production and the theme of decolonization? What can the case study of one specific project tell us about the inner workings of a strategic inter-institutional partnership, particularly with regard to desirable synergy across the range of PhD projects in the larger program?

Keywords

Joint research, Inter-institutional partnership, Collaborative knowledge production, International academic cooperation, Co-supervision

Research Collaborations and Ethics Amidst the Turmoil of War

Amaury Frankl

(Department of Geography, Ghent University – amaury.frankl@ugent.be)

Flemish universities, including UGent, have made significant investments in university development cooperation in Ethiopia, leading to strong bonds between researchers, students, and communities on both sides. However, in November 2020, a conflict broke out in the Tigray Region of northern Ethiopia, exacerbating an already precarious humanitarian situation. In response to the escalating crisis and the potential for a full-scale civil war, researchers in Flanders and around the world have appealed for a ceasefire and the restoration of humanitarian aid. Unlike the suspension of research funds witnessed during the war in Ukraine, no similar top-down actions have been taken regarding Belgian-Ethiopian research collaborations. Consequently, researchers and project coordinators find themselves navigating a delicate and relatively unfamiliar path, deciding whether to suspend, continue, or modify their research collaborations. By posing various questions and engaging in reflections, we will delve into the trajectory chosen and discuss the interplay between research and ethics in times of war.

Keywords

Research, Ethics, Partnerships, Internationalisation, Sustainable Development Goals

Knowledge and practices of open science among scholars and researchers in Tanzania

Aneth Bella David

(Department of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, University of Dar es Salaam, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; Plant Protection Department, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Alnarp, Sweden; Tanzania Human Genetics Organisation, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania – anethdavid367@gmail.com)

Mohamed Zahir Alimohamed

(Tanzania Human Genetics Organisation, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; Department of Biochemistry, Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences; Department of Haematology and Blood Transfusion, Muhimbili, University of Health and Allied Sciences; Department of Genetics, University Medical Center Groningen, University of Groningen – mzahir89@gmail.com)

Grantina Modern

(Tanzania Human Genetics Organisation, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania & Department of Biomedical Engineering, Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology – grantinamodern@gmail.com)

Obadia Shadrack Buhomoli

(Directorate of Library Services, University of Dodoma, Dodoma, Tanzania – obadiashadrack16@gmail.com)

Paul Muneja

(Information Studies Unit, University of Dar es Salaam, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania – pmuneja@gmail.com)

The Open Science (OS) movement has been spreading rapidly among researchers with positive outcomes in terms of accessibility of scientific knowledge. However, there is a paucity of research on the level of awareness and types of OS practices among scholars and researchers in Tanzania. The lack of research may adversely affect efforts to take advantage of the OS movement. This study investigates the level of awareness of OS and practices among Tanzanian scholars and researchers.

A digital survey was conducted over a three-month period and involved 144 respondents. Results show a high level of awareness of the term OS for 84% of respondents, most of them having encountered it from peers or online sources including social media. About 69% of respondents were male while about 44% of respondents were early career professionals. Open access (OA) publishing was the most common OS activity practised by respondents, highlighting both the need to create awareness on other practices and an entry point for knowledge expansion. However, respondents highlighted the barriers to the spread of the OS movement in the country including lack of awareness, knowledge and skills, the lack of institutional support and concerns over data security and ownership.

Findings of this study establish OA as the most common and important OS practice among Tanzanian scholars. They show the importance of online resources and peer-to-peer learning and the facilitating of OS awareness. The study also reveals several areas of advocacy, including setting supportive institutional policies and building infrastructure to support OS practices. We recommend establishing robust guidelines, strengthening institutional support and providing clear opportunities to incentivize individuals to adopt OS practices so as to achieve the momentum required to scale the movement beyond OA.

Keywords

Open Science, OS, Open Science Tanzania, Open Access

Harnessing Social Networks: The Role of Traditional Community Organizations in Forced Returnees' Social Reintegration in Rural Ethiopia

Ashenafi Tirfie Tizazu

(Ghent University, United Nations University-CRIS, Wollo University – ashenafitirfie.tizazu@UGent.be)

Ilse Derluyn

(Ghent University- Ilse.Derluyn@UGent.be)

Ine Lietaert

(Ghent University, United Nations University – CRIS – Ine.Lietaert@UGent.be)

The idea that the successful reintegration of returnees requires significant involvement of the recipient communities and local organizations is not novel. However, in practice, particularly in rural areas, the insistence on acknowledging local organizations' knowledge and their roles in reintegration processes is still in its infancy. There is very little involvement of these actors within the planning and implementation of migrant returnees' reintegration programmes as they do not fit the donors' view of civil society organizations. However, rural local organizations often display strength and creativity in their development practices, including reintegrating forced returnees from Saudi Arabia in rural Ethiopia. Drawing empirical illustrations from 3 rural organizations in Kobo, Iddir, Zewold, and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, we found that some of these local organizations' practices could be considered social innovations for returnees' reintegration. They provide essential services for returnees' reintegration into the rural communities' social structures, including raising awareness of their need for support; providing religious services such as praying, re-baptizing, and re-Christianizing returnees; and mediating disputes between returnees and their families and the local people.

Therefore, given that there is little or no formal support for the reintegration of returnees in rural Ethiopia, it makes sense to examine and draw support from the practices of local organizations.

Keywords

Forced return, Social reintegration, Traditional social organizations, Rural Ethiopia.

Ethnic Federalism, Internal Boundaries and the Researcher's Positionality: Fieldwork Inquiry in Ethiopia

Ashenafi Tirfie Tizazu

(Ghent University, United Nations University-CRIS, Wollo University – ashenafitirfie.tizazu@UGent.be)

Ilse Derluyn

(Ghent University – Ilse.Derluyn@UGent.be)

Ine Lietaert

(Ghent University, United Nations University – CRIS – Ine.Lietaert@UGent.be)

The literature regarding researchers' positionality in fieldwork – an investigation that requires researchers to enter a research site to collect first-hand data – is expanding exponentially. Some scholars argue that the researcher should be an insider, or at least live with their informants for a considerable time to fully comprehend the context and refrain from viewing people via one's assumptions. Others argue that an outsider's positionality can enable data collection in meaningful ways for the researchers as long as they are neutral and avoid interpreting others in terms of their own cultural beliefs.

The debate on the researcher positionality has also drawn the attention of Ethiopian researchers. However, the present ethnic federalism, established in 1991, and the internal regional state boundaries have become fertile ground for the installation of insiders and outsiders along ethnic lines. Also, the federal constitutional provision that citizens have the right to move freely and settle anywhere they choose inside the country is a freedom that increasingly exists only on paper. Low levels of tolerance for ethnic differences have led to many people being killed, evicted, or forced to move back to a location where their ethnic group was dominant. Additionally, in public universities, there have been frequent reports of attacks on students of one ethnic group by students of other ethnic groups. Moreover, on several occasions local residents have threatened to enter universities in support of their ethnic groups. As a result, many parents are becoming reluctant to enroll their children in universities in states where their ethnic group is underrepresented. Furthermore, there have been incidents where researchers (Ph.D. students gathering information for their studies) were murdered in mob justice because the subjects detested outsiders.

The hitherto insider/outsider ethnic lines, violence, and mobility restriction across internal boundaries have increasingly hampered students' and researchers' ability to study and research outside their immediate regions. However, such influence on researchers' positionality has not been part of the discussion. Hence, this paper discusses how these impacted my fieldwork in Kobo, Amhara National Regional State, Ethiopia (2019 – 2020), access to the field as an insider, and participants' expectations as challenges. Indeed, as a person born and brought up in the community, negotiating to access research participants was easy even in villages where the researcher is less known. In contrast, community expectations regarding converting research findings into intervention programmes were challenging. Thus, the paper argues that an insider positionality may have created opportunities for more equally weighted knowledge production from within in areas where outsiders might experience potent obstacles to accessing the field and study population.

Keywords

Ethnic Federalism, Internal Boundaries, Positionality, Ethiopia

How do knowledge politics influence community-based actions in food and agriculture?

A case study in Forikrom, a community in the transition zone of Ghana

Branwen Peddi

(INSPIRA research group, Department of Agricultural Economics, Ghent University – Branwen.Peddi@UGent.be)

David Ludwig

(Knowledge, Technology, and Innovation Group, Wageningen University & Research – David.Ludwig@wur.nl)

Joost Dessein

(INSPIRA research group, Department of Agricultural Economics, Ghent University – Joost.Dessein@UGent.be)

In a move for more decolonial approaches to research and development, the importance of a pluriversal approach, one that is inclusive of vastly differing ontologies, epistemologies and knowledges, cannot be overstated. What this looks like in practice, is a debate that is also held within the field of food and agriculture, where there is a need to align existing food systems with the needs and knowledges of local communities (i.e. food justice and epistemic justice). For example, more and more work is being done on preserving certain local crops and varieties, as diversity is key to ensuring resilience in food systems and as communities have the right to access local and Indigenous foods. Nevertheless, Indigenous and local knowledges, adapted to local socio-environmental contexts and deeply rooted in cultural traditions, have often been sidelined by researchers and development workers. These knowledges have often been deemed “unscientific”, and only valuable insofar as they can be validated within a Western academic perspective of knowledge and science. Knowledge politics that come into play in these processes, have a significant impact on how agricultural development processes and their outcomes are shaped, and why democratic and just involvement of Indigenous and local actors is key. It is therefore important to gain a better understanding of how these knowledge politics work within the field of food and agriculture. An empirical case within the transition zone of Ghana, where different ecologies and social groups meet, is described: the community of Forikrom. In this predominantly yam-farming community, migrant farmers and local farmers come into contact with each other and other stakeholders (NGOs, extension workers, researchers). Migrant farmers travel within the borders of Ghana, often from the more northerly regions, towards Forikrom and further south in the country. It is during this migration journey that an exchange of agricultural knowledge takes place. In this qualitative research based on fieldwork of 2023, we attempt to use a co-creative approach, bringing the different actors together and stimulating processes of knowledge exchange. This goes further than detailing farmer-to-farmer learning, in that we pay specific attention to Indigenous agricultural practices, how participants negotiate Indigenous knowledge alongside other types of knowledge (academic knowledge, experiential knowledge, etc.) and how these dynamics intertwine with community-based actions. With this, we aim to gain insight into perceptions of expertise, local knowledge politics and endogenous development processes. A total of 8 co-creative workshops with roughly 20 participants and 12 semi-structured interviews with key informants were conducted. Finally, we provide recommendations into creating more just environments for agricultural knowledge exchanges and community-based actions, with a specific focus on including Indigenous knowledges.

Keywords

Knowledge politics, Indigenous knowledge, Community-based action, Co-creation, Agriculture

“When your grandfather came to Africa”: Reflections on positionality and how to navigate perceptions when studying the African Union

Constanze Blum

(Leipzig University – constanze.blum@uni-leipzig.de)

This paper critically reflects on positionality in the research process. It discusses my personal experiences during research visits to the African Union (AU) in the context of my doctoral dissertation (2020 – 2022). My PhD focused on the AU Border Programme, which aims to complete delimitation and demarcation of all intra-African borders – to a large extent inherited from colonial times – by 2027. I adopted an anthropological and sociological approach to studying the partnership between the AU Commission and the German development agency *Deutsche Gesellschaft für International Zusammenarbeit* GmbH (GIZ) in Addis Ababa, who jointly implement the AU Border programme which is (somewhat ironically) funded primarily by Germany, a former colonizer. Daily interactions between AU and GIZ staff are shaped by different forms of contestation as well as “clashes” between staff groups that are often diametrically opposed in terms of their composition (race, gender and age). How this mattered became clear when looking at the respective functions of white and BPoC advisors, the latter often carrying out additional emotional labour by performing bridging or broker functions.

In this paper, I reflect on how I was perceived by interviewees (both by African staff at the AU and German development agency staff in Addis Ababa) being a young, white and female European researcher, and how my own positionality impacted on the questions that I asked as well as the answers I received. In the context of studying this specific Global North-Global South partnership, my identity markers as a white, European (more specifically German) researcher were central to the research process and outcome. One senior AU staff member started our conversation on African borders with a swift “When your grandfather came to Africa...”, linking my heritage directly to the subject matter. Gender and age also played a significant role, as patriarchy shapes much of the working relations within the AU Commission. My identity markers each impacted on the research process in a different way, and their combination created ambivalence with regard to access, experienced dis(-trust) and solidarities in “the field”.

Moreover, I discuss how I tried (and also sometimes failed) to navigate these underlying power relations around gender and race and to integrate constant uncertainty, doubt and self-reflections into the research process. Without claiming to contribute to any “good practice”, I argue that it is essential to constantly revisit own assumptions and contemplate positionality, not only, but especially in (near-)ethnographic research. At the same time, building trust is a key precondition for meaningful research on the AU as a central regional organization in the Global South as well as on its partnerships with donors. This sometimes necessitates breaking up the inside-outsider binary between “researcher” and “implementer” and between “recipient” and “donor”, which (in turn) comes with considerable additional ethical issues to take into consideration. With this paper, I wish to contribute to advancing critical reflections on how we can actually *make sense* of Global North-Global South partnerships in a meaningful way, both in political programmes and in academia.

Keywords

African Union, Development cooperation, Agency, Brokers, Positionality

Surviving in a global citation economy: Dispatches from sub-saharan Africa

David Mills

(University of Oxford – david.mills@education.ox.ac.uk)

Recent years have seen a sustained growth in the volume of academic articles being published each year, partly driven by APC (Article Publishing Charge) revenue flows. The business model developed by 'challenger' publishers such as MPDI and Frontiers is increasingly copied by Elsevier, Wiley and Springer-Nature. Within an accelerated research system, editors and publishers struggle to oversee journal quality. A series of recent high-profile 'batch re-tractions' of published articles from journal special issues have been portrayed by the scientific media and integrity 'watchdogs' as an existential crisis for research integrity. In response the dominant global citation indexes – Scopus and Web of Science – have developed citation data, AI tools and bibliometric benchmarks to monitor journals and assess new candidate serials for indexing. In this unwinnable integrity-technology arms race, the ultimate losers may be academics based in Africa and across the majority world.

In this presentation, drawing on research carried out with colleagues in Ghana (Mills et al 2023), I reflect on how this unequal global citation economy is changing academic practice. Interviews with Africa-based authors and editors explore how moral panics around 'predatory publishing' and 'unreputable' journals reinforce colonial academic hierarchies and Eurocentric credibility geographies. Research studies that use the citation indexes as a proxy for quality cast doubt on the reputation of long-established sub-saharan African journals. The policy focus on research integrity displaces attention from the impact of this citation economy on African universities and scholars. Many African academics, working on the peripheries of a global science system, are under pressure from their universities to publish 'internationally'. With high numbers of papers and/or citations required for promotion, acceleration and productivism become a survival strategy. At the same time, a few Africa-based institutional journals and publishers are deploying asymmetric tactics to garner visibility in this new economy (Mills and Branford 2022). Relying on fragmented and under-resourced research infrastructures, African academic publishing is in a constant struggle for recognition and status.

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Keywords

Citations, Citation index, Science communication, Productivism, Integrity

Digitalising colonial photographs and the question of whether this process can reverse cultural genocide on a visual level amongst concerned constituencies

Diana Miryong Natermann

(University of Hamburg – diana.miryong.natermann@uni-hamburg.de)

The late nineteenth century is also known as the era of High Imperialism and the so-called scramble for Africa. A technological dimension particular to that era is the mobile photographic camera which, from the 1880's became an inherent part of conducting research on the African continent. As a result, the idea of conducting explorative expeditions without a camera was inconceivable. The same applies to mission photography and, more generally, to European travellers traversing the African continent for personal or business related reasons. The mobile photographic camera did not only turn into a must-have for travellers, but its results are to this day visible in the hundreds of thousands of images in public and private collections in the Global North.

My paper addresses the question of how far these thousands of images and historical objects from 1880-1980, that are mostly only available in their original analogue form, could help decolonise visual memory practices. The idea is to, for instance, ask how making available colonial photographs from southern Africa can help local constituencies (re)gain access to visual heritage thereby reversing a process of erasure concerning cultural memory under colonial rule. Whilst the photographs in question are colonial and apartheid products, they still depict the formerly colonised and their respective cultures and traditions. By functioning as memory agents, these photographs are mostly unseen by those affected. By denying access to these images in the past (and present), I argue that yet another level of cultural genocide was added unintentionally but equally powerfully to the long list of colonial atrocities.

A possibly useful tool to partially reverse the erasure of cultural visibility then is to digitalise those collections. Therefore, I analyse whether the category of cultural genocide can be applied here and to what degree the digitalisation of colonial photographic collections and making them available publicly can assist – if at all – in decolonising visual memory not only in research circles but especially amongst the general public and historically affected constituencies. This paper addresses stakeholders beyond academia as well as locations of knowledge production.

Keywords

Visual history, Cultural genocide, Colonial photography, Restitution, Digitalisation

Reflections on research in rural South Africa: lessons from a PhD journey

Dorothy Ruth Queiros

(Department of Applied Management, School of Public and Operations management,
College of Economic and Management Sciences, University of South Africa – queirdr@unisa.ac.za)

This paper captures the reflections of a PhD student undertaking research within two rural communities in South Africa. It outlines key lessons learnt, from conceptualising the methodology through to sharing the findings with research participants.

The paper focuses firstly on the necessary adaptation of Western methodologies to suit the African context, reduce bias and minimise the influence of the researcher, so that the voices of both men and women could be heard and validated.

Secondly, it deals with issues of access to rural communities and the necessity of working within traditional leadership structures, which can affect sampling.

Thirdly, the paper deals with research ethics and the need to adapt research ethics processes adopted from outside of Africa, which have, to various extents, been espoused by South African universities. When imposed on rural communities (where some participants may be illiterate), these processes could be considered unethical due to the anxiety caused to participants.

Finally, the researcher will discuss the procedures she used to return to the communities and share the findings. While this paper is about the reflections of one PhD student undertaking research in rural South Africa, the lessons learnt could hold value to other scholars about to embark on the privilege of working with rural communities to gain new knowledge.

Keywords

Access, Bias, Methodologies, Research ethics, Rural communities

Knowledge(s) in dialogue? Epistemic hierarchies and the knowledge/policy nexus in peace and conflict

Fabricio Rodríguez

(Arnold Bergstraesser Institute (ABI) Freiburg – fabricio.rodriguez@abi.uni-freiburg.de)

In recent years, more and more scholars have pointed to the epistemic hierarchies that characterize the field of peace and conflict. An accompanying concern is that of overcoming the unequal structures of privilege that shape collaborations between researchers from the Global North and the Global South. Moreover, there is a growing concern with the hierarchical appraisal of academic knowledge as being the pinnacle of world-intellection, while the knowledge of those involved in the everyday practice of peace-related work and conflict transformation is not always properly acknowledged (as knowledge).

Despite growing efforts to tackle this problem, international scholarship is still guided by hierarchical structures and conceptions of knowledge production. The dominance of Western outlets translates into a discursive landscape in which Western languages, experiences and epistemic traditions reproduce hierarchical relations between (and within) the North and the South. As a result, existing literatures tend to treat societies in the Global North as the role models for peace, while violent events in the Global South are misconceived as the outcomes of bad governance or 'underdevelopment'. As a result, peace policies emphasize liberal democratic institutions and market liberalization, while reinforcing the role of external actors in conflict-affected zones. Instead of fostering conflict transformation, the result has often been the reinforcement of exclusionary structures which prompt the (re)production of violence.

This contribution will present the concept of "knowledge(s) in dialogue" as an emerging practice within the network Postcolonial Hierarchies in Peace and Conflict (HIERARCHIES)". Knowledge(s) in dialogue is part of an effort to bridge scholarly and practitioner's knowledge through dialogic reflections on issues ranging from everyday violence, security governance to transformative justice in postcolonial societies. With the aim of hosting such conversations and foreseeable controversies, the network is designing a policy paper series that tries to rethink the relationship between different forms of knowledge production and (the politics of) policy in the field of peace and conflict. What does a decolonizing approach to peacebuilding and conflict transformation entail? What does it mean to write about policy issues while embracing a postcolonial or decolonial approach? How can scholars, activists, and artists engage in a dialogue of equals despite unequally situated agencies? To what extent can their distinct forms and practices of knowledge production affect the knowledge/policy nexus in the field of peace and conflict?

Keywords

Epistemic hierarchies, Peace and conflict studies, Decoloniality, Policy, Knowledge

Rainbows in Eastern African folktales: oral narrative as ecocritical model

Inge Brinkman

(Ghent University – Inge.Brinkman@UGent.be)

James Wachira

(University of Nairobi – peacemaina@gmail.com)

Peter Wasamba

(University of Nairobi – pwasamba@uonbi.ac.ke)

Teshome Mossissa

(Jimma University – aseegere@yahoo.com)

Other authors: Tsehay Dinsa, Mark Obure, Megersa Regassa, Milkessa Edae, Terefe Mitiku, Kimingichi Wabende, Nega Jibat, Gerti Wouters (OL4D Team project members; Oral Literature for Development' (OL4D) (ugent.be)).

Ecology has a prominent place in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals: the SDGs (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>) make reference to climate action, clean energy, protection of ecosystems and other ecological concerns. The way in which these are addressed – with a stated number of targets, events, publications and actions and statistics – indicate that a logical-scientific paradigm is used to underpin both the problems and the success rates to address the issues. Yet as early as 1996 Jerome Bruner (pp. 39-42, see also Latour 2010) pointed to the problematic separation between logical-scientific and narrative thinking, and the need for a fuller approach to knowledge production that includes narrative modes.

Here we propose to study oral narratives as epistemological models dealing with ecological concerns. The oral narratives we propose to analyse may at once form a source and aspect of TEK (Traditional Ecological Knowledge), and constitute a reflective practice. With this move, we call into question the divide between ecolit and ecocrit: eco-narratives may very well in themselves form a critical, theoretical model.

We focus on stories in which rainbows play an important role. So far such narratives have especially been discussed from an anthropological perspective, focusing on religious cults, rituals of political power, and community formation. The literary aspects have so not received due attention. These aspects combine notions of fertility and peace in land and between people with representations of sun and sky, droughts and rain, rivers, lakes and serpents, and plots of travel and transformation from an ecocritical stance.

We focus on various narratives in Eastern African contexts (notably Gikuyu narratives), not through a comparative perspective, but as historical case-studies indicating the diversity and multiple meaning-making of rainbows in ecological terms.

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Keywords

Kenya, Ethiopia, Rainbow, Oral narratives, Ecocriticism

Echoes from the Ancestral Grove: Agikuyu Folk Narratives as Ecological Chronicles, Illuminating the Menace of Foreign Resource Plunder and its Environmental Ramifications

Jacob Odeny

(Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology – odenyjacobonduru@gmail.com)

The ecological crisis in Africa is urgent and critical. And it is situation that has been exacerbated by foreign agencies engaging in rampant resource exploitation. This paper offers an interpretation of Agikuyu folk narratives as ecological chronicles, rooted in a traditional knowledge system that facilitates a comprehensive understanding and reevaluation of the current environmental crisis, which is driven by the foreign exploitation of resources. This article argues that the Agikuyu community historically possessed ecological wisdom that governed their resource exploitation practices and upheld ecological sustainability. However, the infiltration of development enablers has compromised this indigenous wisdom, replacing it with capitalistic epistemologies that promote unchecked resource extraction, thus leading to the present ecological crisis. Consequently, it is contended that sustainable environmental equilibrium can be achieved by reverting to and heeding the echoes of the traditional ecological knowledge system conveyed through folk narratives. To analyze the ecological chronicles embedded within the cultural heritage of Agikuyu folk narratives, this paper employs a postcolonial ecocritical framework. The narratives not only unveil the sinister objectives of multi-national corporations, but also serve as a powerful tool for highlighting the ecological repercussions and associated implications for the indigenous community. Ultimately, this paper emphasizes the importance of returning to and learning from indigenous ecological wisdom to foster a more profound understanding of the complexities of the current environmental crisis.

Keywords

Illuminating, Ecological crisis, Traditional knowledge, Resource plunder

Shortcuts on the thesis publication market: the case of Abiy Ahmed *et al.* at AAU (Ethiopia)

Jan Nyssen

(Department of Geography, Ghent University – jan.nyssen@ugent.be)

Mistir Sew

(Pseudonym, Alumni of Ethiopian Universities)

Boudewijn Roukema

(Institute of Astronomy, Nicolaus Copernicus University, Torun – boud@astro.uni.torun.pl)

Gebre Kirstos Gebreselassie

(Data Science, Radboud University Nijmegen – gebrekirstos.gebremeskel@gmail.com)

Alex De Waal

(World Peace Foundation, Tufts University, Somerville, MA – alex.dewaal@tufts.edu)

Dissertations have come under scrutiny because decision-makers frequently use their academic credentials to increase their national and international credibility. It would have been challenging for the Nobel Peace Prize committee to have given Colonel Abiy Ahmed the honor instead of Doctor Abiy Ahmed. Soon after, the Tigray War and its related war crimes were perpetrated under the auspices of the Nobel Peace Prize.

With the appointment of Abiy Ahmed Ali as Prime Minister in 2018, Ethiopia has increased its reliance on PhD holders for high-level political roles. Ethiopia's Minister of Defense for example, proudly employs the Twitter handle @AbrahamPostDoc.

Ever since Abiy Ahmed received his PhD from Addis Ababa University's Institute of Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) in 2017, there have been doubts raised concerning the legitimacy of his degree. This lecture is built on an in-depth investigation of plagiarism in Abiy's PhD thesis. The title of the thesis is "Social Capital and its Role in Traditional Conflict Resolution: The Case of Inter-religious Conflict in Jimma Zone of the Oromia Regional State in Ethiopia", completed in 2016 and defended in 2017.

Standard plagiarism detection tools identify similarities between the text submitted and other texts available online. In a thesis largely reporting results of fieldwork, the most likely places to look for this are the theoretical and literature review sections (Chapter 2).

After carefully examining the similarities, we discovered that the Turnitin score for Chapter 2 was 62%, with instances of plagiarism on all 41 pages of the chapter.

Additional checks were carried out on masters' theses awarded by AAU to three (former) Ethiopian ministers, Abraham Belay (2007), Takele Uma (2014) and Dagmawit Moges (2019). All three theses had high similarity scores, including numerous fully copied paragraphs and sections.

Academic institutions have the obligation to revoke a degree in cases of significant falsification of data or plagiarism. There is now sufficient evidence to demand AAU to re-examine theses by Abiy Ahmed and some of his ministers. In comparable cases, universities have revoked doctoral degrees on the basis of plagiarism. Another approach would be to suspend the award of the PhD degree pending major revision, re-submission and re-examination. Our findings have been made public on 12 April 2023, and received adequate coverage in Ethiopian private media, as well as on social media – no formal reaction was issued by Addis Ababa University.

Academic standards violations are serious offenses. The credibility of examiners and peer reviewers is crucial in the academic environment. A university's reputation and the worth of its degrees are compromised if it grants degrees for reasons other than academic merit.

Possible long-term solutions in the African context should include several human and software layers. Supervisors and reviewers should thoroughly check theses. Automated, online plagiarism tools would detect suspicious cases, but could be expensive. Universities must take action in case plagiarism is discovered. A crowdsourced “AfriPlag-Wiki” for in-depth verified analyses, similar to the highly effective VroniPlagWiki for German theses or the Russian Dissertnet, using the free-licensed Mediawiki software and a web server located in an African university, would be of negligible cost and fully under African physical, legal and community control.

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7810624>

Keywords

Academic credentials, Political credibility, Plagiarism, Research ethics, Ghostwriting

Metrics are no zero-sum game. A practical guide to researching and publishing *together*

Josaphat Musamba

(Ghent University & Institut Supérieur Pédagogique Bukavu – josaphat.musambabussy@ugent.be)

Christoph Vogel

(Ghent University & Ebuteli – christoph.vogel@ugent.be)

In recent years there has been a sharp rise in reflexive and decolonial debates on knowledge production and the scientific publication market. Important questions on co-authorship, representation and epistemic violence have informed dozens of roundtables and panels at conferences and have even led to a few special issues under the broader banner of research ethics. Yet, a look at the political economy of academic publishing suggests that this 'revolution' is barely reflected in authorship statistics. Authors of colour remain underrepresented in top journals and anecdotal evidence from discussions with editors and authors suggest a stubborn bias against 'uncommon', i.e. non-Western, drafting or epistemic styles.

Yet, much empirical ethnographic social research – in particular when focusing on politically contested questions such as protest, conflict or violence – is co-produced by mixed researcher teams (Gupta 2014, Middleton & Cons 2014, Fujii 2012). And yet again, we argue, metrics are no zero-sum game. While a relative preponderance of so-called first authorship persists, peer-reviewed publications benefit all authors. Consequently, and numerous valuable, critical conversations on the decolonization of research and publishing notwithstanding, there is in principle little to argue about in terms of the contribution and labour of any person indispensable to a given publication.

Linking debates about knowledge production and ownership with those about power relations and the positionalities that shape them, we propose a practical guide to researching and publishing *together*. Drawing on a decade of joint research and publishing, we revisit our collaborative research in conflict zones and propose a genuine streamlining of all stages of knowledge production. We critically discuss the challenges we faced and lessons we learned with regard to our mutual positionalities, with a focus on co-authorship, epistemic democratization and anti-colonial struggle.

Our identities as researchers of different origin, straddling different worlds, impact not only on power relations between us and towards interlocutors, they also shape our thinking and writing. If we have a close and complicit relationship, we also constantly quarrel about the content and form of our work. Our joint ethnographic practice thus takes a holistic stance and contends that a fully joint approach – stretching all the way from research design to end product, including planning, execution, analysis and writing – can be an avenue towards decolonizing our ethics and epistemologies. Moreover, we advance a pluriversal ethics that accounts for context, the diverse positionalities of those involved, and allows for collaborative worldmaking (Vogel & Musamba 2022, see also Getachew 2019, Kondo 2018). That, we argue, requires a practically minded, bold commitment to publishing *together*.

Keywords

Research Ethics, Knowledge Production, Authorship, Conflict Studies, Epistemic erasure

Epistemic injustice in international development cooperation: a case study of a research institute's knowledge strategy

Julia Glaser

(Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation (WCDI), Wageningen University & Research (WUR) – julia.glaser@wur.nl)

Eunice Amboka Likoko

(Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation (WCDI), Wageningen University & Research (WUR) – eunice.likoko@wur.nl)

In recent years, the presence, and consequences of epistemic injustice – unfair treatment of individuals and groups in relation to knowledge and communication practices – has become a topic of concern and debate for actors in the field of research and international development cooperation.

The debate and developments around epistemic justice are a topic of concern for the Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation, as part of Wageningen University and Research, as it operates as a research institute in the field of international development cooperation. As a research institute, it has a significant influence on its target groups and individuals in terms of knowledge creation, knowledge use and education for professionals and institutions.

This case study aims to give an example of how the concept of epistemic justice can be made concrete and actionable. In addition, it also critically reflects on the current practices and policies that reinforce epistemic injustice. This is done by using an epistemic justice lens to review the current strategy of Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation to position itself as a “knowledge partner” in the field of development cooperation. This was done by interviewing individuals within the organization, reviewing organizational and policy documents, and academic literature about epistemic (in)justice.

Epistemic injustice remains largely ignored as a dimension of discrimination in research, knowledge development and programme implementation. This paper concludes that the strategy development process can be a key tool for tackling epistemic injustice in knowledge and practices, by institutions and individuals in development cooperation.

Keywords

Epistemic justice, Decolonization, Research institute, Knowledge, International development cooperation

'Stay with the Body' – Establishing Embodied Care Pathways for Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Trauma

Leona Morgan

(University of the Western Cape & Ghent University – leona.morgan@ugent.be
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7977-9501>)

Sarojini Nadar

(Desmond Tutu Centre for Religion & Social Justice, UWC – snadar@uwc.ac.za
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8408-2557>)

Ines Keygnaert

(International Centre for Reproductive Health (ICRH), UGent – ines.keygnaert@ugent.be
<https://orcid.org/000-0002-1707-0254>)

While sexual trauma is inherently an embodied experience, and research on psychological interventions for sexual trauma have in the most recent past started to involve the actual physical body, research that amplifies a critical awareness of the community context within which therapeutic interventions occur, remains limited. Decolonial and feminist community psychologies have called attention to this epistemic and ethical gap. This paper focuses on the research protocol that was developed for a study which intentionally explored embodied care pathways for adult survivors of childhood sexual trauma, most of whom grew up in working class, impoverished communities in Cape Town, South Africa. Framed within a critical, decolonial and feminist research paradigm, the paper offers an in-depth description and critical analysis of the participatory action research (PAR) methodology of the therapeutic encounter with 13 adult survivors of childhood sexual trauma, who identify as female and women of colour. The findings reveal that attending to the epistemic and ethical dimensions of research protocol development (including the positionality of the therapist/researcher), are important first steps when conducting research among women from marginalized communities. In addition, interdependence of communities, centralizing the body, and taking cognisance of both the social and spiritual space of belonging, are important in the process of research protocol development. By paying careful attention to all of these elements, the researcher was able to establish embodied care pathways that lead to trauma relief and integration, despite variations in age, number of sessions, and intervention timelines.

Keywords

Feminist Community Research, Research Protocol, Adult Survivors, Childhood Sexual Trauma, Embodied Care Pathways

Co-producing knowledge in health research for stakeholders beyond academia: Participative methods in collecting and disseminating information in the control of Female Genital Schistosomiasis in Cameroon

Makia Christine Masong

(Catholic University of Central Africa, Cameroon – masongbye@yahoo.com)

Background: Most research is conducted with the intention of generating information for wide dissemination, for awareness raising or for practical use, but is mostly limited to academic environments (peer-reviewed journals and university spaces). When the collection of data becomes participatory, more effort needs to be put into optimizing dissemination sources which consider the reach and utility of this information for the research participants themselves, and for immediate stakeholders who can act directly to resolve the issues raised. Participative Action Research (PAR) targets this very objective, and sets a pace where all stakeholders in the research are aware of and can contribute to, and measure the impact of their contribution. In our research, we use this method to “view” and show the social representations of the effects and lived experiences of Female Genital Schistosomiasis (FGS), a neglected tropical disease affecting the reproductive health, socio-economic wealth and psychosocial state of infected women and girls in endemic communities.

Method and Outcome: Using Photo-voice as a PAR research method and tool, in 11 Island communities in Cameroon endemic for FGS, data was collected amongst women and girls (aged 14 – 65 years old) diagnosed for FGS. Data was gathered through this participative method and in-depth interviews, where participants collected and shared their own illness interpretations in the form of pictures, capturing communicative, expressive, and symbolic aspects of the disease effects. Through this, they (participants) actively generated and directed the information they wished to highlight, and communicate (dissemination with who, what platforms and for what purpose). They also directed its use (what action is to be implemented and how). Some main themes developed from these were around “shame”, “pain”, “rejection” concerning symptoms; and “despair”, “anxiety”, in relation to health service delivery gaps in diagnosis and treatment of the condition.

Results and Conclusion (next steps): Following the data collection where women generated their own pictures and interpretations, a planned action stage is planned where these same participants will choose where, how and with whom to communicate this information. Such immediate action was seen to include sensitization and awareness raising of the social effects of the condition (e.g. social stigma) and mental ill-health, targeting platforms of immediate entourage and communities of sick women; diagnosis and treatment availability, targeting platforms of primary health care practice and policy; amongst others.

Keywords

Participative research, Knowledge dissemination, Stakeholders

'Incorporating' experiential knowledge to Sustaining Peace: Exploring Indigenous and Ecofeminist perspectives on UN knowledge production initiatives

Maria Martin de Almagro Iniesta

(Ghent University – Maria.martindealmagroiniesta@ugent.be)

The UN Sustaining Peace agenda (2016) acknowledges the role of natural resources in driving and sustaining conflict and understands that climate change compounds this. In order to avoid violence and insecurity, it thus proposes focusing on good governance of land and natural resource management in resource dependent countries. One year before, UNSCR 2242 (2015) recognised the substantial link between climate change, environmental protection and the UN Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. Since then, ecological peacebuilding initiatives have focused on centering indigenous women and their knowledge as the solution to environmental protection and resilience against climate change projects. Considering the burgeoning debates on the scope of the WPS agenda (Cohn and Duncanson 2020; Martin de Almagro and Ryan 2019, 2020; Yoshida and Cespedes-Baez 2021) and drawing on critical Indigenous and eco-feminist studies on nature and the environment (Brownhill and Turner 2020; Salleh 1997; Sempertegui 2019), this chapter offers a contrapuntal analysis of these initiatives, their limits and possibilities. It does so by focusing on spatial, temporal and emotional features (Crawford and Hutchison 2016) of ecological security. It argues that indigenous women's understandings of the spatial, temporal and emotional features of environmental protection reject assumptions on the capacity to govern or to plan for the future that the UN Sustaining Peace agenda seeks to achieve. Those understandings, however, get us closer to a more radical future of the WPS and its transformative potential.

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Keywords

Gender, Experiential knowledge, Sustaining peace, Feminist knowledge, Indigenous women

Ethnographic research on Jihadist groups: navigating constant disruptions in the field

Marte Beldé

(Ghent University – Marte.Belde@UGent.be)

Any ethnographic study of Jihadism is bound to be fraught with challenges. Turning the ethnographic *gaze* away from Jihadism and onto the supposedly omnipresent “danger” provides useful methodological insights and research pathways. The argument builds on fieldwork conducted in Mali, a country that has witnessed over a decade of violent conflict. Here, I center the *disruptions* of my fieldwork to look at the joint effect of the **construction of danger** and the individual **researcher’s positionality**.

Taking danger – specifically danger for the researcher – as the object of study illuminates ‘hidden’ aspects of the fieldwork methodology in contentious settings. I move beyond the simplistic question ‘*what* danger is there’, to ask ‘*why and how* danger is **perceived** to be **there**’. Inspired by Foucault, danger is considered a **constructed** narrative. I discuss several actors involved in knowledge production on danger: from the state to local fixers, embassies, all the way to our home institutions and universities.

I too am intimately entangled with the processes that construct ‘violent imaginaries’ on the Sahel and Jihad. Researchers should be cognizant of our role not just in the ‘information economy’ but also of how our views inform policymakers and actors in ‘the field’. To understand the role of the individual researcher, I learn from feminist theory and turn the ethnographic gaze onto the *self* and provide an embodied account of my fieldwork experiences. I trace how my own **positionality** shapes the way I perceive danger, and how it intersects with knowledge production processes.

Taking danger as an object of study also permits a dissolution of the arbitrary distinction between ‘field’ and home. Through the deconstruction of ‘the field’ as a fixed space we can perceive a perpetual dialectical interaction between multiple poles of knowledge construction on danger. Moreover, we can recognize that the supposed danger is not ‘out there’ but rather intimately connected to our self. The article thus calls on *all* researchers to be reflexive and make the danger in their field explicit in their work, and also to share how it impacted the research design and execution.

Keywords

Jihad, Danger, Positionality, Ethnography, Epistemology

Confronting epistemic hierarchies?

The virtual encyclopaedia as a way of re-centring the pluralities of knowledge in peace and conflict studies.

Miriam Bartelmann

(Arnold-Bergstraesser-Institut (ABI) – miriam.bartelmann@abi.uni-freiburg.de)

Viviana García Pinzón

(Arnold-Bergstraesser-Institut (ABI) – viviana.garcia.pinzon@politik.uni-freiburg.de)

Peace and conflict studies (PACS) is a burgeoning field. Yet, it still needs to tackle the legacies of colonialism and its hierarchies, the historical trajectories of conflicts and their embeddedness in global entanglements. Against this backdrop, postcolonial and decolonial approaches have pointed out that research and practice in the field are rooted in west-driven epistemological grounds resulting from colonial structures of power. This presentation aims to introduce the work of the collaborative network 'Postcolonial Hierarchies in Peace & Conflict (HIERARCHIES)' while introducing an online platform that aims at pluralizing the voices and knowledges involved in the '(re)writing' of PACS: the Virtual Encyclopaedia on Peace and Conflict Studies (VE).

The VE offers a compilation of theory and empirical research in peace and conflict studies from de- and postcolonial approaches. Conventionally, a defining feature of encyclopaedias has been their purpose of collecting knowledge and providing definitions from a universal perspective. While universalism is frequently attributed to supposedly value-free views held by European researchers and philosophers from the age of Enlightenment onwards, the VE goes against this notion striving to capture and reflect concepts' contested character and context relevance. Rather than providing homogenised, unambiguous and all-encompassing definitions, the VE aims to provide its readers with the tools to critically approach the field of peace and conflict studies from the heterogeneous perspectives of de/postcoloniality. Hence, the underlying epistemic approach to the encyclopaedia is to pluralize voices and knowledges on peace and conflict as a way to confront and progressively overcome longstanding hierarchies of knowledge in the field of PACS.

Understood as a fundamentally unfinished epistemic landscape, the VE is both an outcome and a process. As an output, it is an open-access platform offering a compendium of crucial theoretical and conceptual debates, empirical analyses, and reflection on methods and knowledge production in the field. It combines text, audio, video, and storytelling across different formats. As a process, the encyclopaedia builds on the work of the collaborative research network and is envisioned as a long-term endeavour to outlast the research project. Taking seriously the critique of the coloniality of knowledge advanced by de- and postcolonial scholarship, the different entries and formats of the encyclopaedia feature multiple and diverse voices (in terms of fields, regions, and career stages) and plural perspectives, as well as fostering critical dialogue and cooperative networks.

In this presentation, we will explain the rationale behind the VE project, the principles and practices guiding the process, and the challenges, along with the persistent tensions and contradictions, we have encountered. Along these lines, we will reflect on our positionality and the complexities of a project that aims to contribute to the pursuit of de-colonizing PACS, while being embedded in the academic and funding structures of the Global North.

Keywords

Epistemic hierarchies, Peace and conflict studies, Decoloniality, Postcolonial theory, Knowledge production and circulation

Unequal Measures and Counter-Investigations. Conducting Collaborative Research on the History of the Built Environment in sub-Saharan – Perspectives from Germany

Monika Motylińska

(Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space (IRS), Erkner, Germany – monika.motylińska@leibniz-irs.de)

This paper does not claim to showcase best practice examples of transnational collaborations. Instead, it focuses on the logistics and ethics of conducting collaborative interdisciplinary research on the history of the built environment within specific settings in sub-Saharan Africa, also involving actors beyond academia. The aim is to discuss biases, discomforts and concerns of such research so that this reflection can be challenged and questioned.

Presented observations stem from four research projects in which the author of this paper has been involved. Three of these projects have been (co-)funded by German public and private funding organisations, one by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Three projects have been conducted at a German public non-university research institute and one at a private Canadian research centre. None of these projects would have been possible without the involvement of collaboration partners from Tanzania, Nigeria, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and South Africa.

This dependency on collaborations is not a by-product but rather the prerequisite of pursuing research on the global histories of the built environment – in settings of systemic inequality, funded from the “Global North” and looking at locations in the “Global South”, while informed by postcolonial approaches and the perspectives on and from the “Second World” (since the core focus of the department at which the author is based is the architectural and urban history of the German Democratic Republic).

The proposed paper is structured around three central notions: mutual expectations, gains and losses, as well as omissions. The ethical reflection evolves in dialogue with the ongoing discussions in humanities and social sciences (e.g. *The Bukavu Series. Toward a Decolonisation of Research*; Patchwork Ethnography). It is also filtered through the simultaneous reading of Albert Camus and Kamel Daoud to explore the absurd and pose questions about the possibility of a counter-investigation. The starting point of this paper are mutual expectations – not only those of researchers from the “North” and “South” but also of other actors such as contemporary witnesses or “local assistants”. These expectations are then confronted with the outcomes of the collaborations to address the question of who actually benefits and loses from such exchanges and what kind of liabilities emerge, for instance, concerning remuneration. In the third step, attention shall be dedicated to omissions – aspects of the experience that usually tend to be edited out from the description of the research, such as failures and mistakes.

Finally, from the vantage point of the author, research on the involvement of German – and other international builders – in sub-Saharan Africa is part of her long-term counter-investigation of the category of “Germanness” informed by her positionality as a Polish immigrant with a German passport, whose status of “being German” never comes as sharply to the fore as during her stays in Africa. Yet this intellectual pursuit at the intersection of the academic and the private creates moral obligations and doubts that also inform what shall be discussed in the proposed paper. Thus, “perspectives from Germany” are a provocation, not a statement of complacency.

Keywords

Ethics of research, Inequality, Bias, Positionality, Germanness

Trajectory of Jimma University Clinical and Nutrition Research Center (JUCAN): Lessons for establishing resilient south-north research collaboration

Nega Jibat

(Department of Sociology, Jimma University, Ethiopia – negajibat@gmail.com)

Mekonnen Bogale

(Department of Management, Jimma University, Ethiopia – nuwami90@gmail.com)

Kenenisa Lemi

(Department of Management, Jimma University, Ethiopia – kenenisalemi@gmail.com)

Alemseged Abdisa

(Department of Medical laboratory sciences, Jimma University, Ethiopia & Armauer Hansen Research Institute, Ethiopia – alemseged.abdissa@ahri.gov.et)

Melkamu Berhane

(Department of Pediatrics and Child Health, Jimma University, Ethiopia – melkamuarefayine@gmail.com)

Tsinuel Girma

(Department of Pediatrics and Child Health, Jimma University, Ethiopia & Harvard University, CHAN School of Public Health, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia – tsinuel.nigatu@ubc.ca)

A country's investment in research and development and its effective utilization of scientific results are important parameters of comparison. Ethiopia lags far behind in both research investment and utilizing the potential benefits that research might provide. Establishing resilient research centers is a means of addressing the gap. Thus, the main purpose of this study was to uncover and document JUCAN's impetus and trajectory. A qualitative approach was adopted involving case analysis study design, in-depth interviews, review of secondary sources, and thematic analysis. The study revealed that JUCAN was mainly intended as a response to the chronic problem of infant malnutrition and gaps in children's clinical services in the pediatric ward at the then Jimma University Hospital. JUCAN evolved from the initial vision to inception via a project between two partnering individuals from the south and north, through to a progressive and resilient establishment as international alliance, partnership and research center. JUCAN's growth and continuity is built on four strong pillars. The first is its cohort study design that begins with measuring nutritional status of fetus and follow up studies throughout the life course of the cohort as their age increases. In this regard, JUCAN is unique in establishing continuous cohort study on nutrition for two decades. The second pillar is comprehensiveness of the subject matter, i.e. nutrition, which is a model disease that cuts across most health aspects of research and clinical concerns. A third aspect is its extensive experience and unique work culture, infrastructure and research output, all of which continue to attract new projects with academic and policy relevance. Fourth, the collegial and equitable partnership between the north and south partners enabled the establishment of a locally acceptable, institutionally and nationally valued, and internationally exemplary research center for universities in low and middle income countries in particular.

Keywords

Research center, South-north collaboration, Resilience, JUCAN, Ethiopia

Procedural ethics for social science research, 1974 - 2020: Introducing the Research Ethics Governance Dataset

Rebecca Tapscott

(Department of Politics, University of York, UK - Rebecca.Tapscott@york.ac.uk)

International development research is rife with ethical issues, and the field is increasingly reflecting on how to best address these. Until now, these debates have focused largely on ethics in practice, leaving questions of procedural ethics to the side. However, procedural ethics are important—they are increasingly required across all areas of research, they are the bedrock of institutional approaches to regulating ethics, and they shape ideas about what constitutes ethical research practice. This presentation discusses findings from the Research Ethics Governance dataset (REG), the first globally comprehensive dataset of national level ethics regulations, showing that while most countries require regulation of research, this is still mainly focused on biomedical and clinical studies – though the trend is extending regulation to the social sciences. Beyond providing context for the growing regulation of the social sciences, the dataset shows that ethical regulation is more often centralized than decentralized (i.e., decision-making power rests more with the central government than sub-national entities such as university and hospital ethics committees) and sets out initial insights into the substantive emphases of REC requirements and how they (do not) vary across the north and south. It then presents particularities of different country case studies to help give shape and depth to the quantitative findings, illustrating how research ethics regulation can produce unanticipated and counterintuitive outcomes when transferred to contexts with different political economies of knowledge production.

Keywords

Procedural ethics, Research ethics committees, Knowledge production, Critical ethics, Politics of research ethics

Disempowerment from within: The perpetuation of othering at the intersection of entrepreneurship, gender and ethnicity

Sarah De Smet

(Ghent University – skdesmet.desmet@ugent.be)

Smaranda Borsoş

(Vlerick Business School – Smaranda.Borso@vlerick.com)

Charlene Zietsma

(University of Michigan – czietsma@umich.edu)

Claire Maréchal

(Artevelde University of Applied Sciences – claire.marechal@arteveldes.be)

Karijn Bonne

(Artevelde University of Applied Sciences – karijn.bonne@arteveldes.be)

“And that maybe we weren’t taught it the way we know it today. Because I imagine that my grandmother didn’t even know she was an entrepreneur. My mum didn’t know she was an entrepreneur either. I think that if, for example, we had already had this notion, I think we would have done much more, I think.”

(Sophie, woman immigrant entrepreneur from Congo, living in Belgium)

Due to Western hegemonic discourses about entrepreneurship, other views such as those rooted in historical and cultural traditions of women’s entrepreneurship in Africa (Anyansi-Archibong, 2021), become unthinkable (Zucker, 1983). Rather, these views are considered a deviation to the ideal (Spivak, 1988) and hence correction is proposed to fit the mainstream entrepreneurship image (Essers & Benschop, 2007). Through this study, we want to contribute to a more critical perspective on entrepreneurship and challenge the postcolonial discourses that normalize and naturalize certain values and practices (Khan et al., 2007). As these discourses are not neutral but have power implications (Ahl & Nelson, 2015), we make a conscious effort, using a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), to allow for the redefinition of current constructs (Calás et al., 2009) and for the richness of alternative points of view (Collins, 2013) on the meaning and performance of entrepreneurship by women immigrant entrepreneurs.

In this study we drew on a heterogenous sample of 31 women entrepreneurs living in Belgium, with an African migration background. Through semi-structured interviews, we addressed a wide range of perspectives on their experiences (Gehman et al., 2018), in relation to their gender and ethnic identities and their entrepreneurial experiences.

Our preliminary analysis reveals that several women downplayed and even refuted their gender and ethnic identities and the possible constraints and opportunities these identities might bring (Chreim et al., 2018). They positioned themselves in line with the current Western neoliberal frameworks, which put the onus of entrepreneurial success on the individual claiming an “everybody is capable” view of entrepreneurship (Ahl & Marlow, 2021; Byrne et al., 2019). Further analysis will reveal the extent to which these expressions are a way to secure approval, resources and support from strategic stakeholders and peers (Essers et al., 2021). Often these women were privileged in terms of resources and network and were viewed as successful role models by entrepreneurial actors, such as supporting organisations and other immigrant women entrepreneurs. It seems that their privilege of benefiting from the neoliberal discourse, was translated into a privilege to speak. However, “by reinforcing the cultural and institutional forces that prescribe certain subjectivities” (Foucault, 1980), their discourses create a possible threat to women’s voices who seem to be performing entrepreneurship differently than what neoliberal standards prescribe.

The impact of such epistemic violence is twofold. First, given the dominance of these discourses (Bhabra, 2014), immigrant women entrepreneurs who do not comply, continue to be perceived as the problematized subjects (Spivak, 1988). Hence structural inequalities, such as those related to gender, ethnicity and class, risk remaining unquestioned (Byrne et al, 2019). Second, it limits the possibilities to re-inscribe other views of entrepreneurship (Bhabra, 2014). In addition to gender and ethnicity, another layer of othering emerges at the level of the performance of entrepreneurship itself, through the perpetuation of neo-liberal discourses. By creating a space where immigrant women entrepreneurs can construct their authentic views on entrepreneurship (Adeeko & Treanor, 2022), this research hopes to formulate a decolonial alternative exemplifying the broad diversity and opportunities of the phenomenon.

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Keywords

Entrepreneurship, Gender, Ethnic minorities, Intersectionality, Decolonialism

Knowledge production and ‘ungrievable lives’ during Ethiopia’s Tigray war

Sarah Vaughan

(independent researcher – vaughanresearch@gmail.com)

Meza Gidey Gebremedhin

(independent researcher – meazagidey93@gmail.com)

In this paper we examine the strategies used by the Ethiopian and Eritrean governments (and their allies and supporters) to establish a dominant narrative of the war in Tigray as a “law and order operation” against “terrorists”. We examine the processes by which, during this particularly brutal conflict, in which multiple hundreds of thousands of civilians and combatants were killed, Tigrayan lives were rendered “ungrievable” to use Judith Butler’s terminology. Elaborate physical strategies to close off information flows from the theatre of war in Tigray (where roads, telecommunications and internet were closed) were combined with the deliberate and aggressive distortion of media and analytical narratives. The two strategies were accompanied by exceptionally combative approaches from government-aligned activists and academic analysts, which served to intimidate international journalistic coverage and ward off closer international analysis.

The propaganda war became a second front in this peculiarly violent war, obscuring the brutality of the two states’ war strategies in Tigray and confusing or blunting the force of international responses. As a result, extreme violence, much of it perpetrated against civilians targeted for their ethnicity, was rendered invisible and trivialised by means of a range of research, advocacy, and public communications strategies. Culpability for carefully orchestrated strategies of violence against Tigray’s civilian population was obscured and confused, to be replaced with a general sense of “bothsidesism” – wrongly suggesting that all parties to the conflict were equally guilty of war crimes.

The paper explores the key strategies and major actors which were deployed to these ends. It considers the mobilisation of ethnicised hate speech in the Ethiopian domestic arena, and of inviolable Ethiopian “sovereignty” in the international arena. Both approaches were used as mechanisms to reshape narratives: to ringfence responsibility for the war with Tigrayan political actors, and to limit the scope and legitimacy of international pushback and engagement, especially in terms of the international legal “responsibility to protect.” The paper examines the role of a number of Ethiopian public universities and faculty members in the marginalisation and exclusion of alternative academic voices. We discuss the role of multiple formal and social media outlets. We cover the role of religious leaders and media outlets and discuss the amplification of government-preferred voices from domestic and international academic networks. The displacement of alternative voices and perspectives beyond Ethiopia’s physical space, and the roles played by diaspora groups are also considered.

In its analysis of these strategies of distorted and propagandist knowledge production, the paper explores their narrative connections with the “Great Ethiopia” academic tradition. This projects the Ethiopian state as an ancient and centralised polity, an undefeated African powerhouse and beacon of anti-colonial struggle. The paper demonstrates how tropes of sovereignty and independence were mobilised to bolster pan-Africanist support for the centralising Ethiopian state programme, in its power struggle against a decentralising federalist alternative vision. It explores the surprising level of co-option of a progressive pan-Africanist tradition in the service of a brutal war, and the potential wider impact of this precedent across and beyond the African continent.

Keywords

Narrative distortion, Media manipulation, Ethnicized hate speech, Pan-Africanist co-option, Responsibility to protect

Fostering access of publication markets by disadvantaged researchers in the Global South

Silas Parowa Mangwende

(Women's University in Africa, Zimbabwe – sparowa@gmail.com)

Blessing Zari

(Women's University in Africa, Zimbabwe – bzari@wua.ac.zw)

African researchers, in particular early career researchers (ECRs), remain under-represented in worldwide publication markets. The worldwide flourishing of publication markets has not fully embraced researchers from the African continent who work in marginalised universities and research institutions. Competition is stiff in the publication market especially in more prestigious journals. For most ECRs in Zimbabwean universities, it is not easy to access publication markets especially in prestigious journals. Notably, various structural inhibitors prevent ECRs in Africa, including Zimbabwe, from accessing publication markets. Underpinning most of the inhibitors is access to funding, limited infrastructure, high teaching loads and lack of support structures. Also lack of capacity building opportunities to inculcate academic research skills development are the biggest challenges to ECRs in Africa with regard to accessing publication markets. In particular, funding for research in most African countries is inadequate and this has a downstream effect. As a result of these structural inhibitors, a number of ECRs have fallen prey to predatory journals. Most ECRs engage in research activities without a firm grasp of all methodological facets and in particular the research methods. Soundness of the research methods is a key success factor in order to produce top-notch papers which impress publishers. Another factors has been lack of confidence in conducting research. Low esteem affects motivation and consequently results in poor quality research. Robust initiatives seeking to address unequal access to publication markets by ECRs in Sub-Saharan Africa and in particular Zimbabwe will foster equality, social justice, peace and other SDGs across the continent. Guided through the lens of the Ecological Systems Theory, the study will examine ecological factors affecting early career researchers in developing countries towards accessing publication markets. A structured questionnaire will be administered to 250 ECRs in Zimbabwe's universities. In-depth interviews will be conducted with heads of school, faculties, administrators and members of post-graduate centres, research ethics committees, research boards, international offices and research councils. The study will explore ways of ensuring effective utilisation of university and external resources. It will also interrogate emerging and innovative sources of finance which are at the disposal of ECRs. The ultimate aim is to recommend to universities in developing countries and in particular Zimbabwe, policy changes that will strengthen their research financing systems. In addition, the study will explore new international collaborations that will lead to increased competitive research output. Moreover, the study will explore ways of increasing female ECRs research output through implementation of gender-sensitive research schemes. The study will have both theoretical and practical contribution. For instance, the results of this empirical study will contribute to the advancement of practical solutions to the problems of access of publication markets by ECRs in Zimbabwe.

Keywords

Publication markets, Access, Early Career Researchers, Structural inhibitors, Ecological factors

Strengthening and Accelerating Institutional Linkages among Research, Learning, development and Business Institutions: Lessons from a collaborative projects in Ethiopia

Sintayehu Yigrem Mersha

(School of Animal and Range Sciences, College of Agriculture, Hawassa University, Hawassa, Ethiopia – Sintayehu@hu.edu.et)

Ajebu Nurfeta

(School of Animal and Range Sciences, College of Agriculture, Hawassa University, Hawassa, Ethiopia)

Zelege Mekuriaw

(International Livestock Research Institute, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)

Nargiza Ludgate

(Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, USA)

In this presentation, we will share lessons from a consortium local capacity development (LCD) project, which was recently initiated between Hawassa University and Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Livestock Systems at the University of Florida. The main goal of the project is to create a communications platform to facilitate the co-creation and exchange of knowledge among diverse livestock stakeholders including research, agriculture extension and training institutes (ATIs), policy, the private sector, and development actors in Ethiopia. We believe that this platform would result in reducing the duplication of efforts, optimizing resource use, better coordination, but more importantly translating the knowledge generated by research into practice that brings effective solutions to the livestock sector in Ethiopia. The new knowledge, innovative technologies and products, evidence-based policies, and effective services should reach every livestock utilitarian in a prompt, interactive, and timely manner. While the project is ongoing, we have already gained lessons from this consortium project. These include the acceleration of the communication and exchange of knowledge between the academia, research, extension, development, and the private sector. We will also share our expectations of how the new platform will contribute to co-creating and disseminating various knowledge materials, such as publications, technical reports, brochures, pamphlets, extension materials, etc., to users in Ethiopia. Lessons about how capacity strengthening activities could benefit young researchers would help the livestock sector and policymakers make appropriate policies in terms of skills development. In our presentation, we will also share interesting lessons about partnership development between South and North or Ethiopian and American researchers to strengthen collaboration around agricultural research and communication.

Keywords

Communication platform, Knowledge generation, Research communication, Policy, Development, Livestock

Knowledge sharing and co-creation to strengthen advisory agricultural services

Sylvia Burssens

(Ghent University & Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, Rome – Sylvia.Burssens@ugent.be)

Zofia Mroczek

(Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, Rome – Zofia.Mroczek@fao.org)

Nejib Ajili

(nejib.ajili14@gmail.com)

Mohamed El Amrani

(National School of Agriculture of Meknes – elamrani.mohamed66@gmail.com)

Eugen Chiabur

(eugen.chiabur@gmail.com)

Nevena Alexandrova

(Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, Rome – Nevena.Alexandrova@fao.org)

In a systems approach, all actors co-create to support innovation and deliver solutions for sustainable agrifood systems. They are connected to each other and exchange information to contribute to best practices and cope with global challenges as well as local needs. In this co-innovation model all types of actors, advisors, researchers, enterprises, NGOs, educators, local authorities farmers, foresters, and others, work together toward common objectives. Farmers and foresters are appreciated for their tacit knowledge and are, as main users, in the center of the interactions and an integral part of the process rather than being at the side or the end of the network.

The systems approach to agricultural innovation is embedded in the concept of the Agricultural Innovation System (AIS) or Agricultural Knowledge Innovation System (AKIS). Although Agricultural Advisory Services (AAS), as an integral part of AKIS are moving away from the linear (transfer of technology model) in many countries, there is still a need for a more systemic approach. This approach takes into account the current socio-economic, including the political and cultural, context in the country, as well as global challenges that agriculture is also confronted with such as climate change, biodiversity loss, food security, poverty, economic viability, gender equality, and education.

Based on this approach, the outcomes of two projects supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Tunisia¹ and Azerbaijan², as well as insights of other FAO projects in Liberia, Madagascar and Comoros on transforming AAS in support of modern agrifood systems are discussed, including innovation platforms for AAS, co-created system operational models, and a competency-based skills framework for advisors. Advisors need to be able to navigate the complexity of the AIS and link with all local actors in the value chain to be able to stimulate knowledge sharing and co-innovation to the benefit of the farmers and foresters, and to support better food and nutrition security, resilience building, sustainability and inclusion.

Keywords

Advisory services, Systems approach, Agricultural innovation, Tunisia, Azerbaijan

- 1 The project "Establishment of a public-private partnership in extension and advisory services" in Tunisia was implemented in the period 2019-2021 as part of the FAO Technical Cooperation Programme
- 2 The project "Strengthening Agricultural advisory services in Azerbaijan" was funded by European Commission and implemented by FAO in the period 2019-2022

Rebuilding the things that fall apart: PrimTEd's English language stream develops a framework to enhance educational standards

Thabile Mbatha

(University of Zululand – MbathaT@unizulu.ac.za)

Thelma Mort

(University of South Africa – mortkb@unisa.ac.za)

Jane Tozama Mthembu

(Tshwane University of Technology – mthembujt@tut.ac.za)

This study reports on how the PrimTEd project with its concern about establishing and raising standards of English First Additional Language (EFAL) learning and attainment in initial teacher education at South African universities, has managed to build a different and potentially decolonising framework around English language teaching and learning. English has been a site of struggle, having a complex colonial heritage, and seen as disempowering to local indigenous languages and those who speak them. However, English is also the language of business and compulsory at school, despite the fact that most of the population do not speak it as a mother tongue. A qualitative case study was used to reflect on how the development of teacher knowledge standards approach plays a role in reframing the ontology of the position of English in Southern Africa. Interviews were conducted with lecturers to determine the value of these knowledge standards. Key findings indicate that lecturers displayed no awareness of these knowledge standards but saw value in having them. Future research should focus on how the knowledge standards can be integrated in the development of English language programmes at universities in order to improve English language teaching.

Keywords

Decolonial, Social justice, English First Additional Language, ITE, Assessment

'North-based' research in a 'South-based' humanitarian setting. Aiming for sustainable impact in Nakivale settlements, Uganda

Tessa Ubels

(Anthropology and Development Studies department, Radboud University – tessa.ubels@ru.nl)

This paper discusses the power dynamics involved in conducting research in a 'South-based' humanitarian setting as a 'North-based' scholar. The first part of the paper describes the relations between the author, a Dutch female white researcher, and the research participants, people who fled from Somalia, Ethiopia, Burundi, Rwanda, and DR Congo and are now living and receiving aid in Nakivale settlements, Uganda. The vulnerable position the research participants find themselves in creates a responsibility for the researcher to ensure the research is relevant and impactful. Yet the research in itself may reinforce (perceptions of) dependency (e.g. 'North-based' expertise). This research explores several opportunities and barriers to creating impact within the broader academic and humanitarian setting it operates in. The second, and related, part of the paper is the international research partnership between a Dutch university and a Ugandan non-governmental organisation which provides support to the research participants. The research participants often regard the research project as part of the humanitarian aid system because of this international partnership. In contrast, the research project is strictly independent. The question is, how can the academic research and knowledge generated by a 'North-based' university be localised and made relevant for 'South-based' NGOs? Specific attention is paid to the power dynamics which advance and obstruct sustainable impact in an international research partnership.

Keywords

Ethics, Impact, International research partnership, Power, Humanitarian aid system

A critical literature review of emancipatory ethnographic research in the context of African traditional healing

Tutu Lawrence Faleni

(Department of Educational Leadership and Management, University of South Africa (UNISA) – falentl@unisa.ac.za)

The constitutional changes in post-Apartheid South Africa have created a legislative and cultural framework that acknowledges and recognizes traditional African healing. Such changes have been followed by a plethora of ethnographic research in the field of African traditional healing. The scholarly pursuit of knowledge production has often created conditions where university-based researchers engage in research where vulnerable and poor people become subjects of research.

Whilst ethical considerations assist in creating a framework that regulates the relationship between the researcher and the subjects there are other considerations which influence the relationship between the researcher and the population under study. Literature in qualitative research encourages researchers to adopt an empowering approach toward research populations. In some situations, researchers work with research populations which could be regarded as disadvantaged and vulnerable from a socio-economic point of view. The obvious power relations between the researcher and the research populations could be such that at the end of the research process, the subjects of research are left disempowered and more vulnerable. The researcher is, from a humanity point of view, required, in the execution of research, to make choices which would enhance, affirm and empower the mostly vulnerable research populations.

The purpose of this theoretical review is to reflect on research practices in the context of empowering and affirmative African traditional healing conducted via ethnographic qualitative research in poor South African communities. The conceptual study problematizes the notion of research production within studies of African traditional healing by comparing literature on emancipatory research with concepts of African spirituality, power relations and empowerment practices employed within ethnographic research in traditional healing in South Africa. It critically examines literature within studies of African traditional healing and how researchers can stimulate or contribute to processes which improve their respondents' life conditions

This literature review interrogates the role of the researcher and advocates that the respondents be treated as co-creators in the knowledge production process. The study suggests that researchers should not privilege their own perspectives over that of the research subjects. The study goes on to propose a variety of research practices and roles that could enable researchers to contribute to the conditions within which self-emancipation of vulnerable research populations could be improved.

Keywords

Ethnographic research, African traditional healing, African spirituality, Emancipatory research

The challenge of quoting African “informants” in European academia from the 17th to 20th centuries – a suggestion to critically reconsider bibliographical paradigms regarding African writers and scholars (with examples from Northeastern Africa)

Wolbert G. C. Smidt

(Jena University/Mekelle University – wolbertsmidt@yahoo.de)

In the 1680s the impressive map of Ethiopia designed starting from the 1650s by the orientalist Hiob Ludolf in close cooperation with his Ethiopian Geez teacher Abba Gorgoryos was published and was quickly accepted as the most precise and important map of the region. Its Latin description explicitly refers to Abba Gorgoryos as the main collaborator in the map-making, but in bibliographical references the map always appears as “Ludolf’s map” only. In the 18th century the Scottish noble James Bruce stayed a long time at the Ethiopian court and documented Ethiopian historiographical texts and quoted information from the royal court; how should those texts which were not his be referenced? When missionaries arrived in Ethiopia starting from the early 19th century, they interacted strongly with local intellectual movements and religious scholars, with whom they started a vivid correspondence - many of the letters appear in missionary publications. But when missionary and religious histories refer to these publications, only the names of the European authors are referred to as authors (even if local missionaries strongly underlined their partnerships). When Johann Ludwig Krapf published his Bible translations in Oromo starting from the 1840s, only his name appeared in Latin letters on the title page, while the second title in Geez letters (not visible to average Europeans) explicitly named his Oromo collaborators in the translation endeavor, such as Ruufoo. However, these Bibles are exclusively known as Krapf’s achievements only. In the 1870s, the Austrian linguist Leo Reinisch produced an impressive series of long oral texts in different languages of Northeastern Africa, such as the oral traditions told by Nugus (“king”) Bilal, the local ruler of the small Afar polity of the Bōri peninsula. But usually no bibliography will refer to Bilal. In the early 20th century, in the period of the foundation of Hamburg University, a Somali poet, Muhammad Nur, was hired as a lecturer; his stories and poems, which show a high-level knowledge of the complex cultural traditions of his people, were crucial for the development of Somali studies at the Chair of African languages - however, academic references to this oeuvre are missing, as only the Hamburg linguist is referred to in academic literature as the author. Still in the 1990s, the important Afar linguist Didier Morin published a rich collection of Afar songs by the poet Hamad Laqdé with comments and translation; only the name of Morin appears on the book title. The challenge is evident: European academic literature is a “treasure box” of African texts, from maps, letters, decrees, poems, songs to oral literature. In many cases the names of their African authors are explicitly mentioned, also because the European researchers often strongly underlined the role of their partners, who were usually much more than just “informants”. However, bibliographies generally only “know” the European writer. This paper develops suggestions on how to counter the problematic bias which leads to considerable distortions of knowledge production.

Keywords

African “informants”, Africans in bibliographical citations, oral literature, Ethiopian Studies, pre-modern African scholarship

A material culture analysis of representations of Day Zero in Cape Town, South Africa

Zaib Toyer

(Ghent University & University of the Western Cape – 3216679@myuwc.ac.za)

The study explores “Day Zero”, the water crisis which took place in Cape Town roughly between 2015 & 2018. Day Zero indexed what was to be the day the city ran out of its municipal water, with dam levels allegedly hovering between 15 and 30 per cent of the total capacity at the crisis’ peak (Cassim, 2018; Poplak, 2018; York, 2018). The countdown was clearly visible on highway signboards, newspaper articles, mobile messages and social media platforms and was also tangible in the introduction of water meters and higher tariffs implemented by the local municipality (Brühl, Visser, 2021). Day Zero also sparked frequent trips from poverty-stricken areas on the periphery of Cape Town to affluent areas in search of free spring water (Gosling, 2018; Sieff, 2018). This study provides a multi-faceted view of Day Zero by showcasing the different ways that the Day Zero campaign was mediatized and communicated to various stakeholders, highlighting the silenced voices of affected communities through targeted ethnographic interviews, which were largely absent from media reports. Other methodologies include a linguistic landscapes (LL) analysis of the signage and media communication regarding the crisis. The study aims to shed light on the household responses to and effects of water shortage in the lives of residents of the city of Cape Town during the Day Zero period, the impacts of class, race and urban planning in an unequal society; and how mainly vulnerable communities are affected when resources become depleted.

Keywords

Material culture, Day Zero, Linguistic Landscapes, Cape Town, Apartheid urban planning

ABSTRACTS WORKSHOPS,
PANELS AND
ROUND TABLES

Invisible Voices in the Production of Knowledge – Lessons from the Bukavu Series

Godefroid Muzalia

(Groupe d'Etudes sur les Conflits-Sécurité Humanitaire (GEC-SH), Institut Supérieur Pédagogique de Bukavu, DRC – gmuzalia@gmail.com)

An Ansoms

(Université Catholique de Louvain-la-Neuve (UCL) – an.ansoms@uclouvain.be)

Koen Vlassenroot

(Ghent University – koen.vlassenroot@ugent.be)

Aymar Nyenyezi

(Université de Mons – aymar.nyenyezibisoka@umons.ac.be)

Josaphat Musamba

(Groupe d'Etudes sur les Conflits-Sécurité Humanitaire (GEC-SH), Institut Supérieur Pédagogique de Bukavu, DRC & Ghent University – josaphatmusambu@gmail.com)

Vedaste Cituli

(Anganza Institute & Institut Supérieur de Développement Rural de Bukavu, DRC & Université Catholique de Louvain-la-Neuve)

In 2020, the 'Bukavu Series' were published, the result of a collective process that aimed to give space to those who often remain invisible in the production of knowledge. It presented a series of blog posts produced by a group of 30 researchers based in eastern Congo and Europe and working in conflict-affected areas. The series was the result of a collective and reflexive process that critically examined the positionality and (in)visibility of Congolese researchers in the cycles of research they have been part of. The blog posts critiqued existing logics behind the production of knowledge and reflected on researchers' own responsibilities. The different contributions also called for a more inclusive debate and the recognition of the ethical and emotional challenges research collaborators and assistants face. It was concluded that if we want to build a research environment based on equal partnerships, research collaborators and assistants based in research areas should also claim the necessary space to raise their voices and point out their constraints. This was not only considered a moral obligation but a necessary condition for transforming the production of knowledge and academia at large.

Today, three years after the publication of the series, a roundtable of authors who were involved in the reflective process of the Bukavu Series critically investigate whether this process has changed their way of conducting research and what is needed to build an environment of collaborative research that not only gives a voice and recognition to research collaborators and assistants based in the Global South, but starts from an equal ownership of the entire research cycle.

Keywords

Equal partnership, Equal ownership, Collaborative research, Reflexive process, Positionality

Writing Workshop (by invitation only)

Gillian Mathys

(Ghent University – Gillian.Mathys@UGent.be)

Lebogang Mokwena

(University of the Western Cape – lemokwena@uwc.ac.za)

Fernanda Pinto de Almeida

(University of the Western Cape – fpintodealmeida@uwc.ac.za)

This workshop is aimed at PhD-students and early career scholars (postdocs, sessional lecturers) wanting to gain a firmer grasp of writing for and publishing academic articles in international journals.

The first part will consist of explaining the process from an insider perspective and will offer some dos and don'ts in dealing with editors, submissions and revisions.

The second part will focus on common mistakes in drafts of submissions that can lead to rejection, and list advice for getting your article in shape for submission. For young scholars, the process of getting an article published in a journal can seem a bewildering process.

The final part of the session will involve a practical component aimed at helping workshop participants with re-visioning their papers (that is, entering the mode for revising existing chapters into stand-alone articles for a journal or, down the line, in response to reviewer comments).

Participants will be asked to submit a draft of an article or chapter by 1 November, and written individual feedback will be provided. To enable exchange and discussion between all participants as well as individual feedback, only 15 people will be able to attend this workshop.

This workshop will be facilitated by three scholars spanning early-career to senior scholar ranks, namely: Gillian Mathys, who has firsthand experience as an editor with the Canadian Journal of African Studies and Afrika Focus, Lebogang Mokwena, a postdoctoral fellow at the CHR and perennial revision-phobe currently tackling two Revise&Resubmits, and Fernanda Pinto de Almeida, a researcher at the CHR and co-convener, with Lebogang, of the Centre's Writing Group.

Taking international research collaborations to the next level. *The case of the Academic Network for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (ANSER)*

Emilie Peeters

(Ghent University – emilie.peeters@ugent.be)

Hanani Tabana

(University of the Western Cape – htabana@uwc.ac.za)

Nafissa Osman

(Universidade Eduardo Mondlane – nafissa.osman@gmail.com)

Tammary Esho

(AMREF International University – Tammary.Esho@amref.org)

The Academic Network for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Policy (ANSER) was established by Ghent University in 2016 and currently comprises 42 academic and non-academic members from 23 countries. Thirteen of its affiliated members are in African countries, including the University of the Western Cape in South Africa. ANSER's key goal has been to support realising Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) worldwide, thereby helping achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. ANSER uses the combined knowledge and skills of researchers, policymakers and practitioners within its affiliated member organisations, to establish SRHR evidence bases for developing policy that can be translated into effective practice.

ANSER's key activities include education, research and societal outreach, focusing on four strategies linking research to policy: 1) Increasing opportunities for interaction between policymakers and researchers 2) Making research findings more accessible to policymakers, 3) Addressing structural barriers such as research receptivity in policy agencies as well as obstacles to academics linking research to policy and 4) Increasing the relevance of research to policy. Our activities are underpinned by jointly developing common research agendas, participatory engagement with diverse stakeholders, and conducting collaborative inter-country interdisciplinary research and student networking and training ventures. In engaging in these activities, the network has accumulated extensive knowledge and expertise in instituting knowledge-sharing systems and creating sustainable global academic collaborations and stakeholder engagements. Drawing on our experiences, ANSER can contribute insights into the successes and challenges of establishing best practices in achieving greater equity in collaborative north-south knowledge production.

We would like to propose an interactive panel discussion session on improving collaborative global research and practice networks as part of the GAPSYM 16 conference agenda. We suggest that on such a panel, Emilie Peeters (ANSER Coordinator, Ghent University) presents ANSER's ways of working as a case study of a global knowledge production network. This would be followed by Prof. Hanani Tabana (University of the Western Cape, South Africa), Prof. Tammary Esho (AMREF International University, Kenya) & Prof. Nafissa Osman (Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, Mozambique) sharing their views and experiences of working within the ANSER network and reflecting on challenges the network has encountered and those it continues to face. The session would conclude with speakers and the audience interacting actively with each other, to exchange ideas on strengthening more equitable collaborative networks in north-south scholarly knowledge production.

SET UP

Spotlighted on screen: Emilie Peeters (Ghent University), Prof. Nafissa Osman (Universidade Eduardo Mondlane) and Prof. Tammary Esho (AMREF International University), Prof. Hanani Tabana (UWC)

OUTLINE

- 15' Emilie Peeters (Ghent University) introduces the panel & presents ANSER
- 30' Emilie Peeters moderates the debate on working within a network like ANSER, based on specific questions, with:
 1. Prof. Hanani Tabana (University of the Western Cape, South Africa)
 2. Prof. Tammary Esho (AMREF International University, Kenya)
 3. Prof. Nafissa Osman (Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, Mozambique)
- 10' interactive questionnaire on screen with the audience
- 20' Discussion with the audience on strengthening more equitable collaborative networks in north-south scholarly knowledge production.
- 10' interactive questionnaire on screen with the audience
- 5' Emilie Peeters closes the panel

Keywords

Network, sexual & reproductive health and rights, Knowledge translation, North-south & south-south collaboration, Policy

Opportunities and challenges of interdisciplinary research collaborations across the North-South nexus

Lee-Shae Scharnick Udemans

(University of the Western Cape – lscharnickudemans@uwc.ac.za)

Kris Rutten

(Ghent University – Kris.Rutten@UGent.be)

Maurits Van Bever Donker

(University of the Western Cape – mvanbeverdonker@uwc.ac.za)

Stef Slembrouck

(Ghent University – Stef.Slembrouck@UGent.be)

Quentin Williams

(University of the Western Cape – qwilliams@uwc.ac.za)

The first phase of the Strategic Institutional Partnership (SIP 1.0) between the University of the Western Cape and Ghent University focused on 'turning diversity into capacity'. Starting from fundamental observations about the need and usefulness of cross-national, North/South-comparison around pressing social themes, including questions of how to theorize, investigate and respond adequately to diversity, the Strategic Institutional Partnership aimed at developing a programme of North/South-exchange.

During this roundtable discussion we will explore the opportunities and challenges of setting up interdisciplinary research collaborations across the North-South nexus, building on the experience of past and on-going joint-PhD research projects. How can we build on these experiences to critically assess and at the same time instigate North/South knowledge production and exchange? Which lessons have we learned to further develop 'research pathways of South/North exchange in capacity and learning' which will be the focus of the second phase of the Strategic Institutional Partnership between UWC and UGent (SIP 2.0).

Keywords

Institutional Partnership, North-South nexus, Knowledge exchange, UWC, UGent

Strengthening Digital Inclusion and Social Innovation through Belgian-South African Research Collaboration: Considerations regarding Knowledge Production

Leo van Audenhove

(Vrije Universiteit Brussels – leo.van.audenhove@vub.be)

Koen Ponnet

(Ghent University – Koen.Ponnet@UGent.be)

Wouter Grove

(University of the Western Cape – wgrove@uwc.ac.za)

Natasha Katunga

(University of the Western Cape – nkatunga@uwc.ac.za)

Carlynn Keating

(University of the Western Cape – ckeating@uwc.ac.za)

Humphrey Brydon

(University of the Western Cape – hbrydon@uwc.ac.za)

OBJECTIVE

Explore the unique insights, opportunities, and outcomes generated through Belgian and South African research collaboration in the realms of digital inclusion and social innovation.

INTRODUCTION

Digital technologies and the process of digital transformation are fundamentally changing the business and societal landscape. Access to digital resources and the ability to benefit from the affordances of these technologies can have a significant impact on socio-economic development, education and wellbeing. Societal participation and a digitally inclusive and equal society require that everyone, regardless of socio-economic status or geographic location, can engage with and benefit from these advances.

This topic has been a key focus area explored by digital inclusion/transformation scholars from multiple disciplines from Ghent University (UGent), Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) and the University of the Western Cape (UWC) - a research partnership that spans ten years. The positioning of UGent and VUB in the global north and South Africa in the global south offer a unique lens on the topic of digital inclusion/ transformation as a global concern.

The Network Readiness Index¹, an instrument currently administered by the Portulans Institute is widely used and measures the collective international ability to derive maximum social and economic effects from digital transformation. The instrument measures a country's performance based on four pillars: Technology, People, Governance and Impact. According to the 2022 survey, Belgium is ranked 21st overall out of 131 countries measured. Their ability to achieve beneficial impact (Impact Pillar) from these digital technologies is ranked 17th out of 131 countries measured. In comparison, South Africa's overall ranking is 68th, while the country's ability to derive beneficial impact is ranked at 105th.

1 <https://networkreadinessindex.org/>

The 2022 Survey indicates that much uncertainty remains about our collective international ability (and that of individual economies) to maximize the social and economic effects of digital transformation.

The profound differences in the digital inclusion context between Belgium and South Africa allows for a rich research field for generating knowledge to enhance our collective international ability. The shared vision towards global digital inclusive societies and mutual professional respect enable the partners to collaborate towards the international digital transformation/digital inclusion discourse, development of research capacity (joint PhDs; joint research projects) and digital social innovation.

Although following similar and sometimes co-developed methodologies in joint research projects and initiatives, the contextual realities require vastly different approaches in practical application, citizen engagement and policy contributions.

Reflecting on this mutually beneficial research partnership developed over a decade and the ability to contribute to the digital inclusion international discourse as individual institutions and as a partnership several key principles for constructive collaboration are evident. The round table discussion will explore these principles and other related topics as indicated below.

PANEL TOPICS

- Historical and Contextual Overview: Tracing the evolution and milestones of the Belgian-South African research collaboration on digital inclusion and transformation.
- Digital Inclusion Case Studies: Highlighting specific projects where collaboration led to novel approaches or solutions in ensuring digital access and literacy.
- Social Innovations through Tech: Exploring the role of technology in driving social change, and how combined insights from both countries can catalyse inclusive transformation.
- Policy, Strategy, and Framework Development: Discussing how joint research has informed digital inclusion policies and frameworks at local, regional, and national levels in both countries.
- Challenges and Lessons Learned: An honest examination of challenges faced during these collaborative efforts, and the lessons (principles) they offer for international research partnerships.
- Exploring the value of an “abundance approach” to research collaboration.

INTENDED OUTCOMES

- Sharing insights from Belgian-South African digital inclusion collaborations.
- Considerations in joint knowledge production initiatives between partners with asymmetrical socio-economic characteristics.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Working towards an inclusive and sustainable future requires digital inclusion researchers to accommodate diversity in perspectives, recognise significant contextual differences and be cognisant of different lived experiences to co-design knowledge and solutions for impact. The SDGs require impactful global partnerships for sustainable development – an endeavour worth pursuing.

Keywords

Digital inclusion, Digital transformation, SDGs, Digital social innovation

Learning to unlearn: Feminist research approaches with South African communities dismantle power relations in knowledge systems

Sanelisiwe Nyaba

(Food Agency Cape Town (FACT), Cape Town & Department of Environmental & Geographical Science, University of Cape Town (UCT), Cape Town – nyabasanelisiwe@gmail.com)

Nicole Paganini

(TMG Thinktank for Sustainability, Berlin, Germany & Institute for Development Research, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna – nicole.paganini@tmg-thinktank.com)

Bonang Libuke

(Food Agency Cape Town (FACT))

Aqeela Singlee

(Food Agency Cape Town (FACT))

ACADEMIC FRAMEWORK AND BACKGROUND

Our workshop proposal addresses the role of local researchers, we call them co-researchers, in transnational research collaborations. Our fieldwork conducted in Cape Town's community kitchens, focusing on the silence surrounding gender-based violence unpacked the deep frustration of communities in international research projects. While foreign researchers often rely on local communities as collaborators, their contributions are often overlooked and undervalued in academic knowledge production. Our example scrutinises the challenges of women living in urban low-income areas during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research is part of Urban Food Futures, an international research project, led by TMG Research, a thinktank based in Berlin and Nairobi. The partner in Cape Town is Food Agency Cape Town (FACT), a community-led organisation advocating for food justice.

Feminist research approaches have allowed (us) to address issues of underlying politics, power and patriarchy to enhance unlearning processes to support decolonisation of knowledge generation processes from the perspectives of both the community and the researcher. We draw on the work of Cape Town based feminist Amina Mama. Mama promotes a feminist praxis that engages with the realities and struggles of African women and promotes their agency and self-representation. She encourages researchers to actively listen to and collaborate with communities in the research process, ensuring that their voices and perspectives are incorporated and respected. By advocating for the inclusion of voices from the South, Amina Mama challenges the power dynamics and epistemic injustices that have historically marginalized and silenced non-Western voices in academic research. She promotes a more equitable and transformative approach to knowledge production that recognizes and celebrates the diversity of feminist perspectives and experiences across Africa and the Global South. By centering their voices, critical feminist research aims to challenge and dismantle these oppressive structures, as well as address the intersecting oppressions they face based on their race, ethnicity, and gender. By amplifying the experiences, perspectives, and knowledge of marginalised communities, research becomes more inclusive and representative, reflecting the diversity and complexity of lived experiences. This inclusion allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand and opens up new avenues for analysis and theorizing. We report hereby on a process that we started in 2020 to enhance community agency through collaborative dialogues. This is a continuous action-research methodology which coins the Urban Food Futures programme research ethics in Cape Town.

PANEL CONCEPT

For this panel we plan on zooming in on the use of art methods that formed part of the feminist co-research approaches that aided our research journey in conducting, analysing and critiquing research by co-researchers in collaboration with academics and artists. These art-methods are Photo-voice, podcast and films. Here is the panel overview:

Hosted by:

Nicole Paganini, Bonang Libuke, Sanelisiwe Nyaba, Aqeela Singlee

Start (10min):

Input by Sanelisiwe and Nicole: diving into the work of community based learning and knowledge generation. 10 min presentation of glimpses of feminist research examples such as podcasts, photovoices and poetry to land the audience into the space of the fishbowl

Introducing the panel and fishbowl methodology (5 min):

- Sanelisiwe Nyaba, UCT master student, poet and co-researcher
- Bonang Libuke, UWC student, visual artist and poet
- Aqeela Singlee, Psychologist and communication expert, GBV Ambassador
- Nicole Paganini, scholar activist and programme lead

Fishbowl (45 min) with panel (moderated by NP)

guiding questions for the panel:

- co-creation of knowledge from an ethical point of view
- collaboration with the South from a decolonial point of view
- uncomfortable questions of power and knowledge from a critical feminist point of view

Q&A and closing (15 min)

artistic reflection on the fishbowl by a community poet

When we follow the plants we constantly meet their people: Thoughts on decolonizing the vegetal world through the theory and ethnography of plants

Sara Abdullah - Lagardien

(Department of Anthropology, University of the Western Cape – 4388158@myuwc.ac.za)

Denisha Anand

(Department of Anthropology, University of the Western Cape – 3032742@myuwc.ac.za)

Rhoda Deers

(Department of Anthropology, University of the Western Cape – 3356282@myuwc.ac.za)

William Ellis

(Department of Anthropology, University of the Western Cape – wellis@uwc.ac.za)

Tihana Nathen

(Department of Anthropology, University of the Western Cape – 2958347@myuwc.ac.za)

It can easily be assumed that attention to the vegetal world would only produce a mirror of the natural world and is much less about the social world of humans. It is becoming increasingly clear that emergent fields such as critical plant studies can produce a richly textured analysis of the human and much more than merely the human world. When “following the plants” our work can reveal a novel read of the intermingled worlds that moves beyond discourses about existential threats common in environmental studies. The work shows how people and plants are caught up in co-constituted worlds where the plants are available as metaphor to explain the social but are at the same time active agents in the production of social formations. For instance, Rastafarians see a world where their access to plants is about a decolonial critique of land issues, healing of a people and the refusal to acknowledge current frames for criminalizing their lives. In other instances, we note the movements of plants across borders as they travel alongside migrants and where they perform different types of covert and intimate labour. Further, on the trail of spices, we note a contest for authenticity of persons as cultural beings; this contest centers on the use of these plants that are seen as constitutive of a people but whose use can just as easily de-authenticate. Vital to understanding plants is the practice of naming and we give brief attention to this since naming is fraught with power, dispossession, colonized knowledge and even openly contains images of race so obvious that everyone ignores them.

In closing the panel stays with race and deals with the question of the intersectionality of environmentalisms that is revealed when we follow children, veldkinders, into the field where they use nature to recreate ideal worlds that mirror their everyday.

Keywords

Decolonized botany, Plant agency, Follow the thing, Ethnography of plants, Multispecies

University of the Western Cape's CHR Hub in Woodstock
66 Greatmore Street, Woodstock
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Username: Visual-History

Password: Vhistory@123