



AFRICAN STUDIES, RE-CALIBRATED KNOWLEDGE AND AFRICAN STATES

By

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between African studies, knowledge recalibration, and state-building through a comparative analysis of Nigeria, Algeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, the Central African Republic, and South Africa. Guided by Postcolonial, Decolonial, Afrocentric, Dependency, and Critical Knowledge theories, it employed a qualitative comparative design using secondary data analysed through thematic, historical, and content analysis. The findings indicate that colonial legacies, external funding dependence, weak research infrastructure, governance challenges, brain drain, and the marginalisation of indigenous knowledge continue to constrain knowledge production and effective governance across Africa. Conversely, countries that have invested in human capital, strengthened indigenous research, and integrated local governance systems into state institutions have achieved better developmental outcomes. The study concludes that recalibrating knowledge through African-centred scholarship, innovative teaching, stronger research capacity, regional collaboration, and indigenous philosophies can enhance sustainable state-building. It recommends greater investment in African scholars, research institutions, and indigenous governance frameworks for policy development.

Keywords: *Indigenous knowledge, governance, state-building, epistemic sovereignty, Africa.*

Introduction

The evolution of African studies as an academic field has been quite intriguing. The development of African studies stemmed from various political and intellectual events taking place in colonial and post-colonial Africa. It began with the European colonial mind-set, while “Arab geography and anthropology” incorporated Africa into the region’s “descriptive anthropology” (Hunwick, 1999). The European perceptions of Africa from the 15th century were focused on representing it as primitive to justify the “discoveries and subsequent slavery and colonialism” (Mudimbe, 1988). It is notable that the colonial regime utilized ethnographic reports by anthropologists to advance their imperialist mission. Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, and Evans-Pritchard conducted their research from the theoretical perspective of “enhancing colonial power” (Evans-Pritchard, 1940; Mamdani, 1996). However, the International African Institute, established in 1926, advanced African studies, anthropology, and linguistics, while continuing to promote the colonial agenda of depicting Africa from a Eurocentric perspective.

The African and Afro-American scholars such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, Edward Blyden, and Cheikh Anta Diop produced new discourse about Africa’s ancient history and civilization (Diop, 1974). After gaining independence, African universities fostered scholarship that sought to further native historical heritage and oral literature (Ajayi, 1965). The colonial mentality had long been challenged, and the scholars of the Marxism and World Systems Theory began studying African dependencies (Rodney, 1972). In the writings of Mudimbe (1988) and African feminist scholars such as Oyěwùmí (1997), the ideas of decolonizing African studies emerged. Although the colonial powers have been overthrown, the African studies produced in the last several decades continue to be dominated by Western epistemology that depicts Africa as dependent and peripheral (Mkandawire, 2005). The post-colonial African studies have been characterized by similar assumptions about Africa’s historical and contemporary development in the larger world. Moreover, the indigenous epistemologies and their diverse philosophies have been marginalized, dismissed, and demonized. The colonial governments disregarded these systems as primitive and consequently weakened many African societies (Wiredu, 1998; Nyamnjoh, 2012). Currently, African states apply governance models that were introduced by the colonial rulers (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018).

Such policies do not resonate well with the African values and traditions and have hindered effective policy implementation in the continent. African philosophies, institutions, and systems of governance and justice were considered appropriate for achieving sustainable development and stability. Today, the Ubuntu philosophy is largely ignored in favor of other systems that are better suited to the policymakers' interests. The African states have adopted a Western punitive justice system, which has significantly compromised their citizens' trust in the rule of law and justice (Mamdani, 1996). African epistemologies and philosophies have been largely dismissed, diminishing the continent's capacity to design transformative policies. Knowledge systems about the African context were generated from foreign researchers who disregarded the indigenous systems of governance and justice. The reliance on alien governance structures has further weakened the African states' ability to respond to the imperatives of development and security. Therefore, it is safe to assume that the reversion to African epistemologies and philosophies can provide policymakers with innovative approaches to statecraft.

This paper discusses the implications of the African studies and indigenous knowledge systems to the modern statecraft in Africa. Although much attention has been devoted to critiquing colonial scholarship, little is known about the relationship between knowledge production and statecraft in Africa. Furthermore, the potential of African epistemologies to advance statecraft is poorly understood. Therefore, the present research aims to contribute to addressing these gaps in scholarship. The paper focuses on how the African states adopted indigenous and decolonized knowledge systems to advance their national interests. The study also seeks to establish the similarities and differences in the ways the selected countries utilized their knowledge systems to build modern states. Lastly, the paper will review the impact of the altered approaches to policy formulation and governance in the study countries.

Methodology

The current study uses the qualitative research design. The comparative case study method is utilized to generate an in-depth understanding of the relationship between African studies, epistemic renewal, and statecraft. The research is conducted in six African countries, including Nigeria, Algeria, Congo, Rwanda, the Central African Republic, and South Africa. These countries were purposively selected because of their colonial history as well as their diverse political, social,

and cultural realities. The study focuses on the scholarship on African studies, the production of African indigenous knowledge, and statecraft. All the information used in the current research has been collected from various secondary sources. In particular, the study utilized a wide range of secondary data and information to review the African studies in the context of statecraft of the selected countries. The thematic, historical, and content analyses were applied to the collected data in order to reveal key patterns and themes related to the study's objectives.

Theoretical Framework

The current study is guided by such theories as post-colonial theory, decolonial theory, Afrocentric theory, dependency theory, and critical knowledge theory. These theories help address the research questions and provide a solid conceptual framework for the present study. Post-colonial theory facilitates the analysis of colonial and post-colonial societies in terms of their cultural, political, historical, and intellectual aspects. The theory has been advanced by several scholars, including Frantz Fanon, who discusses colonial power structures in his book *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963). According to him, Fanon, Africans and Asians were subjected to colonial rule and treated as second-class citizens (1963). In his theory of Orientalism, Edward Said demonstrated that the colonial powers depicted nonwestern societies as primitive to justify their dominance (1978). In particular, the Europeans viewed Africa as an inferior continent and its people as lazy and useless. According to Fanon, these ideas were reinforced through the colonial oppression of the Africans (1963). This theory is integral to the current study since it helps understand the colonial perspectives of Africa and their impact on the African studies and the continent's development.

Decolonial theory originated from the colonial and post-colonial histories of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. It addresses such topics as the colonial epistemology and ontology, which continue to undermine various domains in post-colonial societies (Quijano, 2000). Decolonial theory focuses on colonial Western epistemology, which was imposed on nonwestern societies through oppressive means. Quijano (2000) argues that decolonial scholars seek to dismantle colonial social hierarchies, including systems of exploitation and domination. The researcher notes that the Western powers committed epistemicide, which resulted in such phenomena as internalized racism and neocolonial exploitation of resources (Quijano, 2000). Ndlovu-Gatsheni

(2013) maintains that epistemicide has caused the African scholars to adopt the colonial perspectives in producing knowledge about their continent. This theory is pertinent to the current study since it addresses the ramifications of colonial epistemology on the African studies.

Afrocentric theory regards Africa as the center of human history and civilization. This theory was advanced by such scholars as Molefi Asante, who argue that Africa has been subject to Eurocentric misconceptions and projections (Asante, 1987). According to Afrocentric theory, Africa has made significant contributions to the world, and its philosophies should be used as a reference point in studying human history. Asante (1987) notes that the African studies have been conducted from the Eurocentric perspectives, which ignore Africa's rich heritage. Therefore, the African studies need to be revised to emphasize the African realities. Asante (1987) argues that Africa should be studied from the Africans' perspectives, highlighting the continent's unique history and values. The current study applies Afrocentric theory to address the impact of colonial scholarship on the African studies and the need to conduct research from the African center.

Dependency theory helps understand the African countries' reliance on the former colonial powers. This theory focuses on the imbalances resulting from the colonial economies and their impact on the development of the African states. According to Walter Rodney, the colonial powers were only interested in exploiting the resources of their colonies (1972). He notes that the Africans were deprived of opportunities for economic development (1972). Since the colonial economies were controlled by the Europeans, the local elites did not benefit from trade (Rodney, 1972). The colonial authorities intentionally promoted certain industries and weakened others, thus creating economic dependencies. This theory is critical to the current study since it helps explain how colonial economies have influenced African studies and the statecraft in the study countries.

Critical knowledge theory is based on the critiques of knowledge and education by such scholars as Michel Foucault, Jürgen Habermas, Paulo Freire, and Theodor Adorno. The theory focuses on the relationship between education and such factors as power, ideology, and domination. Paulo Freire states that education should liberate people rather than teach them to accept their oppression (1970). Critical theory is integral to the current study since it helps reveal the underlying social issues addressed by the African studies. In particular, the theory assists in demonstrating how the Africans have been marginalized and how the Westerners have appropriated the African culture and values. By applying this theory, the current study will

demonstrate how the Africans can advance their development using their indigenous knowledge systems.

Literature Review

The Historical Development of African Studies

African studies have a long and complex history, which is closely linked to Africa's colonial period. During this time, Africa was studied using anthropology and ethnography, which were used to understand the African cultures and societies. Such social sciences depicted Africa as primitive and uncivilized, thus providing a rationale for colonizing the continent (Mudimbe, 1988). Early anthropologists such as Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown produced knowledge about Africa, which advanced the imperialist agenda of the colonial powers (Kuper, 1988). Their scholarship was largely based on the colonial assumptions about Africans and their cultures. Moreover, the anthropologists conducted their research using the colonial methodology, which disregarded the Africans' perspectives. The colonial ethnography resulted in the establishment of certain epistemic hierarchies, which continue to dominate African studies (Mamdani, 1996). It depicted Africans as inferior and uncultured and promoted such ideas to legitimize the colonial rule. Ethnography focused on the racial and ethnic differences among the Africans, thus fueling divisions among them (Mamdani, 1996). Moreover, it was used as an instrument of governance to facilitate the colonial administrators' work. It can be noted that African studies produced during the colonial period were not intended to advance the Africans' interests. Instead, they served the purpose of supporting the colonial agenda and sustaining the colonial rule.

In the early twentieth century, African studies began to evolve as an academic discipline with anthropology at its center. Evans-Pritchard was among the scholars who produced knowledge about Africa from the ethnographic and anthropological perspectives. However, his work, as well as the work of other anthropologists, was conducted under the colonial ideology. Although the scholars aimed to produce objective knowledge about African societies, their work often reflected their colonial views. At the same time, African studies were conducted to support the colonial rule by providing the administrators with knowledge about the governed population's culture and social structure. Critics such as Fanon and Césaire argue that colonial scholarship failed to reflect Africa's unique history, culture, and philosophy (Fanon, 1963). Pan-African leaders such as

Marcus Garvey and W.E.B. Du Bois promoted African studies to advance the African liberation movement (Adi & Sherwood, 2003). Various African scholars and activists were the first to propose an African-centric approach to studying the continent. For instance, Casely-Hayford and Blyden emphasized the need to depict Africa's rich history and achievements. In particular, Blyden contended that the African civilizations were the cradle of human history (Diop, 1974). The scholars of the Egyptian school of thought also questioned the racist perceptions of the Africans. However, the colonial authorities were quick to dismiss their ideas. The Europeans asserted that the Africans were not capable of having sophisticated political systems and philosophies (Mudimbe, 1988).

Fanon and others argued that the colonial scholarship depicted Africans as uncultured and lazy, thus portraying them as inferior to the Europeans (Fanon, 1963). Such views overshadowed the rich African traditions and history. The Africans were considered to be an inert force, which was detrimental to their emancipation from colonial rule. According to Fanon, the colonial perspectives of the Africans created obstacles to their achieving true independence and self-governance (1963). The colonial scholarship undermined the Africans' belief in their ability to develop their own system of governance, thereby weakening their liberation movement. Toward the end of colonialism, African nationalists and Pan-African leaders advanced African scholarship, which resonated with the emerging African emancipation philosophy (Nkrumah, 1965). They called for a new paradigm of scholarship, which would reflect Africa's unique historical and cultural values.

Such scholars as Diop, Fanon, and Nkrumah acknowledged the contributions of the African civilizations to human history (Diop, 1974; Fanon, 1963; Nkrumah, 1965). In particular, the African leaders emphasized the need to study their rich and diverse philosophies. Asante (1998) discusses Afrocentricity as a new paradigm, which regards Africa as the center of knowledge. Nationalist scholars advocated for studying Africa from the Africans' perspectives to emphasize the continent's unique history and cultural values. At the same time, they sought to redeem the image of Africa, which has been tarnished by the colonial scholarship. In particular, the African studies should redeem the legacy of the precolonial state and its governance systems and highlight their contributions to human history.

Following the end of colonialism, African universities became the epicenters of anti-colonial scholarship (Mkandawire, 2005). In recent years, globalization and democratization have created a conducive environment for African scholarship (Zezeza, 2009). The African studies have become more complex as scholars conduct research on diverse areas related to Africa. At the same time, the researchers utilize the indigenous epistemologies to address the issues affecting the continent. Moreover, they emphasize the need for African epistemologies to be decolonized. Contemporary African scholars advocate for epistemic renewal, which entails transforming academic institutions and the education system. In particular, the scholars call for African studies to be conducted from the Africans' perspectives. Moreover, the African researchers have benefited from the growing accessibility to information and communication technologies (ICT) to engage in knowledge production (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013).

Eurocentrism and Knowledge Production about Africa

Eurocentric scholarship has contributed to depicting Africa as an inferior continent. The Eurocentric historians have presented Africa as uncultured and paid little attention to its rich history and values. They disregarded the African epistemology as irrelevant to modern societies, thus promoting the Eurocentric worldviews. The Eurocentric scholars emphasized the superiority of the European civilization over others, which created a dichotomy between modern and traditional societies (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). Colonial researchers promoted such a perspective of Africa as a continent of uncultured and lazy people. This view was used to justify the Europeans' colonial ambitions by advancing the argument that the Africans were not suitable for governing themselves. The Eurocentric scholarship has had lasting effects on the African studies, as it continues to be the foundation of the colonial academic system. This worldview has been imposed on Africa, which has affected the ways of knowledge production about the continent. The Western epistemology continues to marginalize and diminish Africa's role in human history.

The Eurocentrism in the African studies has resulted in the epistemic domination of Africa by the Western scholars (Ake, 1981). This has contributed to the African minds being subjected to colonial education, which disregarded the continent's rich cultural and intellectual heritage. Furthermore, the scholars from Africa have been unable to conduct research from the African perspectives, which has hindered their scholarship (Hountondji, 1997). The epistemic oppression

has resulted in the colonial dichotomies being imposed on the African academics. Such issues as the Eurocentric social sciences and the superiority of the Western theories are still relevant to the African studies.

Currently, African studies continue to rely on the colonial social sciences and the Western epistemology to generate knowledge about Africa (Hountondji, 1997). The African studies cannot be decolonized as long as they continue to adopt the Eurocentric scholarship. The Western researchers have been producing information about Africa for centuries, which continues to influence the African studies. At the same time, the African academics encounter structural barriers in conducting their research. The institutional factors, such as the availability of funding opportunities, are more favorable to the Western scholars. African students also travel to other countries to continue their studies, where they become accustomed to the Eurocentric perspectives (Zezeza, 2009). The critics of Eurocentrism argue that the Africans' values and systems of governance and justice were disregarded by the colonial powers (Rodney, 1972). The colonial rulers implemented the foreign policies, which did not consider the Africans' communalism, Ubuntu, and collectivism.

Indigenous Knowledge and Governance Systems in Africa

Africa has a wide range of indigenous systems of knowledge as well as governance structures. These traditional systems facilitated Africa's political, social, and economic development long before the continent was colonized. Various African communities possessed extensive knowledge about governance and emphasized the moral and spiritual aspects of leadership. Traditional African governance systems contributed to the stability of many communities and ensured sustainability (Wiredu, 1995). These systems resonated with the principles of collectivism, which is based on the belief in communal ownership of resources and the common good. Traditional African societies practiced strict moral codes and held individuals accountable for their actions. The governance systems ensured that the leaders adhered to the moral principles and performed their duties responsibly. For instance, the Ibo republics, which existed in what is now Nigeria, and the Ashanti nation, which is modern-day Ghana, based their leadership model on morality and social responsibility. Currently, scholars note the relevance of these traditional systems in promoting sustainable governance and development.

Community life is the cornerstone of many African societies, which underscores the importance of communalism. This system is based on the principle that every member of the community contributes to its development. The citizens uphold the values of solidarity and reciprocity, which are critical components of communal living. The social organization is aimed at enhancing the well-being of the entire community, rather than focusing on individuals. Everyone is expected to meet the collective needs while pursuing personal interests to contribute to the community's growth (Gyekye, 1997). Communalism dictates that individuals should share their personal belongings, including property and food, when the community is in need. Moreover, every person is required to bring their skills and abilities to the table to ensure that the community continues to thrive. Many African societies apply the principles of communalism to achieve their developmental goals since they believe that individual efforts can bring about the whole community's prosperity.

Africa has a robust oral tradition, which has played a significant role in passing down invaluable cultural heritage and knowledge. Africans transferred their values and accumulated wisdom through oral history, which has persisted for centuries among various ethnic groups. The oral traditions ensured that communities remained united and transmitted their knowledge to future generations (Vansina, 1985). Mythology, folktales, histories, and proverbs were used to educate Africans about their rich cultural heritage and reinforce social cohesion. The oral tradition resonated with the Africans' spiritual beliefs and helped them understand their origins and place in the world. However, the Western scholars disregarded the oral histories and their significance during the colonial period. The tradition was only recognized recently as a way to reclaim Africa's legacy and knowledge. Today, oral traditions are regarded as critical sources of knowledge that can contribute to addressing various issues facing contemporary African societies. These rich oral histories contain valuable information that can be used to promote African studies. They represent the Africans' worldview and should be relied upon by the scholars to produce credible information about the continent.

Decolonisation and the Recalibration of Knowledge

Decolonisation has become the order of the day in Africa, with scholars calling for an end to the colonial pedagogy and epistemology. In many African universities, the process of

decolonising education has commenced. The institutions are adjusting their curricula to reflect the African values and knowledge systems. One of the most prominent events that sparked the debate on decolonisation was the Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall campaigns, which challenged the status quo and propelled the reform process (Heleta, 2016). Consequently, African universities have been decolonising their curricula by adopting more African-centered approaches to teaching and learning.

At present, many African scholars call for the complete eradication of Eurocentric academics and the replacement of alien social sciences with the African counterparts. Such scholars highlight the need for African studies to focus on African epistemology, history, and experiences. Furthermore, decolonisation means shifting from the colonial scholarship to African-centered academic disciplines. It entails the African epistemology being incorporated into the learning process to ensure that students obtain knowledge from reliable and authentic sources (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). Decolonising the African studies will enable researchers and students to interact with the African knowledge systems and apply them to their studies. It will also help scholars conduct more credible research since they will base their findings on authentic information.

The African-centered methodologies emphasize the need to conduct research from the Africans' perspectives. They entail generating knowledge about Africa using the African epistemology, theories, and practices (Asante, 1998). Such approaches can help African scholars advance their scholarship and promote African studies. The methodologies focus on conducting research in accordance with Africa's history, values, and worldview. Researchers applying these methods acknowledge the validity of African knowledge systems, unlike the Western scholars who disregard them.

African-centred methodologies can be used to conduct studies in various fields, including governance, community development, and health care. Chilisa (2012) argues that these research approaches are relevant to African researchers since they resonate with the African epistemology. Moreover, they are appropriate for studying the African realities since they are guided by the African philosophies. African-centred methodologies enable the researchers to be more committed to engaging in transformative research. This approach calls for the researchers to be conscious and use their intellectual resources to generate authentic knowledge about Africa (Chilisa, 2012). Such

awareness will allow African scholars to conduct their research using indigenous knowledge systems while being empowered to transform society.

The colonial languages have dominated the African studies, which has impeded the researchers in accessing the African epistemology. The English, French, and Portuguese languages were imposed on the Africans, which resulted in their native tongues being disregarded. Moreover, the Africans' own languages were perceived as inferior, which explains why they were not valued during the colonial period. The colonial powers promoted their languages in education and governance to ensure that the Africans could not access the indigenous knowledge.

The reliance on the colonial languages has resulted in the African scholars being unable to produce credible information about their countries. In particular, the African studies are still conducted using the Eurocentric frameworks and do not reflect the Africans' perspectives. Unless African languages are used as the medium of teaching and research, decolonisation of the African studies will not be possible. Therefore, it is imperative to promote the African languages as the alternative to the colonial tongues. Moreover, the African scholars need to conduct their research and publish their findings in their native languages to contribute to authentic African knowledge production. The researchers should make African languages accessible to the local populations so that they can be better informed about their own knowledge systems.

African States and Knowledge-Informed Governance

In global perspectives, the concept of knowledge-based governance has been widely recognized as a critical force in promoting sustainable development. African writers have extensively debated the values embedded in governance that promote communal responsibility and solidarity within African societies (Wiredu, 1995). Leadership in African traditional systems facilitated social organization and civic responsibility in the region. Some of the African states currently practicing African governance systems and values include Botswana, Rwanda, and Kenya among others. Comparative analysis of African governance will shed light on the values and practices that could be integrated into statecraft to promote sustainable development. This is also important in understanding the differences in democracy, policies, and institutions that exist in the region.

The governance challenges facing African states are largely attributed to colonial legacy that created weaknesses in political and administrative systems. The colonial powers failed to develop appropriate systems that would promote communal values among African societies. Therefore, the newly independent African states adopted foreign systems and policies that failed to consider African communal values (Mamdani, 1996). African scholars argue that development-friendly policies that respect African values have the potential to promote accountability, good governance, and effective service delivery in African states (Englebert, 2000). African epistemology, when incorporated into governance, can empower African societies to achieve higher levels of ethical governance and policy design that promote communal development.

The universities in Africa continued to use the colonial knowledge systems even after independence. The curricula, methodologies, and theories used in instruction failed to address African realities and emphasized European history and social sciences (Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o, 1986). The colonial epistemic worldviews continued to dominate African intellectual spaces even after political independence (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). African scholars and writers were forced to use European theories and concepts to promote their knowledge and research findings in international forums. At the same time, European scholars had the authority to define African studies and advance their knowledge and research without limitations. The same colonial attitudes resulted in the lack of African studies in African universities and their higher education systems (Mama, 2007). Additionally, foreign governments and agencies dictated the terms and conditions of knowledge production in African universities and research institutions. African scholars and researchers became dependent on foreign validation of their research and writing, thus eliminating their voices in international forums.

Recalibrating Knowledge and State Transformation in Africa

Politics of Decolonized Knowledge

Decolonizing knowledge entails challenging the status quo of the colonial knowledge system that has dominated the African higher education system, research, governance, and innovation. Decolonization of knowledge has attracted the attention of many students who have been voicing their concerns through various movements, for example, the Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall. Decolonizing knowledge entails transforming the academic, research, governance,

and economic systems that have been operating on the principles of the colonial masters. According to African writers, the colonial knowledge system was inherently Eurocentric and failed to consider African realities and values (Nyerere, 1986). The colonial education system failed to produce knowledge and skills relevant to African societies and economies. In addition to the colonial curricula, the modes of teaching and research methodologies used in instruction failed to reflect African realities (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). African scholars argued that the colonial education system produced people whose skills and talents were not aligned with African values and needs.

Many African scholars such as Nkrumah, Fanon, and Rodney argued that Africans must produce their theories and research to address their problems and promote development (Ake, 1996; Rodney, 1972). They criticized the colonial education system for being selective in adopting relevant theories and methodologies to develop African studies and promote higher education. Decolonizing knowledge will enable African scholars to reclaim their indigenous systems and epistemologies to create knowledge using their theories and research methods in various fields of study.

Indigenous Governance Models and Public Policy

Prior to colonization, Africa had well-established governance systems that promoted communal security, spiritual values, and economic development. Traditional chiefs exercised governance roles through selected community members who performed their duties on a rotational basis to avoid oppression and corruption (Wiredu, 1996). Traditional governance system emphasized the rule of law through customary law to promote justice and peace in the community (Clark, 2010). Community members played active roles in governance, for example, through restorative justice practices that promoted rehabilitation of offenders and restitution to victims of crimes (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). Traditional governance systems promoted collective ownership of resources to ensure sustainability and avoid exploitation of community resources by a few people.

Africa's traditional governance systems emphasized the significance of maintaining social cohesion to promote sustainable development. Restorative justice is one of the strategies used in traditional African governance systems that could be used in contemporary public policy to

promote crime prevention and correction strategies in African states. Collective ownership of resources could also prevent exploitation of the country's resources by foreign private corporations and ensure long-term benefits for all citizens. However, it is necessary to promote individual responsibility in addition to collective responsibility when utilizing communal resources. The principles of traditional governance systems such as rule of law and restorative justice could be useful in modern African governance systems to promote sustainable development.

Educational Reforms and Curriculum Transformation

Education was considered as the best area for Africans to reclaim their freedom and independence from their colonial rulers (Ake, 1996; Nkrumah, 1963). Colonial education system failed to produce the required knowledge and skills to promote development and sustainable growth and was meant to serve the colonial masters. The colonial governments paid less attention to African history, traditions, and values in their education system. Therefore, after attaining independence, most African states did not embrace appropriate educational reforms to make the education system relevant to their needs. Curriculum transformation is critical in African education to restore African values and identity in higher education and promote African Studies. The leading African scholars such as Nkrumah, Frantz Fanon, and Walter Rodney emphasized the significance of transforming education to empower Africans and restore their dignity (Ake, 1996; Rodney, 1972). African states could promote their national identity through appropriate curriculum reforms that emphasize African history and values. This will enable the youth to develop pride in their history, culture, and values, therefore, contributing towards their development.

Knowledge Sovereignty and National Identity

Knowledge sovereignty entails giving back the power to individuals and communities to produce and utilize their knowledge and skills to promote development. Knowledge sovereignty also means embracing one's culture, traditions, and history to enhance self-confidence and self-respect. Sovereignty makes individuals and communities realize their potential and ability to achieve developmental goals without outside assistance. Achieving national identity is critical for African countries to promote unity and self-governance. Colonialism weakened African knowledge systems, traditions, and cultural practices, thus undermining national identity. Lack of

confidence in their own history and traditions makes it difficult for Africans to govern themselves and have strong unity. Embracing African values and knowledge systems can enhance African countries' self-confidence and self-respect to achieve sustainable development.

Moreover, promoting knowledge sovereignty empowers African countries to invest in research and commercialize their research results locally and internationally. African countries can develop their knowledge-based economies to support their own technology, which will promote their products and services locally and internationally. This will boost their economies and contribute to sustainable development. African countries can also promote their cultural products and languages to enhance cultural sovereignty and support their self-respect and self-confidence. Despite the efforts made by African countries to promote knowledge sovereignty, more investment is needed in research to support the continent's sustainable development.

Technology, Innovation, and African Knowledge Systems

Technology and innovation have become critical drivers of economic development globally, and African countries are beginning to recognize their significance. Technological developments have been occurring at a rapid rate, and embracing them is essential for sustainable development. Technology is dependent on knowledge systems as they provide the fundamental basis for developing new ideas and putting them into practical application to produce new goods and services. The African knowledge systems can empower Africans to create their technology to support their economic development and strengthen their local industries. This will also enable them to participate in the international trade of goods and services using their own products.

Innovation is key to building African economies and establishing knowledge-based economies that support sustainable development for a long time. African countries must invest more in research and development to generate new ideas and practical applications of their knowledge systems. Advancement in technology is significant for African countries to promote industrialization and strengthen their economies.

Challenges To Recalibrated Knowledge In African States

Universities in Africa have continued to operate on the same principles that guided their activities during colonial times. The colonial masters failed to develop an education system that

emphasized African knowledge systems and values. Consequently, this has resulted in Africans studying African studies using foreign knowledge systems (Quijano, 2007). Colonial knowledge systems continue to dominate African universities even after many years of independence. Researchers and students have criticized this practice and are advocating for decolonization of education and research to enhance African epistemologies and identities (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). European theories and approaches continue to dominate the African education system despite African scholars advocating for their criticism (wa Thiong'o, 1986). The reliance on foreign knowledge has compromised African researchers' abilities to publish their findings in international journals and research magazines. Therefore, the foreign-based knowledge systems continue to hinder Africans from developing their research and academic skills.

Many African universities rely on foreign funding to support their research activities, which limits their ability to conduct independent research. The foreign funders determine the research agenda, topic, and methodology of the studies (Mkandawire, 2005). Researchers from African universities can easily respond to the requests of the foreign funders. African universities need to develop sustainable funding mechanisms that will limit reliance on foreign donations to acquire knowledge sovereignty (Ake, 1996). The foreign funders also dictate terms and conditions of publications of research findings to ensure they benefit from the research results.

Political instability has hindered effective governance and development of African institutions, which has affected universities' research activities and hindered knowledge production for developmental purposes. Frequent changes in leadership and war have compromised the ability of universities to conduct quality research and make meaningful contributions to public policy (Mazrui, 2003). Civil war, violence, and corruption have resulted in limited access to finance and inadequate funding of education and research activities (Bloom et al., 2014). Consequently, this has affected the number of qualified researchers and lecturers available to teach and conduct research in African universities (Mamdani, 2016). In addition, the inadequate and insecure environment has compromised the ability of universities to publish and utilize their research findings in promoting national development.

Brain drain has affected African countries since they used to provide their best talents to other countries in return for a foreign diploma. Colonial masters used to take the best talents to assist in the development of their countries, thus, leaving African countries with little human

resource in education and research (Docquier & Rapoport, 2012). Currently, African universities struggle with limited human resources to conduct quality research and promote African values and knowledge systems. African countries need to create better working conditions to encourage people to offer their skills and time to strengthen their institutions. This will promote knowledge production and contribute to sustainable development. Poor conditions in African universities hinder efforts to decolonize education and research and limit opportunities for Africans to study their African studies.

Exposure to globalization has brought about the adoption of foreign values and undermined African traditions. Africans have been exposed to foreign culture through foreign media, which has resulted in losing their African values and adopting foreign ones instead. Neoliberal globalization has encouraged commercialization of universities and education, thus, making it difficult for African countries to embrace their knowledge systems and values (Tikly, 2004). The foreign knowledge systems have dominated the African education and research systems, thus, hindering local knowledge production and limiting research activities to topics emphasized by the foreigners (Ake, 1996, Mkandawire, 2005). In addition, the dominance of the European languages has hindered Africans from expressing their ideas using their native languages, thus resulting in suppression of African knowledge systems. The foreign languages are used as the official languages in African universities, which limits African scholars from publishing their work internationally (wa Thiong'o, 1986).

Comparative Experiences of Selected African States

Influence of colonial masters on Nigeria, Algeria, Congo, Rwanda, CAR, and South Africa differs because of their different historical developments and political systems. However, the differences explain the disparities that exist between African states in relation to education and research activities. Nigeria is among the many countries that were under colonial rule and still experience the consequences of the slavery system enforced by the British colonial masters. The colonial masters failed to recognize the needs of the local people and promoted education to serve their colonial interests (Falola & Heaton, 2008). Therefore, the education system failed to provide relevant knowledge and skills to Nigerians to support their development needs. Although Nigeria became independent, higher education continued to emphasize the colonial knowledge system.

However, the Nigerian scholars such as Ake, Ikime, and Jeyifo made significant efforts to decolonize Nigerian knowledge systems. Early political leaders such as Nnamdi Azikiwe and Obafemi Awolowo promoted the integration of traditional knowledge into the education system. The military regimes that characterized Nigerian politics in the 1950s and 1960s weakened the efforts of reforming the education system to respond to national development needs (Ikime, 1984). The political instability hindered knowledge production for developmental purposes and limited freedom of expression. Currently, Nigerian universities experience brain drain due to poor working conditions, political instability, and inadequate funding. These factors affect research and publication of their findings in local journals, thus, making it difficult to contribute to national development. In addition, the suppression of freedom of expression resulted in censorship of works published in Nigeria by local scholars and hindered efforts of developing Nigerian knowledge systems (Adebanji, 2003).

Although Nigeria has made significant efforts to decolonize its education system, its current systems and practices demonstrate how easily the country can give up its African identity for foreign interests. Language and policy changes in Nigeria show that the country readily adopts the foreign systems rather than developing their own (Ake, 1996). The IMF-mandated IMF and WB structural adjustment policies promoted neo-colonialism in Nigeria, thus, limiting its knowledge sovereignty. Currently, Nigeria is making efforts to decolonize the university education systems and promote the use of local knowledge systems and languages to advance national development (Adebanji, 2003).

Algeria is also among the countries that were under French rule and experienced the exploitation of their resources and traditions by the French colonial masters (Fanon, 1963). The colonial masters promoted education system to serve their interests and failed to appreciate Algerian traditions, values, and knowledge systems. However, the anti-colonial movement initiated by Algerian people resulted in the establishment of educational institutions to advance their knowledge and research. Algerian leaders continue to support education as the key strategy in promoting national development. Compared to Nigeria, Algeria is currently experiencing ethnic conflict between Arabs and Berbers to assert their identity based on their linguistic differences (Bourdieu, 1977). The government has been investing heavily in developing the education system and has allocated sufficient resources to conduct studies on Algerian cultural practices and history.

Unlike other African countries, Algeria has been self-reliant on its resources to support education and research activities. However, the limited freedom of expression and political instability hinder knowledge production and limit the use of findings to promote national development. In addition, there are inconsistencies between Islamic and Arabic knowledge systems, which contribute to the lack of national identity and hinder knowledge production for developmental purposes. Compared to Nigeria, Algeria has made progress in asserting its national identity.

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) was under the severe control of the Belgium colonial masters who oppressed Congolese people and failed to appreciate their values and traditions (Hochschild, 1998). The colonial masters also failed to develop an education system that addressed Congolese needs and promoted their values and knowledge systems. Congo attained independence when Lumumba took charge and made efforts to establish education system that would support Congolese development. Currently, Congo is experiencing political instability that affects education and research activities and impedes knowledge production for developmental purposes. Similar to Algeria, Congo has vast resources that fail to support education and research due to foreign exploitation of these resources (Rodney, 1972).

In addition to political instability, Congo experiences inadequate funds allocated to education and research activities to promote Congolese values and knowledge systems. Foreign investment in Congolese businesses has also hindered locals from developing their own strategies to promote economic development. Therefore, the Congolese education system fails to conduct proper research and make appropriate policy recommendations to address the Congolese challenges. Similar to Nigeria, Congo also relies on foreign funding support to conduct research activities (Mamdani, 2011). Despite the challenges affecting Congo, the country has traditional knowledge systems that could be used to promote sustainable development if utilized appropriately.

Rwanda differs from other African states because it has successfully utilized its traditional knowledge systems to promote national development. The government has invested significantly in developing the education system, resulting in highly qualified personnel ready to promote national development. The traditional restorative justice mechanisms have enhanced crime control and supported peacebuilding in Rwanda. Following the genocide that resulted in significant loss

of human life, Rwanda developed its restorative justice mechanisms to help the community heal and rebuild its institutions (Clark, 2010). These traditional mechanisms are helpful in promoting sustainable development because they encourage restoration of victims and offenders' lives and ensure punishment fits the crime. Rwanda has invested in developing its own knowledge and technology to support its development instead of relying on foreign knowledge systems. Therefore, Rwanda promotes its local knowledge systems to contribute to its developmental goals and enhance self-reliance. Compared to other African countries, Rwanda has developed its own indigenous knowledge systems that it uses to drive its development agenda.

On the other hand, the Central African Republic (CAR) is among the most unstable countries in Africa and has failed to develop effective governance systems to promote education and research activities. Unlike Rwanda, CAR experiences frequent political instability that has hindered national development. It also lacks proper investment in education resulting in poor infrastructure and limited skilled personnel in various institutions. Compared to Congo, CAR is highly dependent on external support for its political and economic development. This dependency has resulted in foreign governments influencing CAR policies and practices (Kalck, 2005). Unlike Algeria, CAR has faced multiple regicides that have hindered its ability to develop effective institutions and promote self-sufficiency in its development needs. In addition, CAR has been unstable and insecure, limiting the ability of citizens to conduct research and publish their findings to promote national development (International Crisis Group, 2021). However, CAR has traditional conflict resolution mechanisms and leadership practices that could be useful in promoting self-governance and peaceful co-existence of its citizens.

South Africa has been under the control of foreign powers through colonialism and apartheid system that caused division and hindered national unity and development. The South African states have been promoting various movements to challenge colonialism and apartheid, resulting in the establishment of numerous universities and research institutions for national development purposes. The South African states have invested significantly in research activities and have produced numerous scholars, but their efforts to decolonize education and research have failed to produce desirable results (Mbembe, 2016). Similar to Nigeria, South Africans are reluctant to embrace their national identity and readily accept foreign systems to govern their societies (Mignolo, 2011). The South African government appreciates the need for using African

knowledge systems to promote national development. The country has also made efforts to incorporate African indigenous languages in education and research activities. However, South Africa experiences numerous challenges such as lack of funding and human resources to support their efforts in decolonizing their education systems (Department of Science and Technology, 2004). These factors hinder the ability of South Africans to utilize African indigenous knowledge systems for their developmental needs, hence, lowering their level of self-reliance.

Reflections on the Selected African States

The cases of Nigeria, Algeria, and DRC illustrate the colonial aftermath effect on intellectual dependency and institutional inadequacy in African states. These three countries differ in many ways, including the extent to which they rely on external knowledge and the strategies they use to foster endogenous knowledge and institutions. The situation in the DRC is exacerbated by instability and reliance on foreign investment in its mining sector, whereas political and institutional structures in Nigeria and Algeria are strong enough to partially offset the colonial aftermath effect. However, all three countries are characterized by neo-colonial dependence, although the DRC is particularly dependent on external aid and education. Compared to the DRC and Nigeria, Algeria has more institutional and scholarly resources that allow it to pursue intellectual independence from external dominance.

Nevertheless, the country faces political instability and the colonial dichotomy between Islamic and Arab traditions. Rwanda is different from other Francophone African countries in several ways because it was internally colonized and subjected to horrific genocide in the 1990s. The country has since prioritized rebuilding its human capital and institutions based on Rwandan values. Rwanda promotes endogenous systems and technologies to minimize reliance on external counterparts. Unlike the DRC and Nigeria, Rwanda has strong institutional control and policy coherence to pursue research and development (R&D) and implement new findings in its institutions while maintaining a certain level of foreign expertise in its education system.

Comparing CAR, Rwanda, and South Africa can reveal similarities and differences in the colonial aftermath effect on their states' institutions and research capabilities. Similar to the situation in Nigeria and the DRC, the CAR has weak institutions and limited capacities for R&D, relying on foreign aid and expertise. Rwanda has overcome some institutional challenges caused

by internal colonization and genocide, but its reliance on foreign support and education remains considerable. Unlike other countries, South Africa has well-developed research and academic institutions but has faced severe challenges promoting R&D and institutional development because of colonial dichotomies and oppression. Today, South Africa is focused on overcoming the legacy of apartheid by emphasizing African values and knowledge in its scholarship to achieve intellectual independence.

After analyzing the six African countries, I have identified several themes and patterns regarding their states' institutional and scholarly capabilities and the colonial aftermath effect on them. First, there is an evident colonial aftermath effect that hinders these countries from overcoming intellectual dependency and developing endogenous systems of knowledge production. Second, there are significant differences in the colonial legacies and subsequent policies that determine the extent to which these countries rely on foreign knowledge and institutions. For example, CAR and Rwanda have better-developed systems compared to the DRC and Nigeria, but all four countries face serious institutional instability and violence. Third, the reliance on foreign knowledge, funding, and institutional frameworks varies significantly, although most countries suffer from neo-colonial dependence on foreign counterparts. Nevertheless, CAR and Rwanda are more self-sufficient and have stronger institutional control than other countries. Finally, there is great potential for adopting and promoting indigenous knowledge, systems, languages, and values, but it is poorly explored except in Rwanda.

Prospects and Policy Implications

African-Centered Scholarship

African-centered scholarship promotes intellectual independence and can be manifested in curricula that emphasize African epistemologies and ontologies and endogenous knowledge and languages. It requires transforming African universities into epicenters of scholarship about Africa and using their research capabilities to promote alternative epistemologies. Such universities would be characterized by their capacity to produce knowledge about the continent while being independent from foreign academic institutions. This can be achieved by developing African journals, magazines, and newspapers as alternative sources of information about Africa. The goal

of African-centered scholarship is to liberate African minds from the colonial dichotomy of African vs. Western epistemologies and promote intellectual independence.

Building African Universities and Research Institutes

African governments and private entities need to invest more in research and development to build research universities and institutes, enhance research infrastructure, and ensure that African scholars conduct high-quality research to serve national interests. Policies that promote research funding and development of research infrastructure will increase the competitiveness of African scholarship at national, regional, and global levels. African universities can enter into partnerships with governments and private entities to conduct applied research that can be commercialized to generate additional revenue.

Harnessing Indigenous Knowledge for Policy Research

There is a great potential for indigenous knowledge to inform policy research and development in various areas, including education, technology, health, environment, and justice systems. Indigenous knowledge can be integrated into policymaking processes to promote alternative epistemologies that take into account the needs and interests of the majority of Africans. For example, indigenous knowledge about ecosystems and the environment can guide the development of climate change adaptation policies in Africa. Traditional justice systems can be used as a reference for developing more efficient and equitable judicial systems in Africa. Overall, harnessing indigenous knowledge is a way to ensure that policies serve the people and are informed by their lived experiences.

Regional Intellectual Cooperation and Partnerships

Regional intellectual cooperation and partnerships among African scholars and institutions can promote the continent's research and scholarly output and help it achieve intellectual independence from external dominance. Regional engagement can also help African scholars and institutions build on their strengths and complement each other's weaknesses and promote multidisciplinary research to conduct innovative studies about Africa and its place in the world. African universities, research institutes, and policymakers can engage in dialogues with regional

economic communities and the African Union to cooperate in research and publications about Africa. By engaging in regional cooperation, African scholars would be able to leverage their collective power and achieve continental intellectual independence from neo-colonial domination. Such regional engagement would also promote Pan-Africanism and internationalism.

Rethinking Governance to Advance African Intellectual and Institutional Development

Rethinking governance to advance African intellectual and institutional development means building a knowledge-based system rooted in African philosophies and worldviews to guide policy design, implementation, and evaluation. It implies using alternative conceptual frameworks, such as Ubuntu-essentialist (African) philosophy, to rethink global governance problems, including those related to poverty, inequality, environmental sustainability, peacebuilding, and security. Rethinking governance would be guided by the African philosophical principles of collectivism, human solidarity, and reciprocity, which are manifested in communal living and social responsibility in various African societies. The main advantage of rethinking governance is that it provides new theoretical frameworks to rethink Africa's governance in original ways that take into account Africa's historical perspective and contextual nuances. Such an approach can help Africa overcome the theoretical conceptualizations of global governance that were developed from the perspective of Western or Eurocentric worldviews.

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