The university and public policy in Africa:

may tomorrow be more than just another name for today

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In this article the authors deliver a scathing criticism of white and western means of knowledge production typical of our universities and argue for a process of decolonisation that is simultaneously theoretical and political to face up to the asymmetrical power relations in the global scholarly community.

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary academics, researchers and scholars continue churning out 'increasingly precise answers to increasingly irrelevant questions' (Del Rosso, 2014). These 'answers' are of 'declining practical relevance to policy makers', particularly in an 'age of global protest' (World Politics Review, 2021). 'Translating information into knowledge', Carlos Fuentes, the Mexican novelist, wrote is 'one of the greatest challenges facing modern society and contemporary civilisation' (cited in Gregorian, 1996: 598). Rest assured the poor can do without 'armchair erudition, dead knowledge, and the peddling of petty antiquities' (Nietzsche, 2000, in Reinert & Reinert, 2006: 59). 'Science, and above all the social sciences', said Friedrich Nietzsche, the German philosopher (2000), 'should serve life' (Ibid). How then to serve life in our troubled times when despair is 'convincing' and hope in desperately short supply (inverting Williams 1989, in Macduff, 2017).

DECOLONISATION AND THE POVERTY OF THEORY

It was Africa Day, 18 May 2018, at the University of Western Cape, home of iconic liberation struggle thinkers. Students and faculty waited patiently in the large, packed lecture theatre for the keynote speaker, the 'white African' intellectual, Ben Turok. The fierce and fearless champion of the poor seethed with anger, full of contempt for those 'mystifying' decolonisation to 'some obscure psychological distortion'.

> I told you that I am a white African. I have no identity crisis at all. I know what I am. I know what I have done. I know what I stand for. I apologise for nothing at all. I know my identity [applause], and I am not going to get into debates about my identity. I know who I am. I understand if some people want to raise questions about their role in society but let us not say that that is more important than understanding the legacy of internal colonialism as a system (Turok, 2021).

Another African intellectual giant, the late Thandika Mkandawire (2005: 38), says arguments about 'Africa's recent past and current dependence' having 'anything to do with the present conditions' is usually met with the 'kind of eye-rolling impatience with which committed postmodernists treat people who still fail to understand that history has come to an end and so has struggle' against the unholy trinity of ignorance, poverty and disease.

Delivered to the continent by the 'African diaspora and South African (mostly white) scholars' (Ibid: 45),

postmodernism, writes Mkandawire (2009), has 'both its feet firmly off the ground, aloof, cynical and patronising' (131). Nigerian academic, Denis Ekpo (2003: 126), berates the 'celebrated *postmodern condition*' (added emphasis) as 'nothing but the hypocritical self-flattering cry of overfed and spoilt children of hypercapitalism'. 'So, what has hungry Africa got to do with the post-material disgust of the bored and the overfed' (Ibid.)? Ato Quayson, the Ghanaian literary critic asks (2000):

> What, for instance, is the use of discursive analysis of the language of the IMF's [International Monetary Fund's] economic recovery packages when this does not address the terrible economic and social disjunctures produced in developing countries by the application of IMF policies and those of other international monetary agencies? (cited in Mkandawire, 2005: 41).

Sadly, even those scholars and researchers in Africa and the diaspora who do not 'occlude' political economy (Mkandawire 2009:131) and realpolitik are equally unsure about theory to best serve life, especially the poor (Oloruntoba & Falola 2020). Advocating self-determination, self-reliance, pride and oneness of the human race, those of the *Pan African condition*, in particular, Thabo Mbeki's African Renaissance, 'seemingly lifted straight out of Black Consciousness ideology' (Gevisser, 2009: 210), is 'steeped in western dependency' (Beckles, 2020: 66). With foreign direct investment and western financial assistance as the 'only option available' to the continent's poor and hungry, Mbeki's renaissance is a 'general reformulation of the World Bank's strategy for Africa' (Ibid.). World Bank strategies in Africa have resulted in excessive downsizing of the state; institutional mono-cropping and mono-tasking (Mkandawire, 2009); and the neglect of infrastructure and tertiary education (Mkandawire, 2014).

SCIENCE, MAKING DIFFERENTLY AND STORIES

Politicians, officials, academics and researchers in Africa encounter public policy texts, theories and curriculums that are blind, deaf and dumb to 'their own history, lived experiences – and their dreams' with 'little exposure to their own continent and all its complexity' (Heleta, 2016). When Africa appears and is taught in higher education curriculums, it 'confirms student prejudices' implanted by 'Bantu education' of a dark, negative and different continent 'north of the Limpopo', with 'no intelligentsia with writings worth reading' (Mamdani, 1998: 71).

Embedded in the 19th century white-washing/'Aryanisation' of history, the erasure and falsification of *The Contribution of Non-Europeans to World Civilisation* (willful) is aggravated by the willful ignorance of academics of the complicity of 'scientific' research in the worst excesses of colonialism and Empire (Smith, 2012).

J. Marion Sims, the father of modern gynaecology, gained infamy by conducting 'experimental' surgeries on enslaved women, sometimes several times without anaesthetic, 'not painful enough to justify the trouble', he said in 1857 (Holland, 2018). In 1876, Sims was appointed President of the American Medical Association for his 'pioneering tools and surgical techniques in women's reproductive health' (Ibid.).

In 1923, the United States of America's Public Health Service, with the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, tracked the natural progression of untreated syphilis. Six hundred poor, illiterate, male sharecroppers were recruited, 400 previously infected with syphilis. 'Subjects' were told they were receiving free healthcare, meals and burial insurance in exchange for participating in the 'Experiment'. Penicillin – an effective cure for syphilis in 1947 – was not administered and the study continued until 1972. Victims of the Tuskegee Experiment included wives of subjects and children born with congenital syphilis (Nix, 2020). In 1997, President Bill Clinton formally apologised to the families and those who died excruciatingly painful deaths in the 'worst biomedical science' experiment in USA history.

In April 2021, the University of Pennsylvania and Princeton University issued apologies for using bones of an African American child, killed by Philadelphia police in 1985, in their 'forensic anthropology' classes (Pilkington, 2021). Earlier in the month, the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology apologised for holding more than 1 000 'stolen skulls' of enslaved people in their Morton Collection (Renschler & Monge, 2008). The anatomy professor, Samuel Morton, a 19th century white supremacist, amassed the collection upon ordering his slaves to desecrate the unmarked graves of other slaves, pulling and pillaging skulls and bones. A slave in life and in the *afterlife*, courtesy of Ivy League universities! Our society and educators best not forget that the 'graveyard talks back' (apologies to Roy, 2020).

The dominance of western science and the western cultural archive, 'whiteness' in mainstream knowledge and thought – even in hip and trendy transdisciplinarity (Le Grange, 2017) – is 'identical to the idea of white supremacy' (Baird, 2021). Predating the word 'racism' in English language by 80 years, 'white superiority' rationalised and justified slavery and the slave trade, the annihilation of indigenous people (Indians) in North America, the Belgian atrocities and genocide in the Congo, the colonisation of Africa and south-east Asia, the deployment of the Final ››

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Solution in Nazi Germany, the apartheid state in South Africa and the rising neo-fascism and religious nationalism the world over (Ibid.).

Whiteness, trans-euphoria and the university corporate does not encourage and support (unprofitable) scholarly study scrutinising the colonial underpinnings of 'science', development research and practice – all which sustain the 'unjust post-colonial order' (Nwajiaku-Dahou & Himmelstine, 2020: 5). Devastated by historical underinvestment, structural adjustment and austerity and increasing demand, African universities are sealing Faustian pacts with donors and grant-makers and obsess to be the 'best-in-the-always-right-white-west' (university ranking charts). Collectively, this undermines and trumps the necessary epistemic disobedience and intellectual trespass to passage to less unjust post-colonial orders.

The late anthropologist, anarchist academic and 'house theorist of Occupy Wall Street', David Graeber (2015: 29), reminds us that 'the ultimate, hidden truth of the world is that it is something that we make and can just as easily make differently'. Making differently — questioning, debating, asserting and contributing — is an arduous and dangerous undertaking comprising dislodging the single story, the only story of Africa inhabited by beasts with no heads and houses, and spores of the demon ('half devil, half child' according to the poet Rudyard Kipling, cited in Adichie, 2009). The Nigerian feminist novelist, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009), writes:

> Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanise. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity … [W]hen we reject the single story, when we realise that there is never a single story about any place, we [reclaim] our history.

Telling and writing stories to reclaim our history and dignity will confront deep and enduring asymmetrical power relations in the global scholarly community. Reviewers, editors and 'publishing houses' (Kaijage, 2019: 18) in the north 'attribute truth only to the Western way of knowledge production' (Heleta, 2016). It is said that 'scholars in the global south continue be at the receiving end' of northern masters who 'set the tone, define the terms of reference, dictate the idiom of the discourse and impose modes of conceptual thinking' (Kaijage, 2019: 18).

The confrontation is simultaneously theoretical and political.

THE THEORETICAL CONFRONTATION: WHITE IS ALWAYS RIGHT, AND WEST IS ALWAYS BEST

'Development' and, more specifically, 'development research' about the *other* in its 'crudest form' has:

> … traditionally been about dissecting … [and] measuring the political, socio-economic and cultural processes of black, brown and other subjects of colour against a standard of Northern whiteness and finds them incomplete, wanting, inferior or regressive. In essence, white is always right, and west is always best (Pailey, 2020: 729).

Scholarship in journalism, art, music and literature over the last decade has, however, 'spurred the most serious reconsideration' of the hegemonic whiteness of the 'last 150 years' (Baird, 2021). This is not without fightback! Indeed, there is a 'full-scale, well-co-ordinated and well-funded political project' - uniting liberals and the rightwing in the UK, Europe and USA - who deny their complicity and participation in the production and reproduction of present inequalities and oppose any form and modicum of 'racial equality and social justice' (Modiri, 2021). Speaking of the need for urgent redistribution, restitution and repatriations, the Reverend William Barber of the Poor People's Campaign[1] (USA) said:

> You cannot fix these inequalities by just having Black businesses in the community or just by saying people pull themselves up by their own bootstrap. It was policies, government policies, intentional policies, that created disenfranchisement, that stole wealth, that built this country on the backs of people without them having to pay anything. … 250 years of free labor/slavery, 100 years of segregation and

> [payment of] less than a living wage of $7.25 per hour. That means it has taken African Americans 400 years to get to $7.25 an hour … Well we can't wait another 400 years (25 June 2021, edited interview transcript).

But perhaps the 'project' and banning teaching about slavery, colonialism and placing the 'contributions of black Americans' at the 'center of [the] national narrative' – like the Pulitzer Prize-winning 1619 Project[2] of *The New York Times* – will now provide increasingly diminishing returns as the protests and critiques in academic and political spaces demanding radical change deepen and expand. The global assertion of black and brown personhood in the streets, universities, courts and city halls of both north and south – the Black Lives Matter-led global protests in America, South America and Asia – 'connected black people to experiences of colonialism, racism and state violence perpetrated by their governments' (*World Politics Review*, 2021). From Cape Town to Oxford, students and citizens are tearing down the officially immortalised and sanctified marble busts and towering statues of the slave traders, murderers and butchers of the indigenous 'non-white' people. Students are revolting against colonial iconography and white male supremacy in curriculums and academic disciplines. Universities everywhere are rewriting and reframing the parameters of academic discourse in bold and unyielding manifestos. The assertion, protests, tearing down, revolts and manifestos impel and compel philosophical, theoretical and ideological regeneration. More on regeneration and renaissances shortly.

Despite the protests against 'white is always right' and 'west is always best' – wherein white knowledge and white history defines and governs thought, prescription and action – public policy teaching and learning in Africa is also oblivious to the continent's realities and development priorities. Most mainstream public policy texts 'take for granted' legal and regulatory systems, the public schools, healthcare and social security for the elderly, roads, security and defence as in the west (Deaton, 2015). But most of the world's population in Africa and Asia do not live under effective governments, i.e. states 'lack the capacity to tax and deliver services'. The social contract between governed and the government is 'often altogether absent' in much of Africa and Asia where children perish 'not of incurable disease but childhood illnesses that we have known how to treat for almost a century', according to Angus Deaton, who was awarded a Nobel prize for his work on poverty, welfare and consumption (ibid.). And rich countries are exacerbating matters via the arms trade, trade and agriculture subsidy policies, the pursuit and production of drugs 'not for diseases killing the poor' and technical advice tethered to aid. In many African countries, foreign aid constitutes more than half the national budget and governments are accountable to donors first, and citizens second (ibid.). A point returned to in the next section.

Dislodging the epistemic privilege of the west as the norm, standard and yardstick is about uncovering and deconstructing the biases and prejudices underpinning western knowledge and public policy, prioritising the human and epistemic rights of the subjugated, excluded and devalued (apologies to Demaria & Kothari, 2017). The *public lingua franca* – the resistance and oppositional discourses of those not featured in the 'taken for granted' hetero-normative textbooks, grand white papers, grey strategy documents and dead guidelines – namely #FeesMustFall, #RhodesMustFall, Black Lives Matter and the protests from Eswatini to Chile to Haiti to Hungary to Hong Kong must find voice and expression in lectures, conferences and banquet halls. Post-, pluri- and anti-disciplinary orientations vs trans-euphoria – the western science and subject/discipline straddled *transdisciplinary condition* (Jessop & Nielsen, 2003, Le Grange, 2017) – will be critical in regenerating dull and lifeless curriculums and programmes, helping to repurpose and retool knowledge for government officials and administrators who must envision and manipulate abstract information and design executable models in the heat of competing ideologies, incompatible lived realities, sub-cultural predilections and the professional's own prejudices.

THE POLITICAL CONFRONTATION: REAL-WORLD POLICY PRACTICE, THE HARVARDS OF AFRICA AND THE RULING CLASS

Public policy and business schools the world over do not concern themselves much with the 'oppressive hierarchies of power running deep' in their teaching and learning (Banerjee, Rodriguez & Dar, 2020). Feeding on 'deliberate exclusion, ontological denial and the erasure of local forms and ways of knowing' (Hugo, 2018 cited in Motsaathebe, 2020), courses and curriculums of both schools reproduce and deepen power hierarchies. For example, numerous business and public policy and business schools in the south wax voluminously about 'good governance', 'democracy', 'citizenship' and 'participation'; what it 'ought to be' or 'should be'; and then proceed to dazzle with glitzy models, diagrams and organograms. Remarkably, many of these imported and imposed northern world class models and schemas derived or grounded in 'epistemologies of certainty' where 'often what passes as knowledge is little more than opinion' (Utting, 2006: 7) and the delusions of the wealthy and their functionaries in university economics departments (see Stein, 2021). ››

Telling and writing stories to reclaim our history and dignity will confront deep and enduring asymmetrical power relations in the global scholarly community.

'Good governance', for instance, is everywhere applauded and promoted as motherhood and apple pie – 'universally good' – with little said of its origin and motivations. The current demand for the south to adopt world-class institutions of 'good governance' immediately is however at odds with the historical experience of developed countries. In an authoritative survey of the now developed economies, Britain and the United States (amongst others), Chang (2002) demonstrates that the strictures of 'good governance' – clean and efficient bureaucracy and judiciary, protection of property rights, contracts and patents, good corporate governance institutions and an independent central bank – were the *outcome* and not the cause of economic development.

The 'good governance' regime, in its present incarnation, 'fatally' damages the 'possibility of creating a developmental transformation state' (Khan, 2004: 188). Indeed, 'good governance' is positively anti-developmental compared to the previous 'bad policies' of the now developed countries where until 1913, and beyond universal suffrage and secret balloting was a novelty; there was widespread nepotism and corruption in the public sector; corporate governance institutions fell miserably short of modern standards; competition law was non-existent; banking regulation was underdeveloped and inconsistent; insider trading and stock price manipulation was common; income tax was still a novelty; labour legislation regarding working hours, occupational safety, and child and female labour standards were patchy, coverage limited and enforcement poor; and trade barriers, infant industry protection, export subsidies, and violation of patents were the dynamos of industrial growth (Chang, 2002). In south-east Asia, the 'governance' regimes were clientelistic, characterised by 'extensive cronyism' but 'compatible with heightened levels of productive investment and dynamic growth' (Mkandawire, 1998: 11).

The historical record shows that capitalism and capitalist development 'thrives under quite a diverse set of conditions' (Moore, 1997 cited in Mkandawire, 2015: 578) including cronyism, 'clientelism', 'presidentialism', 'neopatrimonialism' and 'neopatrimonialisation of the bourgeoisie' (Ibid.) Botswana, '[one] of Africa's success stories may also be one of its most clearly "patrimonial" or "neo-patrimonial" states'.

> Complex reciprocities link the government and its citizens, legitimacy is created and reinforced through both the rule of law and personal bonds and a mutually constitutive relationship exists between the personal and the public (Pitcher, Moran & Johnston, 2009 cited in Mkandawire ,2015: 578).

In Rwanda, not the poster child of 'good governance', patrimonialism, economic performance and service delivery are positively associated (see Khan & Pillay, 2019). Rwanda's heterodox and statist development path reduced unemployment, poverty and inequality significantly and rapidly. Unemployment ranged from 0.95% in 2004, peaking at 1.15% in 2014 and pegged at 0.97% in 2018 (Pletcher, 2019). The proportion of people living below the national poverty line declined from 60.6% in 2001 to 39.4% in 2014 (Ggombe & Newfarmer, 2017: 5). Inclusive growth policies reduced income inequality, the Gini coefficient declining from 0.52 in 2006 to 0.49 in 2011 (Ibid.).

Hence clientelism, cronyism and neopatrimonialism – bad policies and bad governance – are 'not incompatible with dynamic capitalist development' (Mkandawire, 2015: 578) measured by dramatic and rapid reductions in unemployment, poverty and inequality for households to escape want, squalor, ignorance and disease. In contrast, the discourse of 'good governance' that politicians and administrators shackle themselves to 'often serves to legitimate neoliberalism'. Good governance is 'a flanking and supporting mechanism for an essentially inegalitarian and unjust economic and political project' (Jessop, 2008: 6).

Messy real-world policy practice where 'good policies' can be bad and 'bad policies' good, depending of course on history, academics in public policy and business schools of the south insist and persist in the uncritical prescription, utilization and detailed elaboration of disembodied 'international best practice' anti-developmental models, diagrams, case studies, flowcharts and log frames.

A case in point is South Africa. Post-apartheid public service and sector reform, driven mainly by (white) academics and academics-turned-consultants, courted and unquestioningly embraced neoliberal New Public Management (NPM) scripts and strictures (Matsiliza, 2020); preaching with evangelical zeal depoliticisation, deregulation, downsizing – Osborne and Gaebler-

style, (1992) – to the officials and politicians of the first democratically elected government. With emphasis on output, outcomes and efficiencies, post-apartheid public service transformation came to mean reorganising government bureaucracies into autonomous business-like entities and encouraging development management theories and tools (Chipkin, 2011).

The shameless grab of NPM witnessed the dismantling of the apartheid developmental state (1948-1990) (Freund, 2018), morphing into a lean, mean and pro-rich minimalist state machine. The people who suffered most under apartheid paid the heaviest price for democracy as the state downsized to fixer of markets and outsourcer of services. The price paid by the new politically enfranchised poor is the criminal under-investment in basic services and infrastructure in townships, shanty towns and shacks – a cause and outcome of the decimation of the state's infrastructural power and productive capacity (Mazzucato & Quaggiotto, 2020). De-institutionalisation, the destruction of the state and under-investment in infrastructure are today branded the 'big failure of small government' (Ibid.). Not unsurprising then is that the state today is 'once again a key actor' in today's economic reflation and public health responses (Deane, 2020).

Even with messy real-world policy practice and good governance policy failure, business schools, and arguably public policy schools, are wont to change, still 'unsure about the merits of decolonizing' knowledge and practice (Kelly & Hrenyk, 2020). Business schools do not teach that the early forms of scientific management – later the foundation of modern quantitative techniques for workforce – derived from slave plantation owners (Rosenthal, 2018). Business schools seem to want to deny or erase their colonial foundations. Schools are silent on the misery and devastation of the white man's 'manifest destiny' of 'Civilisation, Commerce and Christianity'. Little is said in their courses and curriculums of the overt and structural violence of extractive economies, the auto-petroleum bloc, the military-industrial complex, financial speculation and the precarious livelihoods of growing millions banished to the gig economy. The 'over-representation of white academics' in business schools, the dominance of English, and fixation on the northern star (the 'most powerful business schools are in America and Europe') reinforces exclusion, erasure and denialism (Banerjee, Rodriguez & Dar, 2020).

When the quest to be the 'best-in-the-always-right-white-west' and third-stream income (the 'consulting gem') is added to the lethal cocktail of exclusion, denial and erasure, business schools frequently degenerate into institutional aberrations of questionable higher education, national and continental developmental relevance. A case in point is the leading business school of the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa. According to the University of Stellenbosch (USB) homepage, it is ranked in the 'Top 100 Business Schools in the World; Top 3 Schools in Africa; and No 1 in South Africa'. USB strives to 'develop responsible leaders', 'create new knowledge', 'contribute to better business and better societies all over the world' and assist students 'to lead responsibly so they can go into the world as stewards of society' (Ibid.).

In his acceptance speech of a generous donation by a multinational brewing and beverage company of new premises for the USB in the luxurious and leafy winelands, the Rector and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Stellenbosch, Wim De Villiers, beamed about USB as the 'only business school on the continent' with 'triple accreditation' of the internationally prestigious kind (Operations & Finance, SU, 2019). A year earlier, in 2018, De Villiers naively, but not unsurprisingly, questioned the integrity of USB's MBA curriculum. It is worth quoting De Villiers at some length:

'Curriculum renewal is to look both at assessing courses and determining whether they are still relevant or need to change. We want to incorporate this notion of decolonising the curriculum'. He cited the MBA as an example, saying it was not relevant to use case studies only from North America or Europe. 'We should develop local case studies that speak to our local experience and context' (in Govender, 2018).

The historical dependence of business, and public policy, schools in Africa on 'first-world' case studies, most notably the 'Harvard School' (UCT Newsroom, 2016); the unbridled aspiration to be 'an Oxford or a Harvard of the South', a 'little piece of Europe in Africa' (apologies to De Villiers, 2017); and the hyper-aggressive entrepreneurialism of business schools peddling platinum-plated, star-studded, accredited, off-the-shelf, Tupperware courses to students and government is arguably unlikely to deliver 'responsible leaders' and 'stewards of society' dedicated to improving the lot of Africa's poor and hungry. Tragically, deviation from this curriculum and path is not promising because university governors and administrators have become addicted to the prestige, ranking, spoils and revenue in the design of gold-plated foreign courses and delivery of masterful northern profitable irrelevance.

The American philosopher, political activist, social critic and public intellectual, Cornel West (West, 2021 in Democracy Now, 2021), issues a dire warning to those walking the elitist Harvard path: 'Harvard's commodified state tied to big money, tied to image, and, in the end, just being of service to the empire and being of service to the ruling classes'. ➤➤

> **Devastated by historical underinvestment, structural adjustment and austerity and increasing demand, African universities are sealing Faustian pacts with donors and grant-makers.**

CONCLUSION: AFRICA ALWAYS BRINGS FORTH/ CONTRIBUTES SOMETHING NEW

This need not be the outcome! Tomorrow 'can be more than just another name for today' (apologies to Galeano, 2013: 148) if we choose to make our continent, communities and universities differently. Elitist institutions producing elitist stooges (Williams, 2015) are of no good to Africa's dispossessed, displaced and disempowered. The 'mass production of low-quality graduates' (Ogam, 2007 in Mbeki, 2015) is of little value to the hungry, unemployed and homeless of Africa.

Serving life demands of our governors, administrators, chancellors, rectors and deans of African universities to reimagine and rethink the role, status, mission and duties of the African university. Pixley Seme's 1906 provocation – is still current:

> Whither is fled the visionary gleam,
> Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

And when the governors, academy and academics of various *conditions*, convictions and affiliations gather to dream and engineer Africa's 'liberation from foreign rule, autocracy, hunger, poverty, ignorance, disease and dehumanisation' (paraphrased Mbeki, 2015: xv) be warned that society and students are marching and rioting in the streets demanding prosperous, inclusive and sustainable tomorrows that white papers, strategies, guidelines and 'taken for granted' textbooks have not delivered.

It is true that renaissances cannot be conjured up like a spell (Maloka, n.d.). It is true that renaissances release enormous creative energies and uncontainable forces that destroy (Mbeki, 2000). It is also true that '*Semper aliquid novi Africa affert'* (Africa always brings forth/contributes something new) (Pliny the Elder 23-79 AD, cited in Department of International Relations and Cooperation, 2004).

A university anchored in and responsive to the needs of the poor, hungry and homeless of Africa is possibly 'something new' to our chancellors, rectors, deans and administrators in the public policy and business schools of Africa, especially those who 'spend more time with donors than scholars' (Sen, 2021). A curriculum grounded in and alive to the rights and priorities of the poor combined with the *public lingua franca* – resistance narratives, oppositional discourses and radical impulses of our age of global protest – is possibly 'something new' for universities and schools in the south.

The African continent, society, universities, academy, schools and learners must and will bring forth 'something new' because they all *dream, demand, deserve* and are *entitled* to freedom from the yoke of internal colonialism, neo-colonialism, mental colonialism, western theoretical evangelism, the World Bank and the paternalism of the bored and overfed!

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