UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

https://helda.helsinki.fi

The intellectual marginalisation of Africa : African Identities

Obeng-Odoom, F.

2019
Routledge
http://hdl.handle.net/10138/340849
Obeng-Odoom, F 2019, 'The intellectual marginalisation of Africa : African Identities', African identities , vol. 17, no. 3-4, pp. 211-224. https://doi.org/10.1080/14725843.2019.1667223

Downloaded from Helda, University of Helsinki institutional repository. https://helda.helsinki.fi
This is an electronic reprint of the original article.
This reprint may differ from the original in pagination and typographic detail.
Please cite the original version.

The Intellectual Marginalisation of Africa

Franklin Obeng-Odoom

Development Studies and Helsinki Institute of Sustainability Science

P.O.Box 18, Room 206, Unioninkatu 35, FI – 00014

franklin.obeng-odoom@helsinki.fi

University of Helsinki, Finland

Abstract

The intellectual marginalisation of Africa is often explained in terms of the lack of human capital. However, the peripheralization and systemic neglect of excellent research published in Africa problematise the human capital thesis and, ironically, demonstrates that the appeal to 'Southern theory' is not a panacea either. Although these perspectives are quite distinct, both seek to explain, and ultimately redress, Africa's intellectual marginalisation apart from, not as part of, Africa's marginalised position in the world system. The growing gulf between the *use* of knowledge produced in Africa and that in the metropole as well as little metropoles in the continent is patterned after global inequalities – not necessarily differences in levels of human capital or the underappreciation of African knowledge systems. The historical and continuing concentration of the instruments of knowledge production in the hands of elites, the inferiorisation of the contribution of Africans, especially women, and the peripheralization of African outlets of production and dissemination have been central to the creation and persistence of this intellectual marginalisation. Creating structures of dependence and imitative research neither critical of, nor confrontational to, power imbalances is one outcome which, in turn, further legitimises the status quo because its resulting knowledge is unlikely to challenge the hegemony of the global north. This knowledge hierarchy reinforces the privileged status of knowledge produced in the north, while seeking to undermine the potential transformative power of southern knowledge. If so, merely seeking to develop 'Southern theory' is an ineffective alternative to the human capital thesis.

Key words: intellectual inequalities, knowledge divide, capitalism, digital divide, Africa

Mainstream Analysis of the Global Knowledge Divide

According to conventional measure, Africa's contribution to the global wealth of knowledge is often said to be miniscule. Between 1987 and 2007, a period of 20 years, only 13 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa could produce at least 200 ISI-indexed papers each (International

Social Science Council [ISSC], 2010, p. 63). Indeed, over time, the contribution of research papers from Africa to the global pool of knowledge has declined. In 1987, Africa's share of scientific production was 1 per cent but, with a much faster rate of global pool knowledge accumulation, the continent's share plummeted to 0.7 per cent in 1996 (International Social Science Council, 2010, p. 63) and, to date, has remained under one per cent (World Bank and Elsevier, 2014; Kana, 2016), although Africa is the home of some 12 per cent of the global population.

Two explanations of this knowledge divide are commonly offered by social scientists. The first draws on the idea of human capital, sometimes framed as *'homo culturalis'* (see Darity and Williams, 1985 for a review and see, for example, World Bank, 2015. Contrast the more nuanced views on culture in classic studies such as Miller, 1987; Marcus and Fischer, 1986; and Zelizer, 2005). As exemplified in the work of Karla Hoff, of the World Bank, and Economics Nobel Prize Winner Joseph Stiglitz (2016), in this approach, the mode of explanation of social reality in the global south should be inadequate levels of human capital or, put in other words, 'cultural mental models'.

According to this 'culture as human capital' (Darity and Williams, 1985, p. 257) approach, mainstream economics posits that Africa's intellectual marginalisation can be addressed by increasing the individual output and productivity of its intellectual labour force. As black faculty are 'strugglers' (Fryberg, 2010), the key challenge is for them to shed off their unproductive cultures, embrace productive cultures and, hence, become more productive (Pauline, 1999; Darity, 2010). Over time, the argument suggests, the productivity of individual academic labour would aggregate up, drive a rise in individual, national, and regional income levels, and serve as an important driver of national economic growth (see, for example, Becker, 1962; Glaeser, 2011).

By framing knowledge divides in terms of cultural difference and differences in human capital, significant pressure has been brought to bear on African researchers and universities. On academics, there is pressure to publish more; for universities, they have to be more efficient; and, for the administrators, outward orientation has become a major criterion of success in the new academic managerialism (International Social Science Council, 2010, pp. 110-111; World Bank, 2014), details of which range from giving more money to scholars who are more prolific to supporting researchers to publish in top journals (Ngobeni, 2010; Yankholmes, 2014; Kana, 2016).

These key performance indicators continue to be exacted by development partners. Indeed, 'The World Bank recommends that African governments and development partners accelerate support to research and research-based education in Africa to build the necessary human capital to further increase research on solving African problems by Africans for Africans' (World Bank and Elsevier, 2014, p.3). Consequently, various strategic plans have been funded to increase the productivity of academics through 'efficient' management (Uetela, 2016).

The second explanation of Africa's intellectual marginalisation is rather different. It contends that African knowledge systems have not been adequately appreciated. Promoted as 'southern theory' (Connell, 2007; Connell et al., 2018a; Connell et al., 2018b), it seeks to celebrate African knowledges and to promote African-based systems of valorisation. Considerable

effort is made to seek, better understand, and engage African ideas, while proponents have sought several alternative ways of valorising these knowledges. One is to produce Black only citation indexes. justified on grounds that many Blacks publish in non-Black journals which are indexed in the ISI/Web of Science databases (e.g., Price, 2007; Darity, 2010, Price and Allen, 2014). Besides, if they are adjusted to compare only Blacks such that like can be compared with like, they can at least mitigate inherent weaknesses in universal indexes. On these bases, the *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* uses publishes an *Annual Citation Rankings of Black Scholars in the Social Sciences and the Humanities* to periodically report the uptake of the work of Blacks. This approach, however, is highly limiting because, it assumes a homogenous set of countries in 'Africa' or 'blacks'. However, the experiences of Lusophone countries are quite different (see, for detailed assessments, Langa, 2013; Uetela, 2016). Even among English-speaking countries, experiences differ. Compare South Africa to Ghana, for example. Between 1987 and 2000, South Africa alone published more than 50 per cent (50.7 per cent) of the total pool of ISI-indexed journal articles, while only 3.2 per cent of the paper in the pool emerged from (International Social Science Council, 2010, p. 63). So, this approach cannot be used uncritically.

Another approach is to look at the contribution of social science associations, learned academies, and other organisations in supporting or driving research. In this sense, one option is to rely on both the reported contributions and external assessment of contributions by bodies such as CODESRIA. A third approach is to commission external assessment of the content of journals by a respected Southern scholar, while a fourth approach, suggested by Nwagwu (2006a; 2006b; 2008), is to produce authoritative bibliographies of the production of African knowledge. These possibilities have some drawbacks too (e.g., a drawback of the African only ISI approach is that much of the research of Africans are not in online databases and hence those indices can undercount much work). However, used together, these alternative approaches can give a better picture of the nature, use, and the patterns of research uptake. Indeed, when combined, these approaches can meet the two key criteria advocated at the 1977 Black Studies conference held at the University of California at Santa Barbara: academic merit as determined by the quality of the editorial board, the standing of the editors of the journals, and social responsibility in terms of who gets to read the journals, size of circulation, and subscriptions (Weissinger, 2015).

Although these two perspectives (human capital and southern theory) are quite distinct, they seek to explain, and ultimately address, Africa's intellectual marginalisation apart from, not as part of, Africa's marginalised position in the world system. As it is the latter; not the former, which is the key problematic, it is not necessarily differences in levels of human capital or the underappreciation of African knowledge systems that explains Africa's intellectual marginalisation. Rather, it could be more compelling to emphasise the historical and continuing concentration of the instruments of knowledge production in the hands of white elites in the metropole and the little metropoles on the continent, the inferiorisation of the contribution of blacks, especially women, and the peripheralization of black outlets of production and dissemination in explaining Africa's intellectual marginalisation. It is the removal of these structures, together with a wider embrace of African liberation struggles in other areas of life, that could usefully animate the struggle to redress the intellectual marginalisation of Africa.

The rest of the paper is divided into three parts. *Problematising Mainstream Analysis* questions the human capital theory and its resulting policy claims. *Alternative Explanations* develops other ways of explaining Africa's intellectual marginalisation. *Rowing Against the Tide* emphasises that, although well-intended, their foundations in idealism significantly limit their potential and, hence, neither human capital theory, nor Southern theory, is an effective antidote to Africa's intellectual marginalisation.

Problematising Mainstream Analysis

Conventional measures of knowledge undercount the considerable amount of high-quality knowledge produced in Africa (see, for example, International Social Science Council [ISSC], 2010, p. 63; World Bank and Elsevier, 2014; Kana, 2016) because they fail to sufficiently account for the significant scientific contributions made on the continent, some of which have been listed as part of the 'wonders of the world' (Diop, 1967; (Campbell, 1998; Saul and Leys, 1998; Oloyede; 2006; Francis et al., 2008). Presses such as Tanzania Publishing House have published outstanding books in the past, including Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (for additional details, see Bgoya, 2014). In more recent times too, Langaa Press of Cameroon has published many important books, including Francis Nyamnjoh's work, *Rhodes Must Fall* (Nyamnjoh, 2016).

However, in general, research from Africa is poorly utilised. Indeed, the rate at which research published in Africa is used is on the decline. Between 1993 and 1995, citations of journals in Africa for the 200 most cited journals in Africa constituted 22 per cent, but 10 years later, between 2003 and 2005, the share had declined to only 11.7 per cent. Even when it is claimed that the situation has improved, the margin of increase is miniscule, increasing from 0.06%-0.16% to only 0.12%-0.28% in about a decade (between 2003 and 2012). Much of this improvement is driven by citations of African research in the natural sciences (Kana, 2016). When such citations are excluded, social science papers published in Sub-Saharan Africa are cited 8 per cent less than the world average (World Bank and Elsevier, 2014, p.20).

The ISI and the Web of Science are widely utilised as the pivot in the orthodox analysis of knowledge divides. However, as instruments of the global north, they tend to be more familiar with and, hence, privilege knowledge forms in the north. In turn, they list mostly northern-based journals (Zeleza, 1996; Nwagwu, 2008). As Johann Mouton (2010, p. 63 fn) has pointed out, they tend to exclude local journals published in Lusophone and Francophone countries. Yet, as Patrício Vitorino Langa (2013) shows in *Higher Education in Portuguese Speaking African Countries,* such countries have valuable systems of knowledge production too, so neglecting them raises questions about the representativeness of these conventional measures. Indeed, even in the global north, these conventional measures tend to exclude journals that focus on the social realities of blacks on the alleged claim that they are of poor quality (Kaba, 2009; Weissinger, 2015). Such biases are well-known. Indeed, Williams Nwagwu, the Head of Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) Documentation, Information and Communication Centre, has consistently shown that the conventional global indices are biased against Africa (see, for example, Nwagwu, 2006a; 2006b; 2008).

What require additional emphasis are the outcomes of such biases. A serious one is that, although only alleged, conventional measures institutionalise cycles of self-fulfilling prophesy. Thus, these journals are marginalised. For example, Olajide Oloyede (2006) has shown that the articles in the leading CODESRIA journal, *African Sociological Review,* had limited citations and the impact factor of the journal itself declined from 0.09 (2002) to 0.07 (2003) Similar comments were made in the external assessment of the work of OSSERIA – Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA) and its flagship journal, the *Eastern African Social Science Research Review* above' (Francis et al., 2008, p.24).

For these reasons, as a basis for explanation, the mainstream analysis is not only incomplete as a framework of explanation it also creates problems of marginalisation which feeds into its framework. Alternative explanations are needed to better address questions such as what account for the limited uptake of research in Africa and, therefore, what might be a possible path to redress?

Alternative Explanations

The social context that impels the intellectual marginalisation of Africa is complex, but earlier research has helped in illuminating the issues. A few examples should illustrate the point. Neoliberalism and its role in creating an artificial scarcity of university researchers, as well as how neoliberalism has institutionalised the demise of university presses in Africa have been widely documented (see, for example, Gibbons, 2000; Mama, 2001; Connell, 2007; Mamdani, 2007; Xia et al., 2015). Others; such as Walter Bgoya, a former General Manager of Tanzanian Publishing House; in praising the role of African book presses in the continent's liberation, have also provided detailed assessments of African presses and how a complex mix of local and global forces cripple them (see, especially, Bgoya, 2014, pp. 115 – 191). Arthur Lewis, the only African to win the Nobel Prize in Economics, investigated the importance of race and class-conscious education and experiences, including the power of giving learning opportunities to Africans, as well as the various ways in which Africans who obtain such opportunities could leverage them for their further advantage both individually and collectively (see Lewis, 1982, chapters 3-6). So, much is already known about this problem of marginalisation.

What require further analysis is the interaction between the concentration of the instrument of knowledge production, and inferiorisation, on the one hand, and how they have worked particularly strongly together to create, sustain, and extend biases against Africans on the other hand. These processes require further elucidation.

Concentration of the Instruments of Production

At every stage in the chain of knowledge – from the tools for production, through the organisation of production of knowledge, and gatekeeping to the use of already created knowledge – African scholars, especially those based in Africa, are sidelined.

Technology is often spoken of in positive terms in the north. Indeed, Western universities, in particular, have been insistent that its members of faculty become increasingly reliant on technology to promote scholarship. However, the concentration of technology in the North and how technological-based indexes have been constructed devalue African scholarship. In his book, *The Rise of the Network Society* (vol. 1), Manuel Castells (2010, pp. 125-135) shows how the concentration of scientific production and communication organised around technology and the English language operate to peripheralise Africa and Africans, especially poorer ones and poorer universities. The networks have been set up in a way that they promote those ideas that have 'value' to wider communities; and discard those – mostly of African origin – that are devalued. Access to, and control of, the technological network of scientific production is asymmetric. Concentrated in the north, especially in the hands of powerful groups, most Africans are mere users (Murphy and Carmody, 2015). Castells' work shows that African-Americans, other Africans, and minority groups such as women are also marginalised by technology. Thus, technology-inequality plays out in terms of race, class, gender and space, with urbanites enjoying better access. Certainly, the two-speed production process I described earlier is also linked to differential technological levels between African and the rest.

The social organisation of knowledge production complicates these inequalities. The American Economic Association journals - *American Economic Review*, *Journal of Economic Literature*, *the Journal of Economic Perspectives*, *Applied Economics*, *Economic Policy*, *Macroeconomics*, and *Microeconomics* – have approximately 170 journal positions (editors, co-editors, associate editors, and editorial board members). However, none of these persons is black (Darity, 2016, pp. 174-175). While some editorial boards can be dormant, in economics, a new study on the gatekeepers of economics journals shows that the members exert a strong control on editorial policy. Further, there is a small group of economists who control the leading journals of economics. Indeed, as much as 90 per cent of all economics journals have been monopolised by a few economists in the mainstream. In the words of the authors (Baccini and Baabesi, 2014):

> The phenomenon of a same editor serving in the editorial boards of two different journals is called interlocking editorship. This is analogous with interlocking directorship which is the phenomenon of a same person sitting on the boards of directors of two different firms. The editorial board members of the economic journals generated a very compact network where about 90% of the journals considered are linked directly or indirectly (pp. 15-16).

Indeed, 32 editors of the leading mainstream economics journals edit as many as 166 journals (Baccini and Baabesi, 2014). This structure creates a monopoly in favour of Eurocentric, mainstream economics – a trend that can also be seen in mainstream economics departments. As Yalcintas and Wible (2016) shows, economics departments are increasingly becoming monopolistic in terms of who is hired, what is taught, and how. As an imperial science, economics has a low tolerance level for dissent, especially if the dissenters are Africans. Research by many African American political economists (e.g., Darity, 2010, Price and Allen, 2014) shows that mainstream economics (that is, neoclassical, new institutional, and

Austrian) journals are, typically, disinterested in the topics relevant to black societies such as discrimination, race, and poverty.

Africanist journals (those that profess an interest in Africa) proliferated as a result, but those which publish critical scholarship are promptly devalued. The *Review of African Political Economy* – which is the leading political economy journal in Africa – is ranked 'C' by the Australian Business Dean's Ranking of Economics Journals and, although *The Review of Black Political Economy* was initially ranked 'A', the journal was downgraded to 'C' subsequently based on poor citation counts[1]. In turn, Gunnar Myrdal's circular and cumulative causation principle – first developed in *An American Dilemma* (1944) to explain racism against Blacks in America - is triggered: being critical leads to bad ranking which leads to poor citation which, in turn, leads to downgrading. Here, a socially created tendency is instituted to bias research towards mainstream economics.

This trend parallels wider changing conditions in which knowledge is produced. The increasing concentration of knowledge ownership (journals and publishing houses being owned and operated by a smaller number of companies) is one example. Mergers and acquisitions of huge journals is another. Indeed, 'The scientific publishing market is dominated by the so-called 'big four' companies: Springer (which reports hosting 2,987 journals), Elsevier (3,057), Wiley (2,339) and Taylor & Francis (2,105). Together, they comprise around 30% of the world's total scholarly peer-reviewed journals, which number 34,585 (28,134 English language), according to Ulrichsweb, an online directory of scholarly journals' (Van Noorden, 2015, n.p.). The rest are smaller companies, but they are predominantly located in the north, serving mostly northern interests and driving out into obscurity African scholars who cannot take subscriptions to the journals they publish (Van Noorden, 2015, n.p.).

These core-periphery tendencies can be found within Africa too, of course. The racial composition of the professoriate has obtained much commentary and political action, including during the recent 'Rhodes Must Fall' activities in South African (Nyamnjoh, 2016). However, there are other areas that are characterised by similar tendencies. Between 2001 and 2008, White academics obtained 85 per cent of funding in South Africa (Luruli, 2014, p. 165). The leadership of the many journals in the country is largely White. These issues may not at all be intentional. However, as W. Arthur Lewis once famously observed:

> One must distinguish between intentional and consequential discrimination. Restricting the numbers eligible for the better jobs does not have racial or ethnic consequences in homogeneous societies; but in racial societies such measures have racial consequences because the persons most likely to be excluded, even by non-racial rules, will turn out to be members of the subordinate race. Moreover, the division increases with time; for those who are excluded do not get the same continuing learning opportunities as those who are

[1] Discussion of Peter Kreisler's email in the Heterodox Economics Newsletter, issue 152, September, 2013, http://heterodoxnews.com/n/htn152.html (accessed 8.11.2016).

included, nor do they pass the same enhanced cultural richness to the next generation. Consequential discrimination is then embedded in the system (Lewis, 1985, pp. 43-44).

In the South African case, this consequential discrimination can be seen in terms of the national ranking of South African academics, the National Research Foundation ranking, a league whose most prestigious places (As and Bs) are dominated by white scholars. Consequential racism can also be found in the membership of the nation's learned society: The Academy of Science of South Africa, according to which, only 27 per cent of its membership is black (Academy of Science of South Africa, ca. 2013; see also Jansen, 2018, p. 7). In relation to the total South African population which is about 80.9 per cent black (Statistics SA, 2008), this distribution highlights the need to emphasise local core/periphery dynamics in Africa too. However, viewed globally as part of the world system of knowledge production, Africa's share of these troubles is rather small. Indeed, its little share is both inferiorised and peripheralished.

Inferiorisation and Peripheralisation

Inferiorisation of the knowledge of the South, the process of production, and the status of the producers arise when southern-generated knowledge is considered inferior. Inferiorisation also arises when knowledge constructed by black women, and peoples of colour more generally, is devalued. Of these two cases, it is the latter which is the more counter intuitive and, yet, quite common even within feminism (both liberal and progressive, be it ecofeminism, feminist economics, or feminist ecological economics, see, for example, O'Hara, 2009).

Dominated by white, middle class women, liberal feminism can be particularly dismissive of the scholarship of black feminists. Bell Hooks, the leading African American feminist has provided a detailed account in her 1982 classic, *Ain't I a Woman. Black Women and Feminism* (1982), so the effort need not be duplicated. What has to be highlighted is that, as Hooks shows, research money is more easily found by white people to provide anthologies of black women's writings, but it is harder to find money for black women to anthologise about themselves or to study white women. Hooks (1982) famously showed that white feminists will make analogies between the conditions of white women and black people, suggesting that black people meant black men and black women did not exist.

Progressive feminists are much more inclusive. Indeed, they are more sophisticated, challenging the liberal myth and Eurocentric universalism of equating *all* women to nature, and contesting mainstream feminism's idealist and non-materialist orientation (Salleh, 2009, pp. 12-13). Progressive feminism provides a strong challenge to masculinist economics that devalues the contribution of women because its key indicators are overlook sectors in which female labour is dominant. Progressive feminism also demonstrates the direct and indirect exploitation of women who usually provide support for men workers in capitalist firms, while re-emphasising the substantial role women's work plays in sustaining nature (Salleh, 2009; O'Hara, 2009).

However, even progressive feminism pays insubstantial attention to critical race theory (see, for example, Salleh, 2009). Although seeking to include Southern voices, the overwhelming emphasis in progressive feminism is on 'subsistence perspective' (Bownhill and Turner, 2009, p.230), an idea which stresses the interconnections between women's livelihoods and the environment (Bownhill and Turner, 2009). Consequently, when the 'global South' is invoked by progressive feminists, what they seek to do is to invite African female scholars to 'bring a further critical dimension to the fore, namely community activism, local participation, and engagement in the social change process' (O'Hara, 2009, p. 191). The rich theories or theorisation of black feminism itself, is silenced. The theories of its leaders, such as Kimberlé Crenshaw, Amina Mama, and Bell Hooks, are marginalised. The *hierarchical relationship* between white feminism and black feminism and, how that, in turn, shapes the socio-economic and ecological experiences of blacks and their knowledge systems are conveniently overlooked. The result, in the long-run, was the formation of black feminist groups too.

Yet, to-day, the reading lists of the leading feminist thinkers pay scant attention to the scholarship of black feminists. White women writing about black women is common and highly valued, but when black women write about themselves, it is not read. Indeed, as Rosalind Edwards, a White feminist, and others (e.g., Racine, 2016) show, there are both real and perceived *continuing* hierarchies between white women and black women be they feminists or interviewees/interviewers (Edwards, 1990). This body of work argues for white feminists to listen. Yet, as famously shown by South African feminist Sisi Maqagi (1990), the 'listen' in such admonitions is often framed as being 'sympathetic' to black women, that is, benevolently accommodating something not really up to the standards. Indeed, usually white feminists listen to appropriate, rationalise, and present in more 'mature' ways (Maqagi, 1990). Either way, the prerogative of blacks to speak for themselves is undermined and the class position of white feminists stands in the way. The issue, however, is not merely about black and white feminists. It is also about class, power, and how they intermingle to divide feminists across scales and regions.

Consider the case of *unequal knowledge exchange* between Western and Southern researchers. Academics in the West who do fieldwork in the South tend to recruit male research assistants. Females tend to do the same. Under postcolonial capitalist societies, class and gender reinforce the position of males to be in a better position to become research assistants who, if recognised, for example, in research papers, can also enhance their status relative to local females. Relative to the northern-based researchers, however, these assistants are often poorly recognised although the southerners are frequently informants and co-producers of knowledge (Vawda, 2016). In many cases, such assistants could pass as lead authors, but not even their later scholarship is recognised by professors who travel from the north to the south to collect data, a phenomenon Roger Sanjek (1993) has called 'hidden colonialism.' In *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) shows how black people are used as research objects, assistants, and informants –without being acknowledged as co-producers of or significant contributors to 'Indigenous knowledge'. In her words, 'Through their publications they came to be seen by the outside world as knowledgeable, informed and relatively 'objective'. Their 'informants' were relegated to obscurity, their colonial activities seen as unproblematic, and their chronic ethnocentrism viewed as a sign of the times.' (Smith, 1999, p. 82). Researchers from the West have provided important scholarship useful and valuable to the South, but the contradiction is that when the

Southerners have written their own accounts, they have tended to be inferiorised and considered poor in relation to Western scholarship (see, for example, Vawda, 2016). So, it is like as long as the Africans agree to be research assistants, their knowledge is fine; but not when they are equal co producers.

African scholars who migrate to the West might avoid some of these experiences, but the idea of 'brain drain' tend to paint the picture of a pristine West, although many African scholars suffer marginalisation in the West too. Research (Gueye, 2002) looking at the experiences of African and black social scientists in France shows that they experience substantial intellectual marginalisation. So, they obtain few secure university positions. These African scholars are, usually, not members of the editorial boards of the French leading journals, in which they are rarely published. Their lack of academic position and absence from editorial boards combine to create the impression about the inferiority of their research. Serving on the boards of Africanist journals but, in France, even the African journals are dominated in their leadership structure by white French specialists on Africa. In the United States too, a recent study (Arthur, 2014) shows how African academics struggle with various forms of professional and wider society racism in ways that force them to periodically return to Africa for some acknowledgement.

A study of the share of contributions to Africanist journals published in Britain, Canada, and USA between 1982 and 1992 showed that 15 per cent of the papers and 10 per cent of book reviews were published by Africans in Africa, while Africans in the diaspora contributed a further 9 per cent of the content- the remaining 76 per cent of the publications were not by Africans (Zeleza, 1996). Gregory Price and Maxton Allen, two African Americans in the United States, studied the patterns of publications in *The Review of Black Political Economy* (based in the USA) from 1979 to 2011, looking at the contribution of black economists employed in economics departments in the USA and other black economists currently or previously employed in the academy, or research institutes. Price and Allen (2014) found that, although the journal was established to enable black economists to publish their work, papers are dominated by Whites. Elsewhere, one of the authors (Price, 2008) shows that research by black economists is typically deemed unworthy of being cited. African research is, in this sense, peripheralized too.

Rowing Against the Tide: Concluding Comments

Rowing out of the sea of bias is not going to be easy, especially because the imbalances in the knowledge sphere reflect bigger economic imbalances too. While African economies have widely been described as 'rising' in terms of their *national* GDP rates and size of growth as a share of *global* GDP, Africa's GDP has remained nearly stagnant at a mere 2 per cent since 2005 (United Nations Office of the Special Advisor on Africa (OSAA) and the NEPAD-OECD Africa Investment Initiative, ca. 2016). For Africa to have only a trifle of the world's 'most powerful number', a number that is used as the basis for the global definition of 'power' (e.g., whether a region/country is a superpower) (Fioramonti, 2013, p. 3), suggests that African research would have much limited power. More fundamentally, the focus on continuing accumulation overlooks the nature of a model which is based on inequalities in knowledge production and uses as well as inequalities in gender, race, and class (Obeng-Odoom, 2015; Oduro and Staveren, 2016).

If we accept that in itself 'knowledge is power', as demonstrated by Pierre Bourdieu in his influential *Homo Academicus* (1984), then Africa has much limited power. Bourdieu shows how academic power, connected to scientific power, operates in tandem to create symbolic power. This power of symbolism is used in an all-powerful way to influence how society views itself and the world, as well as how the world views society. Symbolic power is also used to produce and reproduce knowledge, so this state of affairs, of Africa's diminished power, creates bigger and serious problems of the further subjugation of Africa. 'Academic power', as understood by Bourdieu, is 'the control of the instruments of reproduction' (p. 78) transmitted by class and race and intermixed with 'scientific power' conferred through holding various scientific positions on boards of knowledge production to create symbolic power of authority and scientific respect (p. 79). So, the economic position of Africa contributes to weakening the power of its research and the weak power of its research contributes to weakening its economic position. Redressing this imbalance does not, however, merely mean increasing Africa's share of GDP because, merely doing so, without a change in Africa's economic structure, would only reinforce and create new forms of inequality. If so, neither human capital approach nor its Southern theory alternative, including promoting a kind of 'Write African, cite African' can address the problem of the intellectual marginalisation of Africa.

Acknowledgements

Kwasi Kwafo Adarkwa, George Bob-Milliar, and Joe Collins did not only encourage me to write this paper, they also gave me excellent feedback on my early drafts. I gratefully acknowledge their support and the feedback of the editors and reviewers of *African Identities.*

References

Academy of Science of South Africa, ca. 2013, 'Asaf Overview', Academy of Science of South Africa, Pretoria.

Arthur J.A., 2014, *Class Formations and Inequality Structures in Contemporary African Migration*, Lexington Books, London and New York.

Baccini A and Baabesi L, 2014, 'Gatekeepers of economics: the network of editorial boards in economic journal', in Laneri, A. Wromen, J. (eds) *The Economics of Economists,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 104-150.

Becker G.S., 1962, 'Investment in Human Capital: A Theoretical Analysis', *Journal of Political Economy,* Vol. 70, No. 5, pp. 9-49.

Bgoya, Walter (2014), '50 Years of Independence: Reflections on Publishing and Progressive African Intellectuals', *African Spectrum,* vol. 49, no. 3, pp. 107-119.

Bourdieu P, 1984, *Homo Academicus,* Stanford University Press, Stanford.

Connell R, 2007, *Southern Theory: The Global Dynamics of Knowledge in Social Science,* Allen and Unwin, Sydney.

Connell, R., Pearse, R., Collyer, F., Maia, J., Morrell, R. (2018). Negotiating with the North: How Southern-tier intellectual workers deal with the global economy of knowledge. *The Sociological Review*, 66(1), 41-57.

Connell, R., Pearse, R., Collyer, F., Maia, J., Morrell, R. (2018). Re-making the Global Economy of Knowledge: North-South Relations in New Fields of Knowledge. *British Journal of Sociology*, 69(3), 738-757.

Darity W.A, Jr, 2010, 'Notes from the Back of the Academic Bus', in Daniel Little and Satya P. Mohanty, eds, *The Future of Diversity: Academic Leaders Reflect on American Higher Education, Palgrave* Macmillan, London, pp. 173-180.

Darity W.A. Jr and Williams R.M., 1985, 'Peddlers forever? Culture, Competition, and Discrimination', *American Economic Review, Papers and Proceedings of the Ninety-Seventh Annual Meeting of the American Economic Association,* vol. 75, no. 2, pp. 256 – 261.

Diop C.A., 1967, *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality,* Lawrence Hill Books, Chicago.

Edwards R, 1990, 'Connecting method and epistemology: A White woman interviewing Black women', Women's Studies International Forum, Vol. 13, No. 5, PP. 477-490.

Fioramonti, L. (2013). *Gross domestic problem: The politics behind the world's most powerful number*. London: Zed Books.

Francis D.J., Björkman J, Manor J, 2008, 'Timely Evaluation: OSSREA 2000-2006', SIDA-SAREC, Stockholm.

Gibbons M, 2000, 'Beyond the market: Universities and society in the 21st century', University of Ghana, Accra.

Gueye A, 2002, 'Dark side of the African brain drain: Experiences of Africans holding doctoral degrees in social sciences and humanities living in France', *African Issues,* vol. 30, no. 1, pp. 62-65.

Hoff K and Stiglitz J.E., 2016, 'Striving for Balance in Economics Towards a Theory of the Social Determination of Behavior', World Bank Policy Research Working Paper, 7537.

Hooks B, 1982, *Ain't I a Woman. Black Women and Feminism,* Pluto Press, London

International Social Science Council, 2010, *World Social Science Report: Knowledge Divides,* UNESCO, Paris.

International Social Science Council, 2016, *World Social Science Report: Challenging Inequalities: Pathways to Just World*, UNESCO, Paris.

Jansen J. D, 2018, 'Message from the president', *Annual Report 2017/2018,* Academy of Science of South Africa, Pretoria, pp. 6-8.

Kaba A.J. 2009, 'Demographics and Profile: The Most Cited Black Scholars in the Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities', *Journal of Pan African Studies,* vol.3, no.2 September, pp. 153 – 207.

Kana M.A., 2016, "Publish or perish" is good for African research, *British Medical Journal,* 352: i121 doe: 10.1136/bmj.i121, pp. 1-2.

Langa P, 2013, *Higher Education in Portuguese Speaking African Countries,* African Minds, Cape Town.

Lewis A, 1985, *Racial Conflict and Economic Development,* Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

Luruli N.M, 2014, 'Research funding and modes of knowledge production: a comparison between NRF-funded and industry-funded researchers in South Africa', Dissertation presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Stellenbosch University.

Mama A, 2001, 'Challenging subjects: Gender and power in African contexts', *African Sociological Review,* vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 63-73.

Maqagi S, 1990, 'Who theorises', *Current Writing: Text and Reception in South Africa,* vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 22-25.

Marcus G and Fischer M, 1986 *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Movement in the Human Sciences.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Miller D, (1987), Material *Culture and Mass Consumption*, Basil Blackwell: Oxford.

Mouton J, 2010, 'The state of social science in sub-Saharan Africa', *World Social Science Report: Knowledge Divides,* UNESCO, Paris, pp. 63-67.

Myrdal G., 1944, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy,* Harper and Brothers Publishers, New York.

Murphy, James, T. and Carmody, Padraig. (2015). *Africa's Information Revolution: Technical Regimes and Production Networks in South Africa and Tanzania.* Oxford: Wiley Blackwell.

Ngobeni S, ed, 2010, *Scholarly Publishing in Africa: Opportunities and Impediments,* African Institute of South Africa, Pretoria.

Nwagwu, W. E, 2006a, 'Cyberdating the academe: Centralized scholarly ranking and visibility of scholars in the developing world', *Journal of Information Science*, vol. 36, no. 2, pp. 228–241.

Nwagwu, W.E., 2006b, 'Organising and Monitoring Research Production and Performance in Africa: Towards an African Citation Index. Electronic Publishing in Africa in the Digital Era', Proceedings of the Second International Conference on Electronic Publishing and Dissemination, Leiden, Holland, CODESRIA, 91 - 109pp.

Nwagwu, W.E., 2008, 'Online Journals and Visibility of Science in Africa: A Role for African Social Science Citation Index. Putting African Journals Online: Opportunities, Implications and Limits', Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Electronic Publishing and Dissemination, Dakar: CODESRIA, pp 1-14.

Nwagwu, W.E., 2016, 'Open Access in the Developing Regions: Situating the Altercations About Predatory Publishing', *Canadian Journal of Information and Library Science*, vol. 40, no. 1, pp. 58-80.

Nyamnjoh, Francis B. 2016, *Rhodes Must Fall: Nibbling at Resilient Colonialism in South Africa*, Langaa Research and Publishing Common Initiative Group: Bamenda.

Nyamnjoh F.B, 2012, "'Potted Plants in Greenhouses': A Critical Reflection on the Resilience of Colonial Education in Africa", Journal of Asian and African Studies 47(2) 129–154

O'Hara S.U. , 2009, 'Feminist ecological economics in theory and practice' Salleh, A. (ed.) (2009) *Eco-Sufficiency and Global Justice: Women write political ecology*. London and New York: Pluto Press / Melbourne: Spinifex, pp. 180 – 196.

Obeng-Odoom F, 2015, 'Africa: On the rise but to where?', *Forum for Social Economics*, vol. 44, no. 3, pp. 234-250.

Oduro, A.D. and van Staveren, I., 2015, 'Engendering economic policy in Africa', *Feminist Economics*, vol. 21, no. 3, pp. 1-22.

Oloyede O, 2006, 'The first ten years: A review of African sociological review, 1997 -2006', *African Sociological Review,* vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 193 – 207.

Paulin E.A., 1999, 'Human capital', *Encyclopedia of Political Economy,* in O'Hara P.A., ed., pp. 464-467.

Price G.N. and Allen M, 2014, 'The Scholarly Status of Blacks in the Economics Profession: Have the National Economic Association and the Review of Black Political Economy Mattered?', *The Review of Black Political Economy,* vol. 41, pp. 1–11

Price G.N., 2008, 'NEA Presidential Address: Black Economists of the World You Cite!!", *Review of Black Political Economy,* vol. 35, no. 1, pp. 1-12.

Price, Gregory N, 2007, 'Would Increased National Science Foundation Research Support To Economists at Historically Black Colleges and Universities Increase Their Research Productivity?', *Review of Black Political Economy*, vol. 38, nos. (1/2), pp. 87-109.

Racine L, 2016, 'The Impact of Race, Gender, and Class in Postcolonial Feminist Fieldwork: A Retrospective Critique of Methodological Dilemmas', APORIA, Vol.3, Numéro 1 / Vol.3, Issue 1, pp. 15-27.

Salleh, A. (ed.) (2009) *Eco-Sufficiency and Global Justice: Women write political ecology*. London and New York: Pluto Press / Melbourne: Spinifex.

Sanjek R, 1993, ‘Anthropology’s hidden colonialism: Assistants and their ethnographers’, *Anthropology Today,* vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 13-18.

Saul J.S. and Leys C, 1998, ‘ROAPE & the Radical Africanist: What Next?’, Review *of African Political Economy*, vol. 25, no. 76, pp. 265 -273.

Smith L.T, 1999, *Decolonizing Methodologies Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Zed, London and the University of Otago Press, Dunedin.

Statistics South Africa, 2018, Statistical Release P0302, Mid-year population estimates, Statistics SA.

Stilwell F, 2003, ‘Markets in merit …or merit in markets?’, *Australian Universities’ Review,* vol. 46, no. 1, pp. 13 -16.

Uetela P, 2016, *Higher Education and Development in Africa*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.

United Nations Office of the Special Advisor on Africa (OSAA) and the NEPAD-OECD Africa Investment Initiative, ca. 2016, ‘Gross Domestic Product Africa Fact Sheet’, available on the OECD Official website, https://www.oecd.org/investment/investmentfordevelopment/47452483.pdf (accessed on Aug 9, 2016).

Van Noorden R, 2015, ‘Nature owner merges with publishing giant Macmillan Science and Education looks set to gain from Springer's scale’, *Nature News,* 15 January.

Vawda S, 2016, ‘Whose knowledge? The politics of scholarship in South (ern): A critical review of Inside African Anthropology’, *South African Journal of Science,* vol. 112, no. 1/ 2, pp. 1-4.

World Bank and Elsevier, 2014, ‘A decade of development in Sub-Saharan African Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Research’, Report No. 91016.

World Bank, 2015, *World Development Report 2015: Mind, Society, and Behavior,* The World Bank, Washington DC.

Xia J, Harmon J.L, Connolly K.G., Donnelly R.M., Anderson M.R., Howard J.A., 2015, “Who Publishes in ‘Predatory’ Journals?”, *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology,* vol. 66, no. 7, pp. 1406–1417, 2015

Yalcintas A and Wible J.R., 2016, ‘Scientific misconduct and research ethics in economics: an introduction’, *Review of Social Economy,* vol. 74, no. 1, pp. 1-6.

Yankholmes AKB, 2014, ‘Publish or perish: African scholarship in the field of tourism and hospitality studies’, *Tourism and Hospitality Research* vol. 14 no. 1-2 97-107

Weissinger T, 2015, ‘Black Studies Journal Assessment: Two Possibilities’, *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, vol.8, no.4, September, pp. 97 -116.

Zeleza P.T., 1996, ‘Manufacturing and consuming knowledge’, *Development in Practice*, 6:4, 293-303

Zelizer V.A., 2005, “Culture and Consumption.” In Neil Smelser and Richard Svedberg, editors. Handbook of Economic Sociology, second edition. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press and New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2005), pp. 331-54.