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Rethinking Power and Reciprocity in the "Field"

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Introduction

Calls for decolonisation are on the rise everywhere, including in migration studies (see Achiume, 2019; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020; Teye, 2021; Vanyoro, 2019; Vanyoro et al., 2019). Criticisms of "fieldwork" with migrants as a vulnerable group are part of an ongoing and broader discussion focused on migration studies' extractive character. This chapter explores how the distinction(s) implied by the term "fieldwork" gives rise to false and misleading dichotomies that are not so useful to any decolonial migration praxis that tries to undo the bureaucratic damage of hegemonic ideas about research ethics. It argues that the dichotomies of "home" and the "field" conjured by this term negate an intermediate space between these two extremes in which social relationships, kinship ties and social value define the possible extent of the risk of migration research to further marginalise or protect migrants. These opposing possibilities arise from the interaction of these social attributes to the extent that they mediate a definition of ethical responsibility that is meaningful in particular contexts. This lends, in turn, a novel meaning to power and reciprocity that necessitates a paradigm shift in the kinds of ethics procedures as well as considerations in partnerships on migration studies that presume that power relationships are evened out when the research is undertaken by

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African researchers working in African academic institutions. This chapter reveals that even well-meaning articulations of what characterises an extractive or unethical relationship with participants are often ominous to local meanings of social relationships, kinship ties and social value in African contexts. Without the necessary critical attention, it concludes, there is a real risk that such norms go unquestioned and contribute to the ongoing bureaucratic damage of hegemonic ideas about ethics so widely accepted in African as in other academic institutions.

The first section of this chapter problematises the "field" as the site from which data is extracted. It is suggested that the conception of migrants in "fieldwork" gives rise to a problematic ethics that is focused on certain definitions of power and reciprocity that is important to include in discussions about decolonising migration studies. The chapter then broadly discusses the term "decolonisation" as a concept that scholars use to capture the ways in which power is appropriated and negotiated in migration studies—or avoided altogether. In the third section, the chapter moves on to describe the ways in which the intermediate space between "home" and the "field" is often overlooked in trying to counterbalance power relationships between researchers and migrants. This allows the chapter to begin discussing the implications of this tension on ethical responsibility and ultimately what an ethics of reciprocity could look like. The chapter here relies on representation and Ubuntu as two key concepts that could be used to inform this ethics. This part of the chapter shows that the increase in focus on decolonising migration studies as a function primarily of North–South power relations has contributed to the neglect of social value in African communities and has contributed to the continuation of uneven relationships between indigenous researchers and migrant research participants. It has also peddled the myth that decolonisation in migration studies can be achieved by balancing power relations between North and South academic institutions through, for example, investing more financial resources in those in Africa. In the fourth section, the chapter provides examples of ethical responsibilities that are shaped by the intermediate space based upon typical experiences of the local "indigenous" researcher. While these may be related to many issues, in this chapter, those identified include the value of revealing identities of non-state actors abusing power, for the "greater good" and looking to the welfare of community members. The chapter concludes by providing suggestions about ways forward and how to do things differently.

Problematising the "Field"

The concept of "fieldwork" in social science research is synonymous with distinction. It is a separation between two zones: one of writing and teaching in one's own university and another of collecting data somewhere else, a place perceived as aloof, remote, and far removed. Putatively, it is like a piece of land to be tilled. In this sense, the field is a place of cultivating well thought through ideas, theories and methods as well as new social relationships with research participants for the germination of new knowledge. This new knowledge is "doubly mediated" in the sense that it is "shaped by the ideas and preconceptions of both ethnographer and informants" (van Beek, 1991, 139). Tantamount to this distinction is the original idea of mystery, expedition and discovery of the "ethnoscape"; that those who are going to the field are removing themselves from their homes to enter new and unexplored lands where they will interact with marginal societies, cultures and human beings. Fieldwork here also implies a separation between two identities: that of the field worker and that of the "other", who is in this case the migrant.

Within North–South relationships, the enterprise of fieldwork often sets Africa up as a foil to Europe as expressed so vividly in Conrad's (2015) *Heart of Darkness.* As with the very study of Africa, this is a text that represents "a kind of original sin in view of the objective role it played in the history of colonisation" (Hountondji, 2009, 126). Like all sorts of paradigmatic oppositions, there is nothing unique or ahistorical about the notion of "fieldwork" and its internment to a "dichotomising system" (Mudimbe, 1988) such as the one expressed in the home/field nexus. Fieldwork as a construct conjures the influences of what Mudimbe (1988) has called a "colonising structure"; a carefully crafted machine meant to "save the other" by "harvesting" knowledge about the "other's" way of life.

In Mudimbe's (1988) writing, a colonising structure is characterised primarily by the following attributes: (1) domination of physical space; (2) reformation of the natives' minds; and (3) integration of local economic histories into the Western perspective. Hence, the first way the "harvest" of data through fieldwork contributes to colonial power relations is that leaving "home" to enter the "field" symbolises the first step towards dominating a physical space, which allows researchers to learn about the "native" enough to know what needs to be reformed about them to get to the point where gathered local histories can eventually be integrated into a Western epistemology. This ultimate "harvest" is then culpable in the production of a body of knowledge as a means of exploiting colonies. It has contributed to what Mudimbe (1988) understands as a technique for "implementing structural

distortions" that could aid underdevelopment in the colonies by transfer of surpluses and ensuring that colonies do not have structural autonomy to sustain their economies. Walter Rodney gives plenty of credible evidence to show that colonialism primarily aimed at developing metropoles and only gave the colonies a few scraps as accidental byproducts of exploitation (see Rodney, 2018).

The second way the ultimate "harvest" from fieldwork has contributed to inequality is through the language of characterising the "field"; broadly understood as categories. These representations tend to be shaped by anthropological discourses and indices of beings and societies that superimpose what can be called African or "oriental" characteristics, particularly through contrasts between black and white. These comparisons tell a story that likely replicates silent but potent epistemic arrangements (Mudimbe, 1988). This confirms that each paradigm reflects an assumption of the world which in turn implicates the very systems that produce epistemological stances. Such representations have become institutionalised through disciplines like migration studies that categorise migrants and refugees as vulnerable and marginalised groups. This amounts to an epistemological ordering which takes place by looking at signs in terms of arrangement of identities and differences as they would appear in ordered tables.

Definitions of those deemed vulnerable often signify figures of "a shortcoming, an impending failure" (Cole, 2016, 264). For example, vulnerable persons are defined by the University of the Witwatersrand's Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical) (2022, 2–3) as people with:

> a lack of capacity or impaired ability to provide voluntary informed consent; health status; social pressures that may impact on the ability to make a free and informed decision; an inability to protect one's interest in research. Vulnerability may be considered a dynamic and specific to a particular context, and may arise as a result of power asymmetries between participants and researchers/institutions. There may be layers of vulnerability that function and interact with a person's circumstances. Being vulnerable does not necessarily imply that harm or exploitation will occur, but it does increase the risk of harm or exploitation through research.

According to this document, migrants are considered vulnerable because they are dependent on the state to maintain a legal status as documented migrants, asylum seekers or documented refugees. They can also be characterised as "individuals at increased risks" because they could be criminalised by the state as undocumented migrants.

Decolonisation and Power in Migration Studies

The colonisation of Africa is where one always starts when beginning to think about the problem with social sciences in relation to power and reciprocity; and migration studies is rightly situated in this context. To look at migration studies outside the colonial context is to overlook significant developments that relate to the establishment of a Northern-centric social science view of the world that comes from interpreting the experience of "others" in the zone of being (Grosfoguel et al., 2015). This bias can be traced back to the very foundations of a field that originated in North America and Europe, to the extent that academic and policy studies of and responses to migration have been dominated by scholarship produced in the Northern Hemisphere (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020, also this volume). Forced migration studies have been implicated in contributing to the legitimisation of the containment of refugees from the Global South outside of the Global North in "the new global apartheid' (see Mayblin, 2017, 31–32).

The obvious hegemony of particular discursive frames of reference in the field of migration studies have necessitated a paradigm shift in thinking through epistemological and conceptual considerations. Therefore, migration studies is now increasingly interested in decolonial perspectives. Briefly defined, "decolonisation" is "the process which signifies the end of rule by a foreign power and the recuperation and/or formation of an 'independent' entity, usually a nation-state, through a process often referred to as a 'transfer of power'" (Gopal, 2021, 881). There are, however, more explicit and specific calls to decolonise migration studies that have called for approaches that decentre the Global North (see Achiume, 2019; Daley, 2021; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018; Vanyoro, 2019). And there are others that call to recentre the Global South, while not explicitly framing their work as decolonial or positioning it within the colonial experience or other postcolonial frameworks. These scholars rely more on poststructuralist ethics and calls for shifting power asymmetries in research partnerships (see Jacobsen & Landau, 2003; Landau, 2019; McGrath & Young, 2019). This work is also subsumed in the "reflexive turn" as the field has taken seriously the politics and ethics of the knowledge-producing process involving vulnerable groups (see Amelina, 2021; Dahinden, 2016; Nail, 2015) This is done by using participatory methods, for example, to counter-act top-down methodological approaches that have dominated the field (see Oliveira & Vearey, 2015).

The central concern for everyone here appears to be with the question "where does power lie"? What we do not see much of in these reflexive debates is engagement with the layers of coloniality that emerge from the

perspective of the "indigenous researchers" identity when doing what has come to be accepted as "fieldwork". There appears to be a liberal humanitarian preoccupation with an ethics that can level the power imbalances between white European researchers and Black African migrants in research. Yet, colonial-esque identity politics have been a crucible for relationships between indigenous researchers and research participants in the field of social science since colonial times and the beginning of fieldwork in Africa. Equally, this relationship cannot be separated from the power imbalances between white European researchers and Black African migrants in research because in certain instances it is what has necessitated the involvement of "indigenous researchers". I draw on Jean-Hervé Jezequel's (2010) work as an example here. The author finds that colonial scholarly research in Black Africa made use of local informants as the administrator-ethnographers, believing that Africans were useful in terms of the collection of raw data when faced with the need to collect data for compiling ethnographic and historical records. With time, African authors mastered their own art to write and undertake ethnography to advance interests related to their own academic careers. While they could have chosen other modes of self-expression like literary studies, they did not waste time in choosing ethnography. Some colonialists appreciated these talents acting as "protectors" to allow them to publish and carry out surveys, while others were bent on stifling them. Hence the marginalisation was more predominant, and they entered research in subordinate positions. Still, in these different positions, some Africans took positions that challenged white studies, while others reinforced them.

This suggests the need to be careful about reducing the idea of "coloniality" to North–South relations, or those between Africa and Europe, when thinking about power. Not everything that is imbued within the South–South context represents decolonial possibilities and relationships. Recentring South–South migration in research and debates is thus not panacea in and of itself. It is also not in participatory or any other revolutionary methods that there lies hope to find the true meaning of decolonisation. Instead, there is a need to look elsewhere for possibilities for decolonisation in other fundamental issues that are yet to be interrogated in migration studies, even if it is now increasingly interested in decolonial perspectives. It also suggests that it is important to turn our attention towards questioning the normativity of the kinds of ethics procedures as well as considerations in migration studies undertaken by African researchers working in African academic institutions.

Tensions Between Academic and Social Meanings of Ethical Reciprocity

Ethics is about protecting participants and researchers from risks and harm. Some ethics concepts include but are not limited to anonymity; confidentiality; risks; harm; vulnerability and reciprocity. Some academic institutions on the African continent that observe ethical approaches tend to be very procedural. In trying to counterbalance power relationships between researchers and migrants, this approach determines that there is a strict separation between "home" and the "field", which risks missing the grey areas that lie in between the two. Ethics review boards of such universities may draw a rigid line between these two components, requiring postgraduate students that are planning to do their non-medical fieldwork involving human participants to emphasise, among many things African scholars would have come to expect, that participants may not receive any direct benefit from participating in their study. In trying to realise this balancing act, they must find other ways to provide some kind of indirect benefits. For example, instead of paying people for participating in their research study, they could emphasise the value of their study's contribution to knowledge and/or improved policies. At best, participants may receive some travel costs to take part in the interview capped at a certain level, although this is likely to be different across the many African academic institutions of higher learning. What is consistent though is that the sphere of economic exchange is important in formulating ethical ways to try and not "contaminate" the integrity of the research process when engaging people with direct economic needs.

Few fundamental questions are asked about the historical and geographic contexts that have given rise to this solution. The economic sphere appears to be the primary descriptor of value, which defines and sets boundaries for the kinds of reciprocity researchers should be looking to determine or avoid at the end of their research. But what understandings of the meaning of value and reciprocity underpin such understandings of what could constitute a problematic transaction in social science research? Does the epistemology that gives rise to this understanding do justice to the lived experiences of African researchers? These questions can help in probing the fact that there remain penalties for African scholars who would appear to be looking out only for themselves by "flaunting" their privilege when they arrive at research sites in flashy hired cars and retiring to lush hotel rooms. It is clear that for people who are working on their own communities, this matters more because it places certain expectations about how they should act in these situations as ethical researchers who are socially responsible. Trust building starts from the

place that one should not be insensitive to the circumstances of others as people who know what it is like. It would follow that a different kind of responsibility regime arises that ethics boards need to be fully aware of when they place economic integers to what can be reasonably exchanged during research.

Kalinga (2019, 270) observes that indigenous researchers have "an additional obligation to respect social customs and codes", which are not easily visible to foreign research partners and are responsible for receiving and interpreting these codes. Given the nature of the current ethics boards in place, the dilemma for African scholars is that choosing to reset the process, build trust and address the sources of such discontent is also tantamount to "career suicide" (see Kalinga, 2019 for a more detailed analysis). The "indigenous researcher" thus finds him or herself negotiating their place within a context where colonialism usurped social value, which stripped the social sphere of its moral value and in the process its potential to be a consideration in the balancing out of unequal power relationships. For example, in an African context, the term community is inclusive of all life (bios): animals, the habitat (the land), flora and even the elements. The success of life is found in the ability to maintain a healthy relationship with all (Setiloane, 1998, 79) and not only in economic terms. This broader conception of harmony as a communal outcome and of what value looks like has implications on how we define value in research, leading to conceptions of ethical responsibility that produce an ethics of reciprocity centred on the economic exchange of goods.

Framing an Ethics of Responsibility in African Society

Having discussed the meaning of responsibility from the perspective of ethical reciprocity, this chapter now turns to a discussion of some conceptual ways to frame an ethics of responsibility in Africa that is attentive to social value as a possible source of balancing out of unequal power relationships between researchers and participants in migration studies. First, this section discusses the importance of understanding the concept of representation as it tells us how responsibility differs according to researchers' positionality. Second, it presents Ubuntu as a key concept that could be used to inform an ethics of responsibility that respects social value in ways that are meaningful for migrant communities and researchers.

Who is Responsible for Representing What?

Representation answers to how responsibility differs according to researchers' positionality. African researchers, in particular, have the difficult responsibility of retaining quite real truths about African communities that have been rendered problematic by the colonial manipulation of the culture, socialisation institutions, beliefs, economies and ways of living without also turning these representations into fetishes that reinforce racist stereotypes about the continent. This suggests that it is not enough to expect African researchers to be the ones sensitive to the question of social value, as in fact their position is tenuous to the degree that it may produce outcomes that further unequal relationships with participants.

This tenuous position results from two issues of concern to a conversation about ethics. The first one is that there arises for African researchers tasked with doing research about Africans, a tension between positioning Africa's specific characteristics as a product of history, and the historical distortions informed by its fetishisation in "African studies". As Magubane (1971, 419) writes, colonialism imposed the urban order on the "conquered indigenous societies" of Zambia, Rhodesia, Kenya and South Africa; one involving "patterns of social organisation, economy, administration, religion and culture". Africans today are rightly frustrated by images of Africa as a backward place; "predominantly represented by nature—lush savannah with beautiful animals, stunning deserts and waterfalls" (Obbo, 2006, 155). African bodies are depicted as either "dancing or starving" (Obbo, 2006, 155), walking from huts and so forth, residing in Wainaina's (2005) "Safari", "Tribal", "Timeless" continent. Certainly, some of this imagery captures a certain albeit sad reality about Africa that speaks to its own rurality, attendant economies that are largely subsistent and problems of poverty created by colonialism. Even as urbanisation has become a dominant trope in media and scholarly representations of Africa, Obbo (2006) admits that in the five African cities she visited and took photos of multistorey buildings, it was equally difficult to avoid images of street children, beggars and hawkers. If this is the case by the admission of "Africanists" themselves, what is the ethical problem with popular Western representations of this kind? My argument here is that it is the emphasis on using this imagery as a template or setting for any text on human suffering, war or strife juxtaposed to the impending benevolence of the West to save African people that cajoles racist ideas that these problems are unique to Africa alone.

This spectacle compels some "Africanists" to try to present corrective representations that can place Africa in "modernity", with its tall buildings, trains,

banks, and all you could think (Obbo, 2006). Africans are said to have also entered "modernity" by becoming "a 'middle class' imbued with 'Western' values" (Obbo, 2006, 156). Their dilemma is also that it is difficult to cherish this discourse or sing the praises of "modernity" without sounding like they are demonising African heritage, tradition, infrastructure and knowledge. Yet it has become a characteristic of postcolonial African political societies that there are dual forms of governance, traditional residing alongside governments; albeit the former is more symbolic. In this society, "African and 'Western' culture are bound together in the closest co-dependence and co-recognition" (Magubane, 1971, 423). So, to some extent, it may also be that Africanists criticised for overly celebrating modernity are not necessarily aspiring to a European way of life but rather only expressing "a desire to escape from the sad condition colonialism imposed on them" (Magubane, 1971, 421). In this sad escapism, the modernisation paradigm became a sphere for Africa's "big men" to flaunt their achievements, while still expecting to return home to servile wives (Obbo, 2006). There is a danger thus that celebrating African modernity can thus easily be met with a rejection of images of "peasants" to the degree that "detribalization" or Westernisation (the "success story" of colonial education) is overly romanticised and governance issues related to colonialism are glossed over. As Obbo (2006, 158) concludes, the results can be Africans who are "unable to face sitting on mats, entering smoke-filled kitchens or hoeing for hours in the sun".

The second issue that arises that is of concern to ethics when it comes to representation is that the assumption arises that by virtue of being "insiders" to a particular group "we" either can speak for "them", or "we" know everything there to know about "them". The "field" of ethnographic inquiry is not simply a geographic place waiting to be entered, but rather a conceptual space whose boundaries are constantly negotiated and constructed by the ethnographer and members (Fitzgerald, 2006). The notion of insider–outsider is therefore intricate to social scientists carrying out ethnographic research and entering the "field". The line between what constitutes the "inside" or "outside" in ethnographic research is often fine and blurred (Zaman, 2018). It is here that studying Africa also requires more than being an African as it raises the possibility that some "Africanists" may begin to see themselves as "the proper representatives of Africa to the outside world and their voices as the authentic conduits of social and cultural truth" (Obbo, 2006, 158). This can turn dangerous to the extent that for some fieldwork to collect empirical evidence comes to be a "waste of time" in attending to "villagers" who have "no theories, let alone the luxury of philosophical thinking" (Obbo, 2006, 158). In this regard, the insider–outsider position reveals

certain damning truths about itself that make it even dangerous to the welfare and representation of participants.

These two problems of representation are related because they point to the different agendas and interests at the heart of the question of responsibility, such that it is not enough to be African to do ethical research. Rather than identity, ideally, the question of responsibility should concern itself with why researchers ask the questions they ask. In other words, why is a researcher asking about, say for example, huts? How do they perceive them and what do they assume them to represent? Because while there are real demographic issues concerning the inequality and poverty that is indeed prevalent on the continent, it cannot be acceptable that an image of the hut essentially comes to signify or index these characteristics. This is a problematic byproduct of colonialism's redefinition of the utility of the value of African social spaces like "traditional" households that rendered it deplorable to talk about huts in any "productive" conversation about economic development. As Magubane (1971, 420) adumbrates, "the possibility of political action by Africans to change the status quo has been denied implicitly by the way in which social change has been conceptualised". This means that there needs to be a deeper attention to the question informing the writing and the discourse, opinion or interest it is trying to satisfy. This exercise takes us to a place of reflecting on the different kinds of "responsibility regimes" researchers come with when they are doing research in the "field". Hence, ethics is not only about balancing North–South power relations but also about engaging the different modes of perception that are informing the social expectations about the researcher in the community and what they signify to wield differential responsibilities to identity types.

Ubuntu: A Currency for Responsibility

An understanding of the idea and social value of African community can play a central role in informing the ways researchers pose questions and the kinds of questions they ask. Community in African society, unlike Western conceptions, ties African people's well-being to that of the entire community, which is the basis of Ubuntu. This raises fundamental ontological differences between African and Western being since an African "is not just an individual person, but one born into a community whose survival and purpose is linked with that of others. Thus, the human person is first a member of a clan, a kindred or a community" (Anthony, 2013, 550–551). If Africans are to be guided by Ubuntu, they follow here "a multidimensional concept that represents the core value of African ontology's—such as respect for human

beings, for human dignity and human life, collective sharedness, obedience, humility, solidarity, caring, hospitality, interdependence, and communalism" (Hailey, 2008, 5).

This is not to say that these are all values that are not recognised in the West; however, they are not emphasised to the same extent (Hailey, 2008, 5). Instead of "I think therefore I am" Ubuntu says, "I am human because I belong"; or "I am because we are", which suggests that one becomes a human being only in a fellowship with the life of others (Nel, 2008). In other words, there is a sense of community in which all the inhabitants of the cosmic order exist for each other, which suggests that no being exists for itself, but exists because others exist (Anthony, 2013). If knowledge occurs in a human context, the purpose of its creation, dissemination, and application is for the collective well-being of these humans (Martin, 2008, 962). It is not for self-aggrandisement, promotion, career advancement, good university or peer standing or feeling good about oneself. This may very well place a specific kind of responsibility on the local or so-called indigenous researchers who are expected to be a conduit of decentring migration studies yet constrained to operate according to ethics regimes conceptualised in Western knowledge systems that are more attuned to ideas of modernity, economic development and progress while seeing little value in the African social sphere.

Typical Experiences of "Indigenous Researchers" Doing Migration Fieldwork

Researchers who do not neatly fit typologies of "home" and "field" implied by the putative construct of "fieldwork", carry identities that do not make it easy for them to escape the communal obligations related to the well-being of the collective. Examples of such identities may include non-nationals conducting research on their own displaced or migrant co-nationals. These are individuals who may be doing their own research or, as is often the case, research assistants collecting data on behalf of tenured academics based in European institutions. This follows the nineteenth-century model where the emergence of the division of scholarly labour took place in West Africa based on "a network of local assistants, comprising both European administrators and indigenous public servants, who did data collection, while scholars and senior administrative officials could devote their time to producing books and articles" (Jezequel, 2010, 147). These responsibilities may be related to many

issues but, in this chapter, those identified include the value of revealing identities of non-state actors abusing power, for the "greater good" and looking to the welfare of community members.

The Politics of Revealing Identities

The language of anonymity is perhaps one of the most unquestioned and unqualified aspect of ethics in the "field". Research does not always have to be anonymous as there is also room for researchers to discuss the risks associated with people's participation and how to mitigate these risks. In fact, some are happy to be identified for different reasons. However, there are instances when participants do not want to be identified by their real names and the office they hold, or even those who take issue also with the naming of the organisations they work for as it raises the possibility of them being identified by colleagues. What should be considered ethical when the community affected by the actions of such participants deems it important to expose them to the realisation of social justice? What becomes the role of the researcher and whose interests should they prioritise for their work to be considered ethical?

The conventional answer would be to consider that action which protects the welfare of the research participant in question. While such key informants do not fall under vulnerable groups (unless maybe they are a community representative), their welfare is considered under the principle of harm as they could suffer some loss of income as an outcome of their participation and divulging sensitive information. It is difficult to separate this status quo from one of the firebrands of colonialism: the distinction between public life and private life. This distinction, situated in the notion of the neo-liberal state, seeks mainly to create a dichotomy; one between the state and the non-state. Those imagined to be in power in this separation are state actors, while non-state actors are easily portrayed as benevolent and neutral, incapable of inflicting harm on others. In fact, theirs is a humanitarian mandate to save, protect and rescue. This imagination has captured the minds of many to the extent that few in ethics boards would take issue with an expose of political leaders that hold public office. Researchers might therefore write about public officials like Ministers when they endanger the lives of migrants, without a care for the risks associated with the lack of anonymity for their livelihoods. Yet, the moment one states that they intend to interview people working in NGOs or any other private office, the question arises how the researcher will ensure that they protect the identities of these actors and respective organisations. There appears here to be a reluctance to engage the decades

of critique and literature on humanitarianism that clearly shows their alignment, in certain instances, with government power or "governmentality". The colonial dichotomising system between public and private/civil life has clearly led many into using ethics that accepts these distinctions by perceiving the humanitarian sphere as existing and functioning in opposition to the state.

What is sequestered in this approach is that sometimes naming plays a key part in addressing power relations between the community and non-state actors. This is the case in instances where donor money is being stolen, or humanitarian modes of categorisation are creating unethical triage regimes that perpetuate inequality and social vulnerability. These should not be reduced to "personal stories" or "intimate complaints", as Kilomba (2010) would call them, but represent serious accounts of discrimination. The ability to name represents an escape from the "brutal mask of speechlessness" which is meant to silence and elicit fear (Kilomba, 2010). Such truths could include those raised by Thomson (unpublished) who writes that, although services are supposed to be provided without charge in the camp, you cannot receive them without paying a bribe, including no resettlement or transfers for medical procedures. Refugees in her ethnographic study in Nyarugusu camp also complain that they want more access to communication with and input into management decisions. Vanyoro's (2022) ethnographic research documents the role of humanitarian actors in the waiting of Zimbabwean migrant men at a transit shelter located at the Zimbabwe–South Africa border.

There is insufficient space for such stories and experiences in considering what should be considered anonymous within ethical reason that serves the interests of migrants and refugees. "Indigenous" researchers who often return to these communities have to ask themselves or answer questions about what they have done since completing their research to expose non-state actors who abuse their authority in the public realm. This tension attests how the removed and dichotomous concept of fieldwork that does not allow sensitivity to the lives and careers of those who inhabit both "home" and "field" simultaneously has led to an unsustainable ethics that does not protect the communities they purport to represent.

Looking Out for the Welfare of Community Members

An adinkra symbol among the Akan, *funtummireku,* depicts two crocodiles sharing a common stomach accompanied by a proverb stating that the crocodiles struggle for food that goes into the same stomach (Martin, 2008). In this kind of African community, mutual aid and support through things like gifting and assisting are not only a question of economic value; they hold

a moral one too. Transgressing this norm may attract ostracisation, funny looks and even worse "social death" among one's kin.

This said, it is very problematic for a researcher to simply set up interviews with struggling people and leave the rest to chance or natural unfolding. Owing to the material disjuncture that divides researchers and participants, it is unethical to simply go about conducting interviews with hungry migrants. One identifies and draws their humanity and even fullness from the relational exchange that comes from acting on this inequality, and if one does not display Ubuntu, they are not sufficiently *muntu* (a human being).

Hegemonic academic ethics lead us to think that anything that entails giving to help out in this situation is compromising. Researchers have conducted research with budgets that do not account for these incidents. Traditional conceptualisations of research emphasise that you cannot compensate participants even for their time as it compromises objectivity. This is a defence to some traces of colonial fieldwork practices that have been documented, such as ones where informants were paid and gained "not only prestige from close association with the white man but also a sizeable income in the slack season" (van Beek, 1991, 154). In this instance, it can be said that "the chance to control the information flow balanced the scales of power" (van Beek, 1991, 154). In reflecting on this limitation and possible social costs, "indigenous researchers" may end up adapting by using their own money to buy some groceries for the communities when they can. This is a cost that does not do justice and is not well suited to the intimate encounters they have as embedded kinds of fieldworkers.

Acting Differently

Reciprocity and power are imperative to achieving ethical research and protecting migrant research participants. The increase in calls for decolonisation has contributed to the increase in awareness and sensitivity to the dangers and risks uneven power relations between the Global North and South present to the further marginalisation of African migrants. With the growth of these calls, more and more conversations are skewed towards economic considerations. This chapter has shown that the increase in this kind of focus has contributed to the neglect of social value in African communities and has contributed to the continuation of uneven relationships between indigenous researchers and migrant research participants. It has also peddled the myth that decolonisation in migration studies can be achieved by balancing power relations between North and South academic institutions, through say,

investing more financial resources in African ones. This neglects two important issues highlighted in this chapter. First is how African researchers' who receive these resources have to navigate their insider–outsider position as it reveals certain damning truths that make their involvement dangerous to the welfare and representation of participants. Second, indigenous researchers are expected to be a conduit of decentring migration studies yet constrained to operate according to ethics regimes conceptualised in Western knowledge systems that come with their own conceptions about modernity, economic development and progress, which see little value in Africa's social sphere.

These dilemmas are more visible because ethics boards are continuing to emphasise definitions of responsibility that create tensions for researchers who do not neatly fit typologies of "home" and "field" implied by the putative construct of "fieldwork", and these researchers are continuing to find ways to combat the social costs of their work. This chapter suggests the need for a questioning as well as transformation of the influences that colonialism and colonial ethnography have on our conception of "ethics" in situations that demand reciprocity, or the coloniality of migration studies will surely continue. More research is needed to understand beyond the power imbalances between white European researchers and Black African migrants in research. This could also help challenge the homogenous and hegemonic narrative of colonialism in migration studies to focus on particular projects and work cultures. This optic can help us to think through the role and place of African scholars themselves in using academia as a vehicle to get what they want, unveiling other hidden forms of power.

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