

DECOLONIALITY AND CHINA'S ROLE IN KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION IN AFRICA

Mahmudat O. Muhibbu-Din¹

Abdul-Wasi Babatunde Moshood²

Abdul-Gafar Tobi Oshodi³

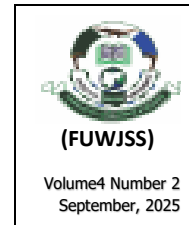
¹Department of Political Science,

University of Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria

Email: *mahmudamuhibbu-din@unimaid.edu.ng*

^{2&3}Department of Political Science, Lagos State University, Ojoo, Nigeria

Email: *moshood_tunes@yahoo.com & oshoditobi@yahoo.com*



Abstract

Euro-American epistemic hegemony in Africa has stimulated the debate to decolonise western knowledge production and dissemination. Despite myriads of constraints bedeviling knowledge production in the African continent by African scholars, few successes are noticeable in African scholarship. Nonetheless, the emerging role of China in knowledge production to redress prevailing hegemonic imbalance is largely upsetting structures of decoloniality within the African continent. Consequently, this paper interrogates implications of China as knowledge producer in the context of Africa as China's knowledge consumer. Analyses in the paper hinged on the notion of decoloniality. Principally, the paper averred that colonial systems created new sites of knowledge production, with spectacular methods, curricular and epistemologies that only serve exigencies of the colonial state in Africa. In this way, colonialism completely destroyed and altered the precolonial mode of knowledge production autochthonous to Africa societies. The paper concludes that central to Chinese educational cooperation in Africa is the transmission of Chinese ideology, culture, and worldview. Thus, China is neither producing Afrocentric knowledge nor Africanising the curriculum. Hence, it is recommended that African must drive knowledge productions that unleash African productive forces and resources for African transformation.

Keywords: Decoloniality, knowledge, epistemic hegemony, research, African scholarship

Introduction

Knowledge Production (KP) is ubiquitous and a product of people lived experiences. Epistemological standpoints of societies inform their knowledge systems, written or unwritten. Thus, KP is not the exclusive preserve of a particular civilisation contrary to the claim of western

epistemic tradition that denies episteme diversity. KP is the vector of cultures, ideology, and power. Therefore, it is value-laden ingrained in the indelible mark of culture and worldview (Ndlov-Gatsheni 2013, Nyamnjoh 2004, 2019, Harding 1997). Colonialism imported western epistemic tradition that suppressed and even denied Africa precolonial epistemic order. Colonial systems created new sites of knowledge production, method of knowledge production indigenous to western epistemology and worldviews, curricular suitable to serve the colonial projects and ambition in Africa. At the same time, western epistemological systems denied or undermined the African epistemological traditions rate it as primitive, uncivilised and backward.

In the context of power relations between developed and less developed economies, KP is product of power and hegemony. The developed powerful western nations engage in KP enterprises that advance their hegemonic interests- domination and extraction of surplus from developing nations for capitalist expansion. Consequently, they determine what kind of knowledge to produce, who consume the knowledge and the purpose the knowledge aim to serve (Nyamnjoh 2019, Zeyege and Vambe 2006). Thus, the west shape the content of curricular in western sites of knowledge production and dissemination in Africa, curricular deliberately suited to subordinate African nations as periphery of the western metropolitan centres were introduced and perpetuated through petty African intellectual bourgeoisie. Thus, colonial hierarchies are sustained through social relations of knowledge production, scholarly publications and dissemination embedded in the colonial material structure of the mode of knowledge production reinforcing knowledge disarticulation and distortion.

Curricular constitutes the collection of wisdoms or bodies of knowledge or episteme in different fields of human endeavour: science and technology, economic cum political systems, governance, and production. The sites comprise the 'space' where this knowledge is produced, stored, retrieved, processed and disseminated. These include all educational institutions at all strata from pre-primary to tertiary education and research institutions, the libraries, and publishing outfits. The personnel through whose agency these knowledge productions take effect. These three components according to Taiwo (1993:892) comprise the material structure of the mode of knowledge production. Colonialism divorced Africans from both its material structure of mode of KP, imposed an incomplete, exclusionary and exogenous mode of KP, and forced new social relations of KP among the personnel of the material structure (Taiwo 1993: 893). Consequently, this result in epistemic disarticulations and distortions with little or no relevance to the local specificities, needs, aspirations and goals. Hence, KP does not take place in a vacuum nor does it take place for its own

sake. Integral to the process of KP is the material prowess of nations propelled by technological power. The most dominant nations produce knowledge that promotes a specific epistemological tradition while they emasculate others. Zeyege and Vambe (2006:334) conceive KP as an “intellectual effort used for liberation or domination by elites or by non-elites over less powerful members of their own groups.” Similarly, KP “is characterised by power dynamics that are often less horizontal and democratic than vertical and prescriptive (if not dogmatic)” (Nyamnjoh 2019:3).

Colonialism conveyed a new mode of KP aimed to serve the exigencies of the colonial state. This completely destroyed or altered the precolonial mode of KP autochthonous to Africa societies (Taiwo 1993). This indigenous modes of KP were well adapted to African social realities, perception of the world and their metaphors, idioms of life. This shaped their cultural perception of the world, transmitted across generation and preserved as the complexity and division of labour increase social differentiation. The persistence of colonial mode of KP in the postcolonial social formation and bad governance under the dictates of international financial institutions as well political interregnum are drivers of crises at the sites of knowledge production typical of most African universities (Taiwo 1993, Arowosegbe 2016). The failure of the postcolonial state elites to transform the colonial mode of KP to one built on national ideology, vision, and culture reinforced the roots of the crises of KP (Taiwo 1993:905). Moreover, at independence refusal of the Petty African bourgeoisie trained overseas to domesticate the standard in western societies nor indigenise the acquired epistemologies to explain African social realities accentuate further the crises (Mamdani 1993, Nyamnjoh 2004:170-179). Thus, the perpetuation and persistent domination of western colonial epistemology, that reduces Africans to sole consumer of knowledge traditions based on positivism-oriented values system and berates the African indigenous mode of KP and dissemination. With the collusion of the western powers, the African petty bourgeoisie intellectuals develop institutions, narratives, and discourses that sustained western epistemological hegemony over Africa. Failure to recognise and acknowledge non-western mode of KP as truthful, valid and resourceful in KP limit ability of knowing and conceptualising the world from multiple epistemological standpoint (Nyamnjoh 2004, 2019, Taiwo 1993). In Africa, epistemology requires deep social transformations from African epistemology and varied epistemic traditions for African progress.

The emerging global power, China is overtaking the west in knowledge production in Africa. The debates are gradually shifting from western epistemological dominated paradigm to nature and forms of knowledge produce in China's space as well as the personnel in KP. Following this

introduction, the next sessions of the paper examine Coloniality in Africa, the Africa Epistemology and KP, Decoloniality of KP, China's Role in KP in Africa, Decoloniality and/ Critique of China's KP, Recommendations, and Conclusion.

Coloniality of Knowledge Production in Africa

Coloniality is the internalisation that everything western is standard and best. It is "enduring imperial and colonial power structure, ... manifest in the exercise of power, production and distribution of knowledge, and experience of life and being of peoples in the global south" (Mpofu 2018:84). Western epistemologies dominate African thought as well as norms and values of the global systems (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013: xi). Western ideologies dominate African academic spaces and are considered hegemonic in intellectual discourse. Western norms, values and culture dominate global as well as local institutions, governance and practices. Coloniality is the institutionalisation of western cultural and political systems through concepts, principles, and laws that facilitate knowledge systems that the west endorses over their subjects. Western education system, curricular, research agenda and priorities have continued to deepen and extend coloniality and western epistemic hegemony. This is facilitated through research agenda and funding in western spaces or sites of KP. Thus, coloniality indicates the mental subordination of Africans.

Coloniality is the conditioning of African thinking, worldview, and imaginations to suit the colonial power directives in economic, social, political, and national agenda. In the educational system, it is preference for western education values, precepts, and worldview, and the petty African bourgeoisie intellectuals' endorsement of such worldview, degrading the African knowledge systems and values not least, in philosophy, science, literature and even historical accounts, and labelling it as unscientific, value-laden, or traditional (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013:38, Nyamnjoh 2004:161-164, Mpofu 2018:85, Muhibbu-Din: 2020:6). African epistemic dependence on the west is a consequence of persistent colonial mentality in scientific endeavours, as well as foreign intellectual domination in teaching, curricula, publication, and research funding. African scholars look up to the west for validation. Western curricular, teaching and research methodologies dominate pedagogy rather than African social, economic, and political priorities, needs, aspirations and goals of societies (Muhibbu-Din 2020:6-7, Afolabi 2020:105, Metuge 1984:54). Ake (1979: 99-100) adds, "Western scholarship is an important tool for controlling third world perceptions of their world and eventually third world behaviour." Claims of western sciences to value neutrality, universality, and objectivity are "a politics of disvaluing local concerns and knowledge and legitimating outside experts"

(Harding 1997: 48). The consequence is not only the education counterproductive to African social realities but also the inferiorization of African epistemological order. Western epistemological imperialism promotes western intellectual hegemony as the sole and only authoritative voice and scholarship on Africa and Africans (Nyamnjoh 2004: 177).

Coloniality dominates the KP and dissemination, subordinating African non-written and indigenous knowledge systems. Colonialism and its education system have reinvented method of KP only on written tradition, and coloniality is the entrenched belief that only written forms of knowledge is valid and truth denying alternative methods of knowing and discovering facts (Zegeye and Vambe 2006:333-334, Musilia 2017:692-704). Incongruities between the colonisers and African epistemic traditions create multiple epistemic thoughts that result in epistemic disarticulation. This results from the west inability to accommodate divergent epistemic tradition and their validity in specific local context (Musilia 2017:693). According to Melber (2020:4), “ways of knowing and resulting bodies of knowledge are always historical and deeply political.”

Western epistemologies are authorised and privileged over non-western epistemological traditions. In research and publication, the west set the assessment criteria, research agenda, and priorities in an environment completely outside the scope of Africans. The desperate aspirations to meet the western standard, parameters in research and publications are strong measures of coloniality (Melber 2020, Afolabi 2020, Zegeye and Vambe 2006, Crawford, Mai-Bornu and Landstrom 2021). The authorisation of certain knowledge and relegation of others based on western criteria and agenda rooted in the western ideology and power interests euphemistically called epistemic hegemony as well as pecuniary gains to dominate KP and dissemination perseveres (Zegeye and Vambe 2006:335-336, Afolabi 2020:105, Nyamnjoh 2004: 177-179, 2019:6).

Western epistemological tradition supports KP and at the same time deepens inequality and polarisation (Harding 1997: 47). Thus, coloniality sustains on the logic of knowledge being commodified (demand) and sold (supply). Research collaboration between the Western and African scholars, is characterised by ‘knowledge extraversion’, which subordinate Africans to supplier of raw data for empirical studies in the west (Layele 1991, Hountondji 1995, Iroulo and Ortiz 2022, p.75). Data gathered in Africa, are exported to Europe for theory building. The trajectory compounded by weak institutional capacities for theory building in Africa as well as state tyranny (Hountondji 1995:3, Nyamnjoh 2004:170). Thus, scientific research collaboration is more between African scholars and scientific communities of the North than the South (Hountondji 1995:4-5, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013:49). The validity and usefulness to the local environment, institutional

resourcefulness is of less priority in research agenda and KP enterprise (Layele 1991: 15, Afolabi 2020:97-99). Coloniality is the continuation of knowledge extraversion or scientific dependence, where knowledge produce diverges from African social realities causing disarticulation and distortion.

Coloniality of KP has implications for research, research subjects, and consumer. African scholars are not speaking to themselves but look outside for approval (Hountondji 1995, Iroulo and Oritz 2022, p.72). Non-African researchers dominate African research publications authenticating the west as the only producer of scientific knowledge (Iroulo and Ortiz 2022:74, Crawford, Mai-Bornu and Landstrom 2021, Melber 2020). According to Iroulo and Ortiz (2022:74), “a primary indicator of epistemic injustice in African Studies by outsider’s research is that it speaks of and for Africa but not with Africa.” African scholars’ research publications compared to the non-African counterparts are relatively low (Iroulo and Ortiz 2022:75; Crawford, Mai-Borno and Landstrom 2021). “African Studies can produce genuine knowledge only if local knowledge and experiences are not excluded, silenced, objectified, distorted, misrepresented, and undervalued” (Iroulo and Ortiz 2022, p.79). Coloniality of knowledge production persists in African research, practices, and structures (Iroulo and Ortiz 2022:79).

Western research methodologies are used and standard of western scholars are set criteria for off shore publications (Iroulo and Ortiz 2022, p.75; Crawford, Mai-Borno and Landstrom for 2021). African researchers respond to the research demands of the North rather the South. Readership is higher in the West than Africa and the language of knowledge dissemination attest to this fact. Thus, African scholarship resonates with other scholars outside Africa rather than their counterpart in Africa. The consequences are failure to “an autonomous, self-reliant process of knowledge production and capitalisation that enables us to answer our own questions and meet both the intellectual and the material needs of African societies” (Hountodji 2009).

On funding, Africa invests less than 0.5 percent of the GDP on research, resulting in less than 1.5 percent of the global research publications. This manifests not only the lack of political will of the ruling elites but in deeper sense a reflection of a historical immersion of Africa as periphery of the western metropole creating structures of economic dependence that continue to manifest in other sphere of the superstructure of the social formation (Melber 2020, p.6). The asymmetries in publications, citations, and ranking reproduce these economic inequalities further entrenched by the petty African bourgeoisie.

African Epistemology and Knowledge Production

African epistemology centres on Africa indigenous knowledge that were sources of esteem for African glorious past devoid of it negative values and modern knowledge gained through African encounter with the rest of the world. African must transcend current western knowledge capabilities, and uncover African knowledge potentials for progress (Hountondji 1995:9-10, Nyamnjoh 2019, p.3, Ndlovu Gatsheni 2013). African Epistemological order bridges the gap between the physical and metaphysical. Thus, it emphasises the whole, “and the truth is negotiated, something consensual, not the result of artificial disqualification, dismemberment, atomisation or mutilation by a science of exclusion” (Nyamnjoh 2004:166-167). African epistemological traditions transcend dualism or dichotomies to embrace multiplicities. Indigenize new knowledge acquire from the western episteme what is lacking in ours, redefine or re-interpret them from African epistemological frameworks to advance traditional African epistemology. This recognises the strength of others episteme without displacing the local and indigenous epistemological foundations.

African Epistemology focus on Knowledge production that prioritises African needs and aspiration, address the problem of coloniality, its structures, and values, and liberate African from knowledge extraversion (Hountondji 1995, p.1-2, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013). Nyamnjoh 2004 reiterates the imperative of valorising the African intellectual capabilities, agency and value systems. A radical shift from the cultural detonation of Africa values through cultural rebirth and reawakening while African scholars interact with other epistemic communities. Exogenous epistemologies are neither re-engaged nor reinterpreted for adaptability through endogenous languages, cosmologies, and perspectives (Nyamnjoh 2019, p.3).

African KP includes replacing the Euro-American hegemony as the sole source of knowledge and embracing multiple epistemic traditions through knowledge dissemination in postcolonial universities and other academic spaces designated for knowledge production. Africanise global scholarship to address challenges confronting Africa (Zegeye and Vambe 2006:345, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013:52). Integral to African epistemology is the role of Africans in setting research agendas, and priorities. Hountondji (2009) suggests the model of African epistemology: the use of African language among scholars of African descent to raise questions, debate and discuss within African epistemic community. Africans will speak to themselves and answer question raised within their own intellectual community not questions raised from outside and address research agenda relevant to Africa.

Knowledge production through what is called African studies controlled by the west must Africanised in the interest of African and for Africans

(Hountondji 2009). Meaningful collaboration between Africanist and African scholars, African voices in knowledge production on Africa research and structures has a potential of creating African studies that enunciate epistemology from African perspectives and with Africans. African studies by scholars of African descent will produce knowledge capable of transforming Africa (Iroulo and Ortiz 2022:79, Hountondji 2009). African government should not suppress African intellectuals; co-operation among African intellectuals on the one hand and between government and African educated elites on the other is essential for KP in the continent (Zegeye and Vambe 2006:345).

Publishing outfits are site of knowledge dissemination, a key component of the material structure of mode of knowledge production. With certain level of progress recorded, African Publishing suffers from extraversion. African publishing readership depends on those outside Africa. Knowledge disarticulation or scientific dependence deepens as African look to the west for approval of what knowledge to produce (Zegeye and Vambe 2006:336). The west set the publication criteria and only certified knowledge is published. Foreigners or non-Africans control what is considered African publishing. African publishing is an extension of European publishing. Thus, African KP entrenched coloniality as European knowledge are presented as 'African publishing'. "Not all knowledge that Africans come to consume is produced in Africa or by people of African descent in the diaspora" (Zegeye and Vambe 2006:335-337).

KP takes place in every culture. "The politics of KP in Africa is defined by power relations." that determine who is published, read and distribute knowledge (Zegeye and Vambe 2006:347). African still depend on foreign publishers to finance Africa's ideas. Government idea of knowledge to generate, publish and disseminate may conflict with those of the publishing houses local and international. The government curb the publishing with prohibitive legislations that may endanger weak publishing sector. KP and publishing is subject to what the funder is interested in funding and publishing (Zegeye and Vambe 2006:348, Nyamnjoh 2004:179).

The use of African Language and the African University is prime. Ngugi emphasises the teaching of African languages as mark of decolonising knowledge production. He advocates for multi-linguistic African university to address the language barrier among diverse African nations (Mbembe 2016:36). Analysing Ngugi's conception of the African University, Mbembe (2016:36) asserts decolonising an African university requires geographical imagination that extends well beyond the confines of the nation-states." A university undefined by colonial boundary bifurcation.

For Zegeye and Vambe (2006:346) the site of knowledge production will extend beyond the universities, thus the imperative to redefine the

concept of the African university, and globalised from African perspective. The old and new knowledge, new crop of intellectuals (not restricted to the academics), that have something original to offer even if they depend on diverse ideas (Zegeye and Vambe 2006:346, Nyamnjoh 2019:7). Assemble committee of scholars with the primary goal to generate knowledge beneficial to Africa, and the world at large. These people will drive the wheel of KP, publishing and dissemination using inter, multi and trans-disciplinary approaches.

In contrasts to Euro-American epistemological claim to universality, Scholars calls for Pluriversalism against universalism (Mbembe 2016: 36, Mpofu 2018: 92). Pluriversalism is “a process of KP that is open to epistemic diversity. It integrates universal knowledge for humanity through a horizontal strategy of openness to dialogue among different epistemic traditions” (Mbembe 2016:37). Pluraliversity recognises epistemic capability of the other traditions, culture, and people globally.

A critical application of the concept of Africanisation, aimed towards Africanising western knowledge and globalising African knowledge. This requires needed resources- financial, human, infrastructure- facilitative of intellectual effort, production, distribution and readership and access to African knowledge in any form African intellectual must find language to describe and market their idea. This will prevent others from distorting their idea (Zegeye and Vambe 2006:347). Nyamnjoh (2019) suggests solution to transform African universities beyond its current configuration, it must embrace African traditions of knowledge and KP, transcend the western academy for guide or inspiration. Africanisation has failed or unsuccessful due to the problem of underfunding and marketization of universities education (privatisation, commercialisation and commodification); the outcome is prevalence of consultancies culture preoccupied with struggle for survival to the detriment of fundamental research and scholarship, authoritarian state rule and subordination of universities to the tyranny of dictatorial rule. African intellectuals must embrace transdisciplinary approach to social research relevant to Africans and Africa, by challenging the basic assumptions of dominant theories, methodologies and research (Nyamnjoh 2019:2-5).

KP is beyond written knowledge. It entails “the sum total of people's beliefs and values as they engage with other people and with nature” (Zegeye and Vambe 2006:348). This extends beyond books, written knowledge, or western sites of KP. The Eurocentric notions of epistemology confine knowledge to those that acquire written knowledge (academics) as the only intellectuals with “potentials to produce and circulate their form of knowledge through audio, video, and oral media” (Zegeye and Vambe 2006:347). Various sources of African knowledge systems ridiculed and

denigrated under Euro-America epistemic supremacy, and new approaches that address new challenges and aspirations are needed for progress. The goal is evolving an epistemological order centred on research collaboration in KP; promote “research involved in systematic and meaningful deconstruction and reconstruction of theories and methodologies” with goal to promote top-notch research and breed new and vibrant scholars on the institutionalised epistemic order. (Nyamnjoh 2019:6-7). The essence of African KP, Ngugi argues, is that the content of the knowledge must be liberatory targeting African productive forces against western domination or Eurocentrism. KP is not about language or mode of KP: written or oral but critical to African KP is the “the anti-imperialist struggles to liberate their productive forces from domination” (Zegeye and Vambe 2006:342).

Research Methodology

Data from which this paper emerged came from secondary sources which include library resources as well as institutional websites of representatives of Chinese government. Data that emerged in the study were content analysed.

Decoloniality of Knowledge Production

Decoloniality is central to Africa’s emancipation. It deals with the dynamics of power relations in knowledge production and dissemination. Decolonising involves transforming the mind, and purging it of the permeated western ideology, philosophy, values, and worldview. Decoloniality combats the colonial created global power structures of inequality, western epistemic hegemony, and degradation of Africans and African epistemic order. (Melber 2020, Ndlov-Gatsheni 2013, Afolabi 2020, Nyamnjoh 2019). “Decoloniality is platform and indeed an African agenda that seeks to transform various methods, pedagogies and socio-cultural influences that render Africans second-class citizens in a globalised world” (Afolabi 2020:97). Decoloniality seeks to overturn power relations in economy, knowledge production and the superior-inferior nexus of the North-South relations. In the context of emerging Southern power hegemony, decoloniality seek to the purge the relations of neo-colonial structures and validation of one partner above other.

Decoloniality is to turn away from coloniality, which is dominant western knowledge, values, cultures, and epistemologies to embrace African indigenous knowledge, externalising from the African epistemologies and universalising African knowledge production from African worldview, solving local problems, responsive to local intellectual and material needs. This entails overcoming the problem of underfunding and marketization of university (privatisation, commercialisation, and commodification) and its

attendant consequences. Decoloniality entails rigorous and transformative scholarship capable of changing the African narrative at the site of knowledge production and dissemination. Decoloniality reimagined the world from a different theoretical paradigm of power, knowledge, and Afrocentrism. Mpofu (2018:83-84) engage decoloniality as a combative ontology against coloniality for African development. Mpofu (2018:92) argues further that “the critical and analytical stamina of the decolonial epistemic perspective allows the unmasking and undressing of the logic of coloniality that lies curtained behind the rhetoric of modernity and its vaunted civilising mission”. Quoting Mignolo (2011:3), Mpofu (2018:92) argues, “Decoloniality can be best understood as a pluriversal epistemology of the future, a redemptive liberatory epistemology that seeks to delink from the tyranny of abstract universals.”

Nkrumah (1965) was critical of coloniality as more dangerous and lethal form of colonialism. External policy prescriptions are part of colonial domination of thinking and solution that are exogenous to African social realities and epistemological root. Thus, decoloniality necessitate usurping colonial domination of thinking and tendency to look to west for solution to solve local problems. Nkrumah calls for African ecumenism at the political, economic, commerce, social and all levels to deal with all vestiges of neo-colonialism.

One major setback for decolonization is the fact that most African who fought for her independence were products of western education and trained to like and aspire to become like the west and socialise to hate Africa - "Mental colonisation" is the severest form of colonisation and the one hardest to decolonise (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013:50-51). Thus, epistemic disobedience or decolonizing knowledge requires the reinvention of the narrative, ideology, cosmology in the service of the colonised civilisations, values, worldview, and social interests. The appropriation of knowledge in service of the human and civilizational values of the colonised is instructive. In combating western epistemic claim to superiority, decolonialists are engaged in changing and shifting the 'geography of reason' from the colonial transplant to a decolonial renewal in discipline (Mignolo 2009:13-14). Thus, subject will be study according to decolonized social sciences, sciences, anthropology etc. The western scholars have no prerogative to guide the colonised on the ideals of morals, ethics or knowledge (Mignolo2009:15). For Mignolo (2009:15), epistemic disobedience within the frame of the modern epistemology can at best lead to reform. Thus, the author suggests 'epistemic delinking' as a first and genuine step toward epistemic disobedience.

Decolonisation involves a mental shift or purgation of the internalised western values, belief, culture, language, and epistemology as the standard

and best. This is necessary to free African from neo-imperialism, neo-colonialism, and knowledge production counter-productive to African development. Decolonisation of the western knowledge values and ideas is essential requirement for African liberation. This will entail a process of reversing the hegemonic epistemic discourse and racial discrimination; and reinvent the narrative of power, knowledge, and beings of the global periphery from the Eurocentric myth.

Decolonisation is to shift the university from being responsive to neoliberal logic of profit making, commodification of knowledge production, and the negation of the ideals of university as site of knowledge production for societal progress (Mbembe 2016, Afolabi 2020). Scholars dislodge western claims to epistemic universality and authority, demystify coloniality of knowledge production, and recognise non-western epistemic traditions (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013, Mbembe 2016, Afolabi 2020, Zegeye and Vambe 2006, Houndtondji 1995, Iroulo and Ortiz 2022, Musilia 2017).

Neoliberal market principles have not only dominated knowledge production enterprises that support western dominance in knowledge production and dissemination, but have infiltrated African universities compelling them to align with global standard they cannot influence (Melber 2020:8). The market principle, profit making is gaining salience in African sites of knowledge production against the imperative of knowledge production for citizens education, and creation of just and fair society (Melber 2020:8, Mbembe 2016).

Ngugi's use the word decolonising- which implies "an ongoing process of seeing ourselves clearly"; emerging out of a state of either blindness or dizziness" (Mbembe 2016:34). Decolonising could also be taking for "seeing for ourselves" and in relations to others with whom we share the universe (Mbembe 2016:34-35).

Decolonisation to Ngugi is "the beginning of new struggle; a struggle over what is to be taught; it is about the terms under which we should be teaching what to the African child" (Mbembe 2016:35). Ngugi is more concerned with writing and teaching -writing oneself and teaching oneself (ibid). It suggests complete usurpation of colonial structures, myths, and values and its replacement with African pedagogue, African writing to the African child.

To Africanise is politics and specifically the politics of language, meaning a return to the mother tongue. Ngugi in his work *Decolonising the Mind*, raises critical questions on KP: what should constitute KP? the purpose of KP - for enslavement (neo-colonialism) or liberation from slave consciousness; How should African view the world or their universe: Afrocentric or Eurocentric? who will be in charge of teaching (Africans or non-Africans) the kind of knowledge produce, in what order and from which

worldview? "If African, what kind of African? One who has internalised the colonial worldview or one attempting to break free from the inherited slave consciousness?"

In the conceptual frame of Ngugi, "Africanisation is a project of 're-centering'. It is about rejecting the assumption that the modern West is the central root of Africa's consciousness and cultural heritage. It is about rejecting the notion that Africa is merely an extension of the west. It is not about closing the door to European or other traditions. It is about defining clearly what the centre is" (Mbembe 2016:35).

Quoting Ngugi, Mbembe (2016:35) claims

Education is a means of knowledge about ourselves. ... After we have examined ourselves, we radiate outwards and discover peoples and worlds round us. With Africa at the centre of things, not existing as an appendix or a satellite of other countries and literatures, things must be seen from the African perspective. All other things are to be considered in their relevance to our situation and their contribution towards understanding ourselves. In suggesting this, we are not rejecting other streams, especially the western stream. We are only clearly mapping out the directions and perspectives the study of culture and literature will inevitably take in an African university.

China's Role in Knowledge Production in Africa

China-Africa relations date back to the 1950s and the targets were anti-colonial struggle and ideological struggle. In two decades, the relation expanded to trade, education and training. Education partnership is key to China-Africa relations, aimed to promote friendship between China and Africa. China's bilateral, multilateral engagement and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) hinged on China's five foreign policy principles of Peaceful Coexistence, namely: i) mutual respect for territory and sovereignty; ii) mutual nonaggression; iii) mutual non-interference in internal affairs; iv) equality and mutual benefit; and v) peaceful coexistence.

Under the FOCAC framework Africa-China education cooperation include human resources training, technical cooperation, higher education partnership; rural school construction; Chinese language teaching, Chinese government scholarship, Faculty and student exchange (Niu 2014:33-34, Hodzi and Amoah 2023:19-20, and King 2019). Chinese universities partnership with their African counterpart, strengthen these institutions through joint research, curricular development, staff exchange and co-sponsored symposium (Niu 2014:34-35). Example of the exchange programme is the 20+20 Cooperation Plan launched in 2009. It is a one-to-one cooperation between 20 Chinese universities and colleges and 20 African institutions (Niu 2014:37, Hodzi and Amoah 2023:20).

China-Africa relations depict a 'cooperative model' (Niu 2014:33). China is interested in sharing its development experience with Africa to support Africa development and self-reliance. China offers short term training courses to Africans in different fields (Niu 2014:35-38). Areas of higher education cooperation between China and Africa in addition to Faculty and staff exchange are culture, art and media exchange programs, infrastructure development, support for human and institution, capacity building, supply of academic materials, joint research, recruitment of African students and collaborative programs (Niu 2014:34, Hodzi and Amoah 2023:20). Chinese government scholarships to African students to study in China aim to facilitate education, scientific, technological, and cultural exchanges, economic and trade cooperation between China and Africa (Niu 2014:38).

In the past five decades, China has provided government scholarships to 50 African countries and nearly 30, 000 African students have studied in China. Chinese government offer 5,000 scholarships to African students (Niu 2014:39). FOCAC 2018 promises 50,000 government scholarships, 50,000 seminars, and workshops for professionals of different disciplines (Hodzi and Amaoh 2023:20).

Since the 1980s, Chinese government have supported African countries in science and technical education. Chinese government donated 23 advanced laboratories in the field of biology and microbiology, physics, material science, analytic chemistry, food preservation, horticulture, civil engineering in African universities. Similarly, more than 160 teachers and researchers have been dispatched to African universities to give lectures, tutor students and undertake joint research (Niu 2014:41).

The Chinese government provide the funding and facilitate collaboration to support the propagation of Chinese culture and language through the establishment of Confucius Institute (CI) in Africa (Niu 2014:40). This is central to dissemination of Chinese culture and influence (Kurlantzick 2007:67). China is not opposed to trilateral cooperation in education development in Africa. It enables China learn from other donors' strategies on aid management and builds their capacity in aid and foreign assistance delivery to developing regions. (Niu 2014:42-43).

The China's South-South Cooperation (SSC) emphasise people-to-people and cultural exchanges on development aims to observe the core five principles of China's foreign policy and respect for national aspirations (Niu 2014:34, King 2019). China development cooperation projects (education and training) in over 27 countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa hinges on China's South-South Cooperation (SSC) support for global south development (Hodzi and Amaoh 2023:26). In 2015 President Xi announced the establishment of the Institute of South-South Cooperation and

Development (ISSCAD) aimed to provide degree and non-degree executive programs for mid-level to senior officials, managers, researchers from government, NGOs, media, academic and other organisations in developing countries (Hodzi and Amaoh 2023:26).

The BRI works within the paradigm of the SSC in education, health, culture, and science (King 2019). The FOCAC ministerial policies and the BRI indicates China's framework of engaging Africa in a cooperative model, strengthen win-win cooperation and development in an atmosphere of mutual benefits, sovereignty, non-interference, people-to-to-people exchanges and cultural relations. Educational exchanges serve as a means of bridging the skill gaps along the route. (MoE 2016, Hodzi and Amoah 2023:26).

Decoloniality and /Critique of China's Role in Knowledge Production in Africa

China's role in KP in Africa serves China's political economy objectives. Chinese investment in education and other social sectors, science and technology, infrastructure has boost Chinese soft power in ways that were unprecedented (Yu 2022, Bagwadeen 2024:3). According to Adam Smith, "it is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest" (Smith 2012:19). China-Africa relations depict superordinate-subordinate relations in the context power imbalance and disparities.

China's economic capacity and the FOCAC institutional architecture impose a relation of unequal partners despite the Chinese foreign policy principles of equality, respect for sovereignty, mutual benefit, win-win cooperation (Yu 2022, Lumumba-Kasongo 2011, Keet 2010, Bagwadeen 2024). China FOCAC pilots the relations to further Chinese political economic objectives in Africa (Bagwadeen 2024:10-11, Yu 2022). The problem is compounded by the relative weakness of African leaders and institutions to effectively negotiate with China (Lumumba-Kansongo 2011:239-240).

China is an emerging economic giant with relevant state capacities to exploit relations with Africa in the service of China's hegemonic interests. Mutual benefit and prosperity are impaired in China-African relations due to lopsided state capacities and development. African economies must strive to counter the imbalance through strategic engagement to compensate for the imbalance to make the relations mutually beneficial (Keet 2010:28). China is becoming top destination for African students as more African student are enrolling in Chinese institutions. China has over taken France as choice education destination for Africans. While the rising China-African cooperation in education is perceived as redressing the global inequalities in

knowledge production and consumption, (Hodzi and Amoah 2023:17), China is replicating the existing asymmetries in knowledge production and consumption. China-Africa education cooperation is reproducing the North-South epistemic hierarchies that it aims to solve (Hodzi and Amoah 2023:29). Asymmetries in knowledge production are a reflection and a reproduction of global economic structures of inequalities (Melber 2020). This inequality in power and hierarchies continue to manifest themselves in other spheres of Africa social realities.

Asymmetry characterises Faculty exchange in China-Africa education cooperation. The current faculty exchange portrays Africans as consumers of China's knowledge and expertise (Hodzi and Amoaah 2023:28). The disparities in choice of destination of Chinese students in Africa compared to African students in China are perspicuous indication of global inequalities in KP. Chinese students studying in Africa are less than 800 out of an estimated 600,000 studying elsewhere. UK, USA, and Australia are preferred countries of choice for many Chinese students. In addition, the attraction of resources revenue from internationalisation of higher education is loss to African countries from Chinese students (Hodzi and Amoah 2023:28). Chinese engagement in education programmes in Africa is instructive as it provides alternative or open door to non-western epistemic tradition. However, it does not necessarily recentre epistemology from African perspective. The aim of internationalisation is “generation and transmission of ideology, elite formation, social and educational development of societies, production, and application of knowledge and training of highly skilled labour force” (Hodzi and Amoah 2023:27). Currently, China scholarship and China-Africa education cooperation generally shaped to suit the demands, needs, and national priorities of African countries. This trend poses the danger of China being the sole producer of knowledge consumed by Africans. China-Africa educational cooperation is exposing the asymmetries among South-South countries of China and Africa (Hodzi and Amoah 2023:27).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper concludes that central to Chinese educational cooperation is the transmission of Chinese ideology, culture, and worldview. A strong indication that self-definition is missing, the ideological component of KP is defined by China; Mode of Knowledge Production (MoKP) is according to Chinese expertise, epistemological hegemony of Chinese KP is afoot and further dislodging the possibilities of fostering much less strengthening afro-centric epistemology. While will open our KP to epistemic diversity, replacing Eurocentric epistemology with Chinese is definitely not the African dream.

China is neither producing the Afrocentric knowledge system that scholars of African descent are clamouring for nor Africanising the curriculum, produce knowledge that prioritise African problems as defined by Africans. Africans are not speaking to themselves in the knowledge production sites as an intellectual community of Africans that modify Africa epistemology to African peculiarities and specificities and globalise from the Afrocentric perspectives. Chinese KP is renewing African epistemological dependence from Eurocentric epistemology to a Sinocentric one. In the area of higher education internationalisation in KP and dissemination, it serves as tool for soft power diplomacy. Its offers opportunities for stronger collaborations between governments, universities, and markets to drive change (Hodzi and Amoah 2023:18). Nevertheless, Internationalisation of education aimed at providing multiple streams of funding for education. The phenomenon of neoliberal globalisation plays a key role in internationalisation of higher education and increasing funding of institutions and knowledge sharing. It further increases the appeal of Chinese institutions to Africans, its scholarship; training and school construction are deepening China's integration into the world economy and the spread of China's ideology, culture and language. Marketization of education for funding is anathema to African emancipatory goal. African epistemological paradigm sought education /knowledge production system free from commercialisation and privatisation. China-Africa educational cooperation is reproducing existing old asymmetries in knowledge production prevailing between the global North and Africa. It simply means the problems is old and have been with us. China is rapidly replacing the global North, changing the 'geography of exploitation/domination. China's aids, loans, and development assistance rehash old exploitative tendencies of neo-colonialism. Despite China's policy of people-to-people exchange, win-win cooperation, south-south cooperation (SSC), Africa remains the recipient of knowledge produce in China. Africa is the global consumer of loans, investment in infrastructure, education cooperation -with China as the supplier.

African leaders must prioritise African interests in KP as well as in other political and economic sphere to launch Afro-centric epistemology, promote research collaboration and funding at African sites of KP, allow African scholars interact as an epistemic community in solving problems of African nations and advance epistemology of African origin while Africanising epistemic alternatives from other worldviews. In an environment of geopolitical rivalry between the US and China, Africa should develop a continental framework of engagement with China for a mutually beneficial engagement and development outcomes (Bagwadeen 2024, Keet 2010, Lumumba-Kansongo 2011). The continental policy framework will shape

China-Africa relations in all sphere social, economic, political, educational cooperation in ways to protect and advance African epistemological standpoint and preserve African interests and priorities. African leaders' political will and geopolitical strategy will shape the development of common African policy towards China. The comprehensiveness and robustness, and whether they prioritise Africa interests can be worked out through institutional bodies of African Union (AU) and African Free Continental Trade Agreement (AfCFTA).

AU 2063 vision and AfCFTA Agreement can shape African continental framework for China's engagement in Africa (Bagwandeem 2024:11). The AfCFTA's market potential and economic opportunities can change the economic inequalities trajectories between China and Africa and make Africa a global power (Yu 2022). The power equation balance between China and Africa has the potential of directing China-Africa education cooperation to a win-win cooperation shifting form the current superordinate-subordinate cooperation. Africa ecumenism is crucial for Africa to combat neo-imperialism. African agency at FOCAC is subject to African power potential projections as producing nations, increasing intra-African trade volume and African unity to fix the prices of primary commodities. Transformation of Africa from finished products importing nations to producing nations is essential to African development and emancipation. Africa economies must produce with her endowed natural resources to reshape knowledge production from Afrocentric perspective. FOCAC is Chinese led institutional framework and giver of aids, loans, infrastructure, and development assistance (tied to agreements obscure from public scrutiny) that keep Africa dependent and consumer nations of Chinese manufactured goods and knowledge system.

The role of the civil society to oversight African leaders to make them accountable to the public is crucial. This can help to prevent corruption and abuse (Bagwandeem 2024:11-12). To advance African interests, projects a more unified African approach at FOCAC, the AU, regional economic communities (RECs) should on behalf of all African countries create a common African strategy to curb power scramble for Africa to advance their economic and geopolitical interests (Bagwandeem 2024: 12-13). China's role in KP in the continent situates within a broader continental framework that recognises African epistemology and Afrocentrism. In this way, the China-Africa educational cooperation can operate in a genuinely win-win cooperation, facilitating people-to-people exchanges in the context of SSC.

The paper construes KP as ubiquitous and not the exclusive preserve of any culture or clime. Africa precolonial era has indigenous mode of KP and knowledge dissemination. Colonial invasion truncated the African epistemological foundation, altering it completely in some places and

replacing it with western epistemological traditions. The west arrogates to itself epistemological hegemony and withering African epistemological sources. This foists on Africa coloniality as strategy of continuing domination and repression, fostering knowledge disarticulation and distortion of the global periphery, pervasive inequalities and scientific dependence.

African underdevelopment has a result of extraversion and neo-colonialism is devastating and antithetical to any meaningful transformation and development. The rise of China as a major global player is replacing the west as the old guards to new one under the ostensible claim of cooperation, development, partnership, and equality. In the context of geopolitical rivalry and multiple hegemonic powers, African has the options of diversifying its relations and strategically exploiting the relations with global powers to their advantage. The role of the African leaders, continental-wide institutions, and civil societies are integral to actualising this goal. This will cover all aspect of African relations, including major powers foray into arena of KP and dissemination. With African template guiding what knowledge is produce, in whose interests, where and who participate in the process of KP and dissemination are important strategic decisions Africans must make for themselves.

China is entering the centre stage of driving knowledge production in Africa with Africans as passive recipients. Africans are not defining the problematic, priorities and aspirations of knowledge production based on African material and intellectual needs. African need to take charge of KP and invite others where we need them, not relinquish the exercise of KP to outsiders Europeans and Chinese. Reversal of African education system, design carefully and orchestrated to solve African problems and launch African transformation and development is indispensable. African must drive knowledge productions that unleash African productive forces and resources for African transformation. Epistemological oppression and abstract claim to universality and positivistic truth need be overthrown and jettisoned for epistemic diversity that institutionalised African epistemology without foreclosing other episteme nor denigrate indigenous epistemological structure, knowledge, values, and culture. It is from this locus that will advance knowledge production from Afrocentric lens and externalise to the global system.

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