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# **Reassembling Scholarly Communications**

## **Histories, Infrastructures, and Global Politics of Open Access**

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# 1 Epistemic Alienation in African Scholarly Communications: Open Access as a *Pharmakon*

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Twenty years into the twenty-first century, it must regrettably be admitted that open access (OA) has not fulfilled the lofty ambitions set out in the Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI) in 2002. Instead of reducing publication costs, accelerating the dissemination of scientific information, ensuring the visibility of scientific publications, and promoting barrier-free access to scientific information, OA now often seems to reinforce and to create new inequalities. As Ulrich Herb has noted:

Open access has changed. At the beginning of the millennium, it was portrayed in a romanticising way and was embedded in a conceptual ensemble of participation, democratisation, digital commons and equality. Nowadays, open access seems to be exclusive: to the extent that commercial players have discovered it as a business model and article fees have become a defining feature of gold open access, open access has increasingly transformed into a distinguishing feature and an exclusive element. ... Open access is increasingly becoming an instrument that creates exclusivity, exclusion, distinction and prestige. These functions, however, are obscured by symbolic gift giving strategies and presented as altruistically staged, so that in the discourse of the open access community and in media reporting on open access, the both euphemistic and largely obsolete prosocial story-telling of open access dominates.<sup>1</sup>

Regarding these unmet OA promises, it is important to think about their consequences in the context of the African continent. It is such thinking that is the aim of this chapter—in which, drawing on postcolonial theory, I will examine OA through the lens of the *pharmakon*. The term *pharmakon* comes from the Greek word *pharmakos* (φάρμακον), which refers to a purification ritual that took place in ancient Greece. During this rite, criminals were expelled from the city to purge the polis of the evil that affected it.<sup>2</sup> It may seem ambiguous, but from this ritual, the (criminal) evil is still used to heal the city. In his essay on Plato's *Pharmacy*, and in a more recent context,

Derrida provides a modern and philosophical interpretation of this ritual; he highlights the ambiguity of the term *pharmakon* which can mean both medicine and poison.<sup>3</sup> It is from this perspective that OA can be compared to a *pharmakon*. As I will show in the remainder of this chapter, it is simplistic to consider OA as a unified phenomenon: in some situations, it acts as a poison; in others, as a cure.

The first part of this chapter describes the context in which OA has been adopted in Africa. The second part is an attempt to demonstrate that OA, as here implemented, acts as a poison that causes epistemicides and linguicides in Africa and whose most insidious manifestation is epistemic alienation. Finally, in the third section, I recognize that OA still holds great hope for the African continent—depending on how it is adopted. For these reasons, I here suggest a strategy that will recover the healing potential of open access. By carrying out cognitive decolonization and redesigning OA as a tool of cognitive justice and liberation, this strategy, following Tlostanova and Mignolo, is about learning to unlearn in order to relearn.<sup>4</sup>

There are also a few important up-front clarifications. First, while writing this text, my identity is important: I fully assume my African standpoint. Second, the African academic communities I am talking about here are from universities located in sub-Saharan Africa; there is a specificity to my remarks that can be elided if we treat “Africa” as a homogeneous whole. Third, the intention of this text is not to retreat into a false and unnecessary dichotomy between the West and Africa. That said, historical and comparative approaches remain useful to understand better the current realities of scholarly communication. Finally, this text is inspired by the fieldwork initiated by the Open Science research project in Haiti and French-speaking African countries, also covered in this book by Denisse Albornoz, Leslie Chan, and Angela Okune.<sup>5</sup> One of the outcomes of this research project was the identification of cognitive injustices, including epistemic alienation, as obstacles to the adoption of open access.

### **The Biased Beginnings of Open Access in Africa**

History shows that, in the contemporary sense, early OA practices began in North America and Europe, with the first online peer-reviewed journal, *New Horizons in Adult Education*, launched in early 1987 by the Syracuse University Kellogg Project.<sup>6</sup> Following this, many new OA services sprang to life on the

World Wide Web. One of the best known and longest running of these is *arXiv*, the first online preprint server, used by physicists to share their papers since 1991. The term “open access” was itself formalized and clearly defined only in 2002, after the Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI).<sup>7</sup> This first meeting opened the gate to a cascade of similar summits ending every time with declarations, plans, or programs for open access. From 2002 to the present day, most of these major meetings have taken place in Western countries and under the impetus of the actors from these countries.

Looking to Africa, the promises of OA after the BOAI in 2002 seemed irresistible if we were to address the lack of access to scientific information in African universities. This was probably the beginning of OA in Africa. Taking the well-known theory of Everett Rogers, the spread of OA is here understood as a result of a diffusion process.<sup>8</sup> This is aligned, though, with the notion that the visibility of African scientific production is always dependent on Western initiatives, even when it comes to using open technologies that African practitioners (including librarians and computer scientists) could appropriate in complete autonomy and at a lower cost. The Western origin of OA is, then, clear. This comes with significant challenges for its wholesale import into new African contexts.

### Early Mismatching in the African Context

Considering the lack of a strong cultural attachment to OA in African academic communities, it is worth examining the history of its adoption. Even at a first glance, we can see that OA faces different challenges in Africa than in Western countries. Many factors suggest that OA is a matter for the rich countries of the Global North, where basic infrastructural matters, such as regular and reasonable salaries for academics, public research grants, access to the internet, electricity, well-supported libraries, and comfortable and safe workplaces have long been settled.<sup>9</sup> On this basis, it makes little sense to say that we are dealing with the “same” OA in both contexts and the motivations to fight for OA cannot necessarily be assumed to be the same. This disjunction stems from the failure to account for African realities since the beginning of the diffusion of OA.

Indeed, since the beginning of OA, there have been local barriers to uptake that, unfortunately, persist to this day. These include lack of infrastructure, lack of internet access in African universities, and the low digital

literacy of most scholars. These barriers inhibit OA, and particularly green OA, whose promises seemed most to meet Africa's needs. In this latter case, the barriers consist of a scarcity of institutional repositories, librarians untrained in matters of open access, and the passivity of library staff with respect to introducing OA into academic practice.<sup>10</sup> In addition, the absence of local funder interest in OA and the lack of financial resources in African universities, compound libraries' expenditure on so-called "prestigious" journals. These barriers are the root of the failure of OA to meet its promises of rapid dissemination and access to scientific information on the African continent.

Another hope for OA was to make visible and accessible to Western scholars unknown and neglected research from the Global South.<sup>11</sup> However, in addition to the barriers mentioned above, this vision for OA faces resistance (involuntary or not) from African researchers. Among the reasons that can explain this resistance, the first is that the desire to make African knowledge visible was not truly an African initiative. The idea originated from the difficulty faced by some Western scholars in discovering knowledge produced in the Global South. The second was that many African researchers perceive OA as a threat to the supposed income they believe they will receive from their scientific publications. It must be said that, in Africa, the publication of an academic book and the rights that a person could derive from it are erroneously seen as possible income sources. This false perception is reinforced by a lack of knowledge about copyright and open licenses. Third, the scarcity of funding and grants for research leads to a lack of incentives for Africans to engage in OA. For while in some Western countries there are incentives (carrots) and mandates (sticks) that facilitate the adoption of OA, this is often because research is publicly funded. This is not always the case in Africa, where researchers are self-funded or supported by Western programs (although this can be different in a few countries, such as South Africa).

Thus, although the 2002 BOAI declaration was paved with good intentions, it did not address the realities of its adoption on the African continent.

### **Is Open Access a Poison for Africa?**

From 2002 to the present day, OA has evolved positively but also been deeply perverted. In this section, I will focus on the dramatic development of OA and its consequences in the African academic milieu.

At its birth, OA was a broadly unified and idealistic movement with the green and gold routes; supported by a small but strong community of scientists, librarians, and research sponsors, advocating for free access to information and protesting against the high costs of publications. Over time, this romantic vision of OA has undergone fundamental changes that have distorted it toward market orientation, control, and governance of information and research.

The capitalist/market orientation of contemporary OA is evidenced by the economic language of the major laws, declarations, and policies.<sup>12</sup> For example, the 2012 Finch Report in the UK called for accountability, efficiency, and economic growth.<sup>13</sup> In the OA2020 initiative, libraries are considered as the organizers of the cash flows in the subscription system and the initiative is seen as an improvement of research evaluation.<sup>14</sup> In the same vein, the European Commission's 2016 publication considers that "open science is as important and disruptive a shift as e-commerce has been for retail. Just like e-commerce, it affects the whole 'business cycle' of doing science and research—from the selection of research subjects, to the carrying out of research and to its use and re-use—as well as all the actors and actions involved up front (e.g., universities) or down the line (e.g., publishers)."<sup>15</sup>

These changes and a shift toward economic thinking began with the growing interest in OA by commercial publishers. These entities have now infiltrated the decision-making spheres—often lobbying at the highest levels of politics—and created an imbalance in their favor within the discourse of open access.<sup>16</sup> That said, it is clear that green OA is a harder route to commercially exploit than is gold. Regarding the domination of commercial publishers in OA communities, it is hardly surprising, then, that article processing charges (APCs) have gained importance as the dominant and most prominent, even if not the most widespread, business model for open-access journals.<sup>17</sup> For this reason, I here focus on APCs, without wishing to ignore other, potentially better, models for gold OA. The sad truth, though, is that many African researchers cannot afford the costs required for authors to publish in APC-based journals. Hence, this model can be considered as a vehicle of continued exclusion.

In addition, there is a tight relationship between APC pricing and a journal's Impact Factor (IF). The higher a journal's IF, the higher the costs of APCs are set.<sup>18</sup> Thus, APCs consolidate the market strategy of publishers, whose approaches have always been based on the mirrored spaces of

economics and prestige. This is encouraged at the local level by the promotion and tenure system which, despite declarations such as the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), is still embedded in traditional practices of scientific publications and often gives more importance to high IF journals. This importance is given at the expense of local scientific production and open journals, which local promotion and tenure systems often consider to be of poor quality. This disregard of published work in journals outside these criteria is also visible at the global level. Indeed, academic institutions of the Global North will not usually recognize journals from Africa as being of high quality and sometimes these titles are not listed in scientific databases commonly used in Western universities (e.g., Scopus, Web of Science). Of this, Chan notes that

historically institutions, and in particular publishers, from the [G]lobal North have largely established the quality standards for journals. Things like peer review, citation formats, writing or rhetoric styles, and external markers such as journal Impact Factor. Confronted with academic journals from countries of the [G]lobal South that they are not familiar with, librarians but also scientists, often assume that if these quality markers are absent or not recognisable, then the journals are of lesser or even questionable quality. This assumption is wrong but it continues today.<sup>19</sup>

In the end, the APC model represents the most visible capitalist trajectory of OA. It sets up a financial barrier to publish in “prestigious” journals; a form of exclusion that in almost all cases rules out researchers from African universities. It also consolidates the myth of the Impact Factor, leading to the exclusion of some journals according to their geographical origin. This second form of exclusion further allows us to make a parallel with Wallerstein’s theory of capitalism, in which academia can be considered like a world system with scientific publication as the commercial unit.<sup>20</sup> Europe and North America sit at the center of the system, and countries of the Global South, including Africa, are placed at the periphery.

### Coloniality of Knowledge in Open Access

In the thinking of Suárez Krabbe, coloniality refers to the fact that the relationship between colonialism and coloniality is structural and persisting, in opposition to the idea that colonialism is over.<sup>21</sup> Based on the insight that colonial societies have systematically banished indigenous forms of knowledge, coloniality of knowledge is a theoretical concept first developed by

Aníbal Quijano, and later by Walter D. Mignolo.<sup>22</sup> The concept describes the ongoing colonial access to, as well as the distribution, production, and reproduction of, knowledge, and the often subtle processes that ultimately exclude and occlude alternative *epistemes* (or ways of knowing). My interest in this section is to show how coloniality of knowledge manifests in OA in the context of the African continent.

If one examines platforms that harvest information available on the web, it quickly becomes apparent that most information resources come from the North. Web of Science, for example, reveals that Africa produces less than 1 percent of scientific articles in the world. This African contribution is shared between North Africa (44 percent) and sub-Saharan Africa (56 percent), but this nuance should be noted: production in sub-Saharan Africa is largely dominated by English-speaking countries. Indeed, in the sub-Saharan level, Francophone Africa produces only 2.75 percent of articles; this means that, at the global level, its contribution is almost zero (0.01 percent).<sup>23</sup> Do these proportions reflect the reality of scientific production? Clearly not—there are many high-quality articles written in Africa, but they are not included in web platforms such as the Web of Science. This is either because a large number of them exist in a physical format (hard copies) that prevents their circulation, diffusion, and sharing on the web; or because many African journals do not meet the infrastructural requirements of these web platforms. It is true that these platforms existed before the beginning of OA. But they also joined the OA movement, and now harvest almost all the OA resources that circulate on the web. As a result, the scientific information disseminated by these platforms reaches the majority of internet users in Africa, to a greater extent than local scientific productions. This situation strongly contributes to an ongoing coloniality of knowledge.

Fifty years ago, we would have found a reason for this exclusion, in that the costs associated with the production and distribution of physical (printed) documents were very high. In the contemporary era, this argument is not relevant, since the internet, the web, and OA have reduced production costs substantially and made the subsequent dissemination of information instantaneous. The paradox is that, despite this coloniality, Africans do not seize the opportunity of green OA to disseminate the grey literature that is abundant in African universities. Indeed, OpenDOAR and ROAR show that there are currently just three institutional repositories (IR) in sub-Saharan French-speaking Africa, compared to 130 in the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, including 33 in South Africa and 26 in Kenya.<sup>24</sup> The repository located in

Cameroon contains 31 documents and is not associated with any university, but rather with an association for the promotion of science. The Senegalese deposit of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) also is not associated with any university, while the deposit of Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire (IFAN) is inaccessible. This exposes clearly a difficulty for the adoption of OA in African universities and particularly in sub-Saharan French-speaking Africa. Hence, these IRs do not reflect the actual scientific production of African universities. Under these conditions, how can we avoid a coloniality of African scientific production, if researchers do not have the possibility to self-archive and contribute themselves to the circulation of their work even through green OA?

### Epistemic Alienation

We can define epistemic alienation as the distortion of one's native way of thinking, and of seeing and speaking of one's own reality. In Africa, this cognitive distortion is led by the adoption (unconscious or not) of Eurocentric philosophical, sociological, and historical thought—used to speak of, to describe, and to study African realities. Epistemic alienation is symptomatized by epistemicide: destruction of local epistemologies that are replaced, in this case, by a Western paradigm.<sup>25</sup> The African university system is one of the main causes of epistemic alienation because these institutions simply replicate Western universities, without any effort to contextualize missions, curricula, and structure. And indeed, these postcolonial universities are still dependent on the West; this dependence can be economic, scientific, or related to the language of instruction.<sup>26</sup>

On economic dependence, Piron et al. consider that postcolonial scientific research remains fundamentally outward facing and organized to meet a theoretical, scientific, and economic demand of the center of the system.<sup>27</sup> In other words, the fact that African policy makers do not always prioritize research funding in their countries makes them dependent on the scientific agendas of donors, most of whom are from the North. Extended to equipment, documentation, and scientific paradigms from the North, this dependence profoundly affects the African researcher's way of thinking. And current OA policies are not helping to change this situation, because many of them are international and shaped for Western contexts. There are a few true and effective African OA policies, which are not just replications

or extensions of Western OA policies. But this situation would be a little different if government economic policies were to financially support common thinking on how to find solutions to local problems.

A scientific dependence is visible in the way in which Western authors and materials are frequently cited in scientific papers, theses, and dissertations produced in African universities. In French-speaking African countries, for example, one can note the prevalence of French authors in humanities and social sciences. By way of anecdote, this calls to mind a question I asked of a Cameroonian sociologist: "Do you think that Pierre Bourdieu can better describe our realities than what your colleagues here, at the University of Yaoundé I, wrote?" Because of the universal fame of authors such as Pierre Bourdieu, using them as a reference instead of a local author is prevalent in the practice of many African researchers, despite the difference in the specificity of the context. This choice is sometimes justified by claims of unawareness of the work of local colleagues and that all to which they have access, online/offline, or even OA, are the papers of authors like Pierre Bourdieu. This situation is not ideal for the humanities and social sciences, but the same issues are present in hard sciences. By way of another example, attending a friend's thesis defense in geology, I was outraged when the jury asked the candidate why he didn't cite an overseas journal with a high Impact Factor; despite the fact that he had already cited all the relevant locally contextualized literature. Afterwards, I asked my friend why he used, and why the jury encouraged him to use, Western journals. In his view, local journals are not serious; most of them disappear one to two years after their launch. Even if they continue to function, their periodicity is not always respected. The bias toward the citation of Western material that emerges from this, though, means that issues that are specific to Africa are pursued with less vigor, and OA accentuates this problem. This is because most OA scientific publications available and diffused on the web, with high visibility, are from the North. In this logic, OA aggravates epistemic alienation by reinforcing the use of the scientific work from the center of the world-system, while consolidating Eurocentric thought as the global theoretical reference or normative model, to the detriment of local epistemologies.

However, we should not place the entire blame for this situation on Western people, systems, and countries. This situation may be the responsibility of the local researchers themselves, due to their lack of OA literacy and practices. We can point the finger at librarians, who are not advising

their institutions of current OA practices and the necessity to establish OA policies or infrastructures, such as institutional repositories and open journals. We can also put the blame on leaders of academic institutions who do not prioritize OA in their policies. We could also blame the editors of local journals for allowing their titles to die out. In addition, promoters of local journals need to be trained and supported by decision makers and OA policies. One can point to the fact that in countries such as South Africa, efforts are being made to change this reality.<sup>28</sup> But we must accept the obvious—that South Africa is not at the same level of development as many African countries. To do otherwise is to hide the realities of the majority of Africa.

On the matter of language, it must also be recognized that African researchers face a real dilemma. All have a first African language, with English, French, Spanish, or Portuguese being only secondary languages. Therefore, Africans feel obliged to undertake the difficult exercise of translating their thoughts into the colonial languages imposed in academic curricula. Added to the above, the inherent looseness of translation lends imprecision to the dissemination of African knowledge within a context dominated by Eurocentrism and English as the *lingua franca*. This linguistic distortion contributes to the marginalization and denial of African languages and fatally to their linguicide. This is another epistemic alienation that the current practices of scholarly communication and OA promote. Julia Schöneberg puts it very well in these terms:

Translations make knowledge available to Eurocentric-dominated realms that they wouldn't otherwise appear in. Also, publications receive less recognition if not published in (mostly) English "high-ranked" journals and publishers. Vernacular language is rarely acknowledged as "academically relevant."<sup>29</sup>

While there are celebrated cases, such as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, who chooses to write in his native language, who reads and how many people can read these languages? Indeed, African researchers face the difficult choice between sacrificing the relevance of their ideas in the local community, for the visibility that writing in English provides; or the opposite.<sup>30</sup>

The debasement of OA has had disastrous consequences in the African academic milieu. Amongst them is epistemic alienation, symptomatized by epistemicides (killing of indigenous people's knowledge), and linguicides (killing of indigenous people's languages). It is true that epistemicides and linguicides preexisted OA; but the way OA is going at the global level, and the lack of awareness at the local level, reinforces and accentuates these preexisting problems. On this basis, open access currently contains within it the germs of epistemic poison for Africa.

## Rethinking OA: A Decolonized Approach to Scholarly Communication

The fact that OA can be an epistemic poison for Africa does not mean that it should be abandoned. Indeed, OA offers African scholarship unprecedented *opportunities* to reach previously inaccessible audiences—nationally, regionally, and internationally. Thus, failing to embrace OA would mean missing a great opportunity to improve the dissemination, visibility, and impact of research findings from the African continent. Depending on how we approach it, OA can be a cure for these ills; that is why in this section I am borrowing from Tlostanova and Mignolo, to call for a process of “learning to unlearn in order to relearn.”<sup>31</sup> This process follows a twofold approach: decolonize the way of thinking and redesign OA to make it more relevant to the African context.

### Cognitive Decolonization as a Starting Point

Many strategies can be established to seize OA as an opportunity. The starting point is to decolonize the way of thinking of scholars from both South and North. It can be surprising to mention Western scholars here, but it is important for them to make an epistemological rupture to better understand all the potential, nuances, and limits that they cannot see, blinded by their context. I am lucky to have graduated in both systems, Western and African universities; I can guarantee that those experiencing only the Western reality, where academic conditions are optimal, will not be aware of the realities and barriers faced by African universities and researchers. That is why it is so important to decolonize the way of thinking of scholars from the North. To achieve cognitive decolonization, I suggest a dual approach.

First, we should privilege and prioritize recognition and representation of the perspectives, epistemologies, contexts, and methodologies that inform knowledge production globally and locally.<sup>32</sup> This will help to develop the confidence of academics in knowledge, history, and language from the periphery. To do this, we will use epistemological decolonization that deals with problems such as epistemicides, linguicides, cultural imperialism, and alienation, through a double task of “provincializing the center of the system” and “deprovincializing Africa.”<sup>33</sup> “Provincializing the center of the system,” then, is a process of “moving the center” by confronting the problem of overrepresentation of Western thought in knowledge, social theory, and education. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni, “deprovincializing Africa” is “an intellectual and academic process of centering Africa as a

legitimate historical unit of analysis and epistemic site from which to interpret the world while at the same time globalizing knowledge from Africa."<sup>34</sup>

Second, we should facilitate and promote the creation of socially relevant knowledge, independently of Western norms and standards.<sup>35</sup> This is the quest of epistemic freedom (which is the right to think, to theorize, and to interpret the world; to develop one's own methodologies, and to write from where one is located, unencumbered by Eurocentrism): to democratize "knowledge" from its current rendition in the singular into its plural form, "knowledges."<sup>36</sup> This search for epistemic freedom is aligned with the concept of cognitive justice, initially defined "as a recognition of diverse ways of knowing by which human beings across the globe make sense of their existence."<sup>37</sup> Indeed, Piron et al. define cognitive justice as an epistemological, ethical, and political ideal aimed at the emergence of socially relevant knowledge everywhere on the planet, not only in the countries of the North, but within an inclusive science open to all knowledge.<sup>38</sup>

Through this process, scholarship could be decolonized, empowered, and enabled to define and design the best ways to adopt OA according to local needs.

### The Redesign of Open Access as a Tool of Cognitive Justice

Open access can be made a tool of cognitive justice if we take into account the enhancement of knowledge produced in the periphery, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. To achieve this, I recommend a five-point approach:

First, we must *embrace open science as the next stage of OA*. While enabling access to knowledge and research results through a multiplicity of dissemination possibilities, open participatory science will also help us to seize the prevalent power relations that structure knowledge production into interconnecting hierarchies at local and global levels. As Chan notes:

Open Science aims for the entire research process to become more open: including the production of the research question, methodologies, through to data collection, peer review, publication and dissemination. In that way, it is easier to look at who is participating in these processes of knowledge production and what kind of power they have in a given context. It allows us to be more cognisant of how power is prevalent in systems of knowledge production, and allows us to think of ways to democratise these processes—to make them more collaborative and equitable.<sup>39</sup>

Second, we should *explore alternative ways for communicating research, aside from a traditional, published journal article*. This is especially relevant

because African scientific knowledge is mostly found in the grey literature (theses, dissertations, and research reports) and they are rarely online or freely accessible. As a result, they are invisible in Northern databases and do not demonstrate their full potential in many contexts. That is why it is crucial to promote and to reinforce green OA. Additionally, we should consider the fact that younger scientists are using blogs and wikis for collaborative research development rather than the more competitive mode of research production to which older researchers are accustomed. Attention to this “grey literature” is important.

Third, we require local criteria for research assessment and evaluation, adapted to African realities, without any constraint to satisfy the requirement to publish in prestigious journals. For, as Eve Gray has written: “a truly African-focused scholarly publishing programme, for example, should not necessarily follow the international dominance of scholarly journals, but should publish according to the needs of target audiences, whether that be articles, research reports, data sets, and monographs, as well as publications targeted at non-scholarly audiences, such as manuals and handbooks.”<sup>40</sup>

Fourth, we *need to train and to attune local stakeholders in and to decolonized OA*. I totally agree with Piron et al. that African university libraries, if better funded and their staff better trained in decolonized OA, could play a major role in locating, archiving, and preserving local scientific documents as well as in the management of these archives.<sup>41</sup> This will help them gain confidence in their ability to create knowledge relevant to their community.

Fifth, for all these initiatives to be fully realized, it is imperative to *develop open-access policies that are sensitive to cognitive justice*. As Gray says in this regard: “policy formulation would thus need to grapple with issues of access and development impact, rather than just the question of academic prestige. Publication policy cannot privilege international publication over local but needs to focus primarily on the production of high-quality and relevant research to meet African development needs and only in second place deal with the need for international prestige.”<sup>42</sup>

At the conclusion of this chapter, I have presented the case that OA, as it is deployed today, contains a poisonous element for Africa and that this will remain the case if nothing is done. But we can still remedy this situation if we adopt a decolonized approach to scholarly communication. In this regard, the five recommendations I am making here should sound an alarm bell for all actors in the OA community around the world so that, together, we can get OA back on track in the quest for the common good.

## Notes

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