Title of paper:

Africanising journalism curricula: the perceptions of southern African Journalism scholars

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Abstract

African journalism scholars and professionals are generally agreed that journalism education in Africa is too dependent on Western systems of philosophy. This dependency has led to ever increasing calls from some journalism scholars to "de-Westernise" or "Africanise" journalism curricula in the continent so as to make it relevant to the African context. However, journalism scholars have not unpacked what they mean by Africanisation or de-Westernisation. This study therefore, explores the perceptions of southern African journalism scholars on the Africanisation of journalism curricula. A questionnaire with open-ended and closed questions was administered to 31 journalism educators in southern Africa. The findings of the study seem to suggest that journalism scholars do not take de-Westernisation to mean a complete removal of Western philosophies and epistemologies from the journalism curricula. Nor do they view Africanisation as adopting black people's cultural values and norms. The findings suggest that Africa's diversity in terms of culture, languages and norms should inform the Africanisation process.

Key Words: African, Africanisation, de-Westernisation, Western philosophies journalism curricula

1. Introduction

African journalism scholars and professionals are generally agreed that journalism education in Africa is too dependent on Western systems of philosophy[1]. This dependency dates back to the colonial era when the colonising powers imposed their epistemology and philosophy on the colonised. According to Mukasa and Becker (1992:41) "teaching materials, trainers, curricula from the respective colonizing powers" were aimed at "ensur[ing] the dominance of their [European] culture in their colonial enclaves". Indigenous histories, epistemologies and ontologies were not considered worth including in any educational curriculum (Ramose, 2004:138).

The irony, however, is that Western philosophy and epistemology continue to dominate African curricula well after the colonising powers relinquished the reigns of power to the black political elite in now independent states (Banda, 2008:50; Ramose, 2004:138). Mukasa and Becker (1992:36) underline this dependency when they say that out of a survey of 20 randomly selected papers read at a 1987 communications conference in Nigeria, 87% of citations were from Western sources, suggesting that there is a heavy dependence on Western thought patterns in African journalism education. Mano's (2009) extensive survey on the teaching of journalism and media studies in Africa also revealed that there is an over-dependency on syllabuses conceived in the West; that most students

[1] It is vital for journalism scholars and professionals to unpack the notion of "westernisation" as the West is not a homogenous entity. Refer to Skjerdal's (2009) discusses different Western influences on the African continent. He notes, for example that American influence on African journalism institutions is different from the European one. Ethiopia, for example, has had a plethora of influences from North America and Europe. De Beer (2005:140) also points out that South African journalism schools have followed either the American and / or British models. Rhodes and Kwa Zulu-Natal Universities were influenced by Marxist critical approaches from British schools, whilst Stellenbosch University, as noted by Rabe (2002) is furnished along the lines of Columbia University in America. The same can be said of many other African countries. Effective de-westernisation, therefore, can only take place if scholars fully understand its different shades and how these have shaped thought patterna in different African countries.

and staff are still trained abroad; and that major books and theories used in African institutions were mainly written by Westerners for Western students.

Western dominance of the dissemination of knowledge and information can also be seen in the over-reliance on Western textbooks. UNESCO made this observation when it said:

> The source of inspiration of teachers, curricula and textbooks is Western. Teachers are mostly Western educated, curricula are drawn from Western models and most textbooks are authored and published in the West and North America (UNESCO, 2002:1).

Funding, peer review and many other validation processes all lead to this over-dependency on Western models (Banda, 2008:50).

Theory and practice in journalism education, according to Banda (2008:50), therefore, are still defined and determined by Western institutions and scholars. The roles of journalists are also still informed by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm's normative libertarian and social responsibility theories (Kanyegirire, 2006:161). According to Gunaratne (cited in Fourie, 2007:208) these theories are Western-centric and biased. He argues that Siebert et al. draw their concepts from Western philosophers, theorists and institutions.[2] These theories have been universalised in the examination of media in non-Western countries.

[2] Philosophers, theorists and institutions which have informed Western thought systems are Plato, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Hegel, John Milton, John Locke, Adam Smith, Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, john Stuart Mill, Karl Marx, Josef Stalin and the United States Commission on Freedom of the Press, to mention but a few Gunaratne (cited in Fourie, 2007:208).

The consequence of all this, is the use of Western journalistic standards to determine what good journalism should be in African journalism practice. Nyamnjoh (cited in Mano, 2009:279) for example argues that codes of ethics and professional values used by journalists in Africa are heavily inspired by Western or Western derived international codes. A report submitted by African Journalism scholars[3] at the 1st World Conference of Journalism Educators in 2007, also reiterated the fact that "in order to enter the international and increasingly the national higher echelons of academe, individuals, just as institutions such as universities, will need to play the game according to the hegemonic rules of the North" (De Beer, Banda & Mukela, 2007:5). The report gives the example of South Africa where "journalism and media authors only get full research credit if they publish in one of the few journalism/media/communication journals indexed in the North by ISI and/or IBSS" (De Beer, Banda & Mukela, 2007:5).

This dominancy of Western liberal thought on African scholarship is seen by postcolonial scholars as limiting the scope and history of freedom of expression to Eurocentric thought patterns (Fourie, 2007:208). They also see it as part of the colonial agenda to impose a Western world view on important issues such as class, race, gender and sexuality. Mazrui (cited in Banda (2008:51**)** says that this dependency on western philosophy and theory results in the production of journalists who cannot deal with the complex postcolonial continent that is Africa. The curricula alienate African journalism

[3] The team of African scholars who presented the report were Fackson Banda (Rhodes University, South Africa), John Mukela (Southern African Media Training Trust, Mozambique), and Arnold De Beer (Stellenbosch University, South Africa).

students from their history, thus making it difficult for them to effectively engage and critique the postcolonial state.

It would seem, therefore, from the foregoing argument that there is a consensus that African journalism curricula have to be freed from the iron-grip of Western philosophy. Many African journalism scholars and professionals are increasingly calling for the "africanisation" of journalism curricula on the African continent (see Ankomah, 2008; Groepe, 2008; Botha & De Beer, 2007; Banda, Beukes-Amiss, Bosch, Mano, McLean & Steenveld, 2007; Wimmer & Wolf, 2005; Mbeki, 2003).

However, very few studies have been done to ascertain what scholars mean by the africanisation of the journalism curricula. The notion "africanisation" is very problematic and has been debated across disciplines. The study, therefore, seeks to explore the perceptions of journalism educators on africanising journalism curricula. Some of the major questions that the study seeks to answer are: Who is an African? Do Western philosophies and epistemologies have a place in African journalism curricula? What language should be used to educate and train African journalists? Can *Ubuntu* philosophy serve as a foundation for the African journalism curricula?

2. Research Methodology

The survey research design was employed for this study. According to Babbie (1989) and Rubin and Babbie (1993), the survey design is ideal in situations where the researcher wants to explore an issue or phenomenon. Since the researcher's main aim in this study was to explore the perceptions of southern African journalism educators on the

africanisation of journalism curricula in their institutions, the survey design was deemed appropriate for the study. Exploring the journalism educator's perceptions would help the researcher "formulate questions and refine issues for a more systematic inquiry" in the future (Neuman, 1994:19).

The population of this study comprised all journalism educators in southern Africa.[4] Population, according to Cardwell (1999), is a group of people who are the focus of the research study and to which the results could be applied. This is the group from which a sample is drawn. Pretorius (2004) defines a sample as a selected part or the subset of the population. This sample is part of the population from which inferences about the population can be drawn.

Because there is no known database which indicates the numbers of journalism educators in southern Africa and also because this is an exploratory study, a convenience sampling technique was used to select subjects for the study. The researcher chose educators whose email addresses were accessible to her. The limitation of this sampling technique is that there is a very high likelihood that the sample will not be a representative of the population to which the researcher is interested in generalising to. However, in mitigation for the use of this sampling technique, the researcher makes reference to Babbie (1989) who argues that even though representativeness of the sample cannot be guaranteed, exploratory studies are valuable when the researcher is breaking new ground and wants to glean some insights into a phenomenon.

[4] In this study, southern Africa refers to all SADC countries, namely, Angola, Botswana, DRC, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Thirty- one (31) journalism scholars from southern Africa were selected for the study. These were selected because they are the only journalism scholars in southern Africa whose contact addresses the researcher had. Despite this limitation, almost every country from the region was represented in the sample. Because of the type of sampling method used, the sample was not equally distributed in the region. For example, out of 31 journalism scholars, 13 originated from South Africa, which makes the sample biased towards South Africa. Namibia was represented by 3 journalism educators, Zimbabwe 4, Zambia and Malawi, 2 each. The other countries had one journalism educator each.

To collect data, a questionnaire with both close-ended and open questions was drafted. The closed-ended questions constituted 89% 0f all the questions, while 11% were of the open-ended type. To test the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was pilot tested with a group of 12 randomly selected journalism educators, who were not involved in the main study. The participants were asked to make comments on the questionnaire. Five (42%) of the pilot group responded and adjustments were made to the questionnaire based on the comments received from them. The questionnaire was then distributed to the main study group of 31 journalism scholars.

Data was collected over a period of one month. The responses were organized and assigned categories and then analysed by use of descriptive statistics, in order to obtain frequencies and percentages. Because of the use of the convenience sampling method which results in a non-representative sample, the researcher did not do cross tabulations by race or gender. A much bigger and randomly selected sample would be required to do that. Microsoft Excel was used to capture the data and then for analysis purposes, it was then transferred to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Responses from

the open-ended questions were grouped according to their similarities and then summarized.

3. Presentation and discussion of results

3. 1 Profile of the participants

The following table summarises the characteristics of those who participated in the study:

Table 1: Summary of the profile of the respondents

Country of origin	Gender		Race		Academic Status			Total
	Female	Male	Black	White	lecturer	Senior Lecturer	Professor	
Botswana		1		1			1	**1**
DRC		1	1			1		**1**
Lesotho	1		1		1			**1**
Malawi	1	1	2		2			**2**
Mozambique		1	1			1		**1**

Namibia		2	1	1	2			**2**
South Africa	4	2	3	3	2	3	1	**6**
Zambia		1	1			1		**1**
Zimbabwe	1	3	4		3	1		**4**
TOTAL	**7**	**12**	**14**	**5**	**10**	**7**	**2**	**19**

The table indicates that out of 31 questionnaires which were distributed to journalism scholars in southern Africa, 19 were completed and returned to the research. According to Rubin (1993:340) a response rate of 50% is usually considered adequate and 60%, good. The response rate of 61.3% for the study, therefore, is representative of the sample of respondents.

The table also shows that almost all southern African countries are represented by at least one journalism educator. This, however, is not to say that these respondents represent the perceptions of journalism educators in their own countries. The table also shows that South Africa has the highest number of respondents (6), which is not surprising considering that out of the 31 questionnaires sent out to journalism educators, 13 were sent to South Africans. Except for Zimbabwe with 4 respondents, other countries had either 1 or 2 respondents.

3. 2 Defining the African identity

A discussion about africanising journalism curricula inevitably leads to a debate on the African identity. It raises questions about who is an African. The term "African" means different things to different people.[5] Participants were, therefore, asked to define who an African is by selecting a definition out of four given ones. All 19 respondents were unanimous in their choice of the first option "any one born in Africa". Options such as "only black people born in Africa" "all black people regardless of where they were born" and "black people who have not lived in Africa" which put emphasis on colour were all rejected by the respondents. When asked whether they considered themselves to be African, 94.7% respondents, regardless of race, said they were Africans. Their main claim to an African identity is that they were born in Africa and that they had roots in Africa. One white respondent argued:

My family has been in Africa since 1792. I have roots here and nowhere else.

Another respondent described himself as an "adopted" African because he was born in the UK but has lived in Africa since 1970 and could not imagine living anywhere else.

What is significant to note is that the respondents chose a definition of African which is not premised on colour. Their definition rejects a racially based one as propounded by Negritudists who put emphasis on blackness to define an African. [6]

[5] See More (2006:63) who poses the question "Who or what is African…in African Philosophy, African Humanism, African Personality"?

[6] The concept of Negritude was created by Leopold Sedar Senghor, Aime Cesaire and Leon Damas. It asserts and valourises blackness as a distinct African characteristic (Refer to Abiola Irele's *The African Experience in Literature and Ideology,* 1981).

Debates of who an African is have always ragged among African scholars. Professor Thobeka Mda of the University of South Africa (UNISA), for example, argues that white South Africans are Europeans and that they want to lay claim to an African identity for the sole aim of acquiring "a piece (huge pieces in fact) of land in this country, and therefore, this continent" (Mda, Daily News, 28 June 1999, cited in Fourie, 2008:289-290). Professor Pikita Ntuli, Director of the Sankofa Centre for the African Renaissance, however, differs with Mda on the grounds that "it was not easy to trap issues of definitions in neat packages for it is the nature of cultures to be hybrid" (Ntuli, Daily News, 6 July 1999, cited in Fourie, 2008:290).

Appiah (1992) also argues that sharing the same skin colour does not automatically lead to sharing the same perspective of the world in general, and Africa in particular. The African-American writer, Richard Wright, on his first visit to the Gold Coast also reiterated Appiah's argument when he despairingly said, "I was black and they were black, but my colour didn't help me" (Lopes, 1973:78).

All this shows that sharing the same skin colour does not automatically mean that all black people share the same perspectives on africanisation. Racialising the African identity is problematic as it essentialises the African experience and ignores the diversity that exists on the African continent. Africa's diversity of languages, histories[7], values and customs should serve as the springboard from which the africanisation process should

[7] Africa was not insulated from outside influences. Paul Gilroy (1993) for example notes that the Atlantic slave trade resulted in cross-cultural exchanges amongst the continents that were involved in the slave trade. The same could be said of colonialism. Through these historical events, Africa appropriated new cultures, languages and norms. In view of this, what then is African culture?

take off. That way no single racial group or culture will be privileged at the expense of the others.

3.3 Africanisation of Journalism curricula: should it be done?

Participants were asked if they supported the principle of Africanising the journalism curricula in Africa. The majority of the respondents (94.7%) felt strongly that the Africanisation of the journalism curricula was vital. Most of the respondents argued that Africanisation was necessary because most syllabi, books and case histories used in African journalism institutions are Eurocentric. They lamented the dominancy of the West on African journalism curricula. Statements such as 'must be responsive to Africa's needs and reflect the continent's diversity', 'be sensitive to African issues', 'see the African continent from an African perspective not from a Western one" dominated the responses. One respondent, however, questioned the notion of Africanisation. He argued:

> *I do not really know what we mean when we talk of Africanising journalism education when the practice of journalism is guided by the same principles; to educate, to inform, in the interest of diversity and democratic circulation of ideas and information. Be it in Africa or Europe, I think the fundamental principles that guide the practice of democracy are the same…*

This same concern was raised by Mokegwu (2005:16) who argued that the desire to Africanise journalism curricula in Africa should not be taken to mean that African journalism practice "would cease to recognize some universal fundamentals of journalism, like the pursuit of truth the question of social responsibility and recognition

of the right of the people to know in a democracy". In this regard, African journalism practice will be no different from Western practices.

When asked what they would consider to be the main features of an Africanised journalism curriculum, most of the respondents said they would expect the curriculum to promote African cultural values, African traditions, African history, African philosophies, issues of diversity, to mention but a few. However, none of the respondents interrogated the concept "African". As already stated above, defining who an African is, is a complex task fraught with problems. Ramose (2004:139) in his article "In search of an African Philosophy of Education", criticises Higgs and Parker for taking the "meaning of the term African for granted".

More (2002:63) poses the question "Who or what is African….in African Philosophy, African humanism, African personality?" When Ramose (1998: iv), for example, says "it is the African who is and must be the primary and principle (sic) communicator of the African experience", who exactly does he have in mind when he talks of the "African"? Similarly, when Botha and De Beer (2007: 201) advise that a shift towards an African epistemology should include "African history, philosophy, cultures, symbolic forms, achievements and needs", what did they mean by "African"?

It would appear therefore that a lot of scholars assume that when they make reference to "African" everyone knows who they are referring to. The term is very often used loosely with little thought of what it truly entails. There is, therefore, need to unpack the term "African" before the Africanisation of the journalism curricula in Africa can commence.

3.4 De-Westernisation of African journalism curricula: what does it entail?

A review of existing literature will show that African journalism scholars are agreed that African journalism curricula should be de-westernised (see Ankomah, 2008; Groepe, 2008; Botha & De Beer, 2007; Banda, Beukes-Amiss, Bosch, Mano, McLean & Steenveld, 2007; Wimmer & Wolf, 2005; Mbeki, 2003). However, few scholars have attempted to unpack what they mean exactly by de- Westernization. Asked whether they understood de-Westernisation to mean a complete removal of Western philosophies and epistemologies from African journalism curricula, the majority of the respondents (84.3%) rejected the suggestion [disagreed (63.2%) or strongly disagreed (21.4%)]. This result is further confirmed by their response to the question whether African journalism curricula should be informed by both Western and African philosophies. Seventy three point seven percent (73.7%) and 15.8% agreed and strongly agreed respectively. The frequency figures are given in the following Table:

Table 2: Responses to whether Western epistemologies and philosophies should feature in the African journalism curricula

	Q6A (All Western philosophies and epistemologies have to be completely removed from African journalism curricula)		Q6B (African journalism curricula should be informed by both Western and African philosophies)	
Responses	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	0	0	3	15.8%
Agree	0	0	14	73.7%
Not Sure	3	15.8%	2	10.5%
Disagree	12	63.2%	0	0
Strongly disagree	4	21.1%	0	0

The table above shows two questions that are diametrically opposed to each other. The responses to the questions, though with small variations, can be relied upon. In Q6A, for example, the trend of the responses is on the disagreement side, while for Q6B the participants are in agreement with the statement. The conclusion to be drawn from this is

that southern African scholars are on the whole against the idea of completely removing Western epistemologies from African journalism curricula.

Participants were also consistent in affirming the importance of Western influence in determining good journalist practices in Africa when they rejected the suggestion that African journalism curricula should get rid of Western journalistic standards to measure good journalistic ethics in Africa. The majority (73.7%) were of the opinion that this is not a good idea. An overwhelming majority (94.7%) also indicated that journalistic ethics and professional values in African journalism curricula should be partly informed by Western and international practices. Again, 89.5% firmly rejected the idea that African journalism schools should not be funded by Western aid agencies and Western non-governmental organizations. All this is in spite of the fact that some African scholars believe that it is these aspects of Western influence that perpetuate the dominance of the West on African journalism curricula (Mano, 2009; Mukasa &Becker, 1992).

The conclusion one can draw from these results, therefore, is that southern African scholars believe that Western philosophies and epistemologies, journalism ethics and professional standards have an important part to play in African journalism curricula. De-Westernisation, therefore, does not mean getting rid of everything that is Western. Western philosophies have become an integral part of African journalism education and,

therefore, cannot be wished away. Through contact with these philosophies, African educational thought has assimilated elements from Western cultures[8].

Thus it would be difficult, if not impossible to remove everything Western from African journalism curricula without distabilising the education and training of journalists in African journalism schools. The findings further confirm Mano's (2009:291) caution against a complete"de-linking [of] African media studies from international media studies". Africa is part of a global community and, therefore, cannot isolate itself from what is happening in the rest of the world. With regards to funding, it is possible that one reason for rejecting the suggestion that African journalism schools should not be funded by Western agencies stems from the fact that most journalism schools are underfunded in their own countries and, therefore, rely heavily on external funding. Without these funds, these programmes might not function effectively.

3.5 Pre-colonial African values: should they inform African journalism curricula?

Participants were asked whether they felt that pre-colonial African values should inspire African journalism curricula. The responses are captured in the graph below.

Figure 1: Responses on the pre-colonial African values

[8] Morley (1994:151) points out that "every culture has ingested foreign elements from exogenous sources with the various elements becoming 'naturalized' within it".

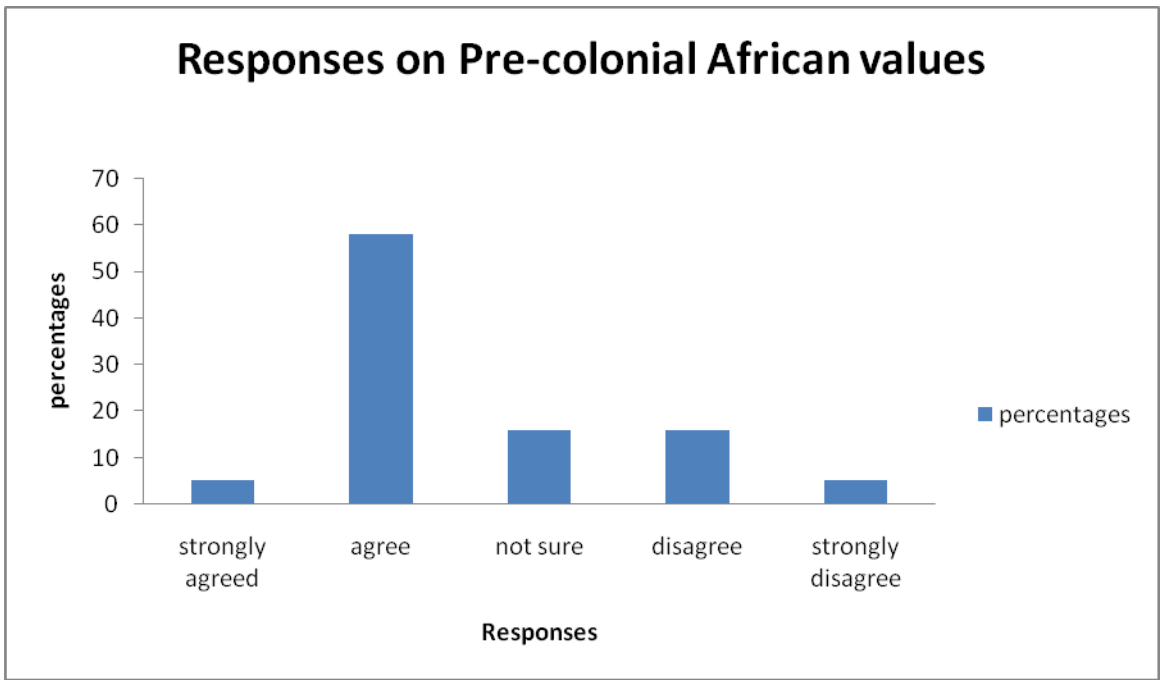

Figure 1 above shows that 63.2% [Strongly agree (5.3%), Agree (57.9%)] of the respondents believe that pre-colonial African values, norms and culture should inspire African journalism curricula. This is opposed by 26.1% who rejected the idea. Those who believe that pre-colonial cultures have a part to play in African journalism curricula seem to assume that there is a concrete pre-colonial culture to which journalism scholars can make reference to. Their belief is in line with Cabral's (cited in Chennells 1999) argument that there is an authentic African identity from which Africans were diverted at the time of colonialism. Africa was viewed as "a site of pristine cultural authenticity" (Ang, 1996:53) which site was now subverted and corrupted by foreign influence (Morley, 1994:151).The problem with this way of thinking is that it assumes that pre-colonial African cultures were static, an assumption which is not borne by history.[9]

[9] Kasfir (1999:93) quotes pre-colonial warrior masquerades which took place in South-Eastern Nigeria. At first the warriors who participated in these masquerades wore human skulls as masks, but with time, these changed into carved wooden imitations.

Kasfir (1993:93) challenges this notion when he says there is no authentic past and there never was:

> There are innumerable befores and afters in this history, and to select the eve of European Colonialism as the unbridgeable chasm between traditional, authentic art and an aftermath polluted by foreign contact is arbitrary in the extreme.

History shows that African cultures have always been in flux and continue to be in the twenty-first century. The process of africanisation should not, therefore, be reduced to "a simple binarism: an insulated, consensual black Africa versus an equally insulated and consensual white Europe" (Mngadi, cited in Botha, 2007:206).

3.6 *Ubuntu* philosophy as the bedrock of journalism curricula

Despite Africa's heterogeneity, some African scholars believe that *Ubuntu* philosophy is a common thread which runs through the beliefs, customs, value systems and socio-political institutions and practices of African societies (Diop, 1962:7; Kamwangamalu cited in Christians, 2006:242). Because of this belief, some African journalism scholars argue that *Ubuntu* philosophy should underpin African journalism curricula (Rabe, 2005; Christians, 2006; Botha & De Beer, 2007; Thloloe, 2008:3).

Participants were, therefore, asked whether African journalism training and practice should be underpinned by the core values of *Ubuntu* philosophy[10]. The majority of the respondents (78.9%) [Strongly agreed (5.3%) and Agreed (73.7%)] approved of the idea.

[10]The core values of *Ubuntu* are communalism, interdependence, humanness, caring, respect, sharing and compassion (Olinger, Britz and Olivier, 2007:8-10; Beets & le Grange, 2005:1202).

Asked whether *Ubuntu* philosophy is impractical in this hyper-commercial environment, the majority of the respondents (73.7%) felt that it is possible in this environment. This is illustrated in Table 3 below.

Table 3: The practicalities of *Ubuntu* philosophy in a hyper commercial environment

Responses	Frequency	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	1	5.3
AGREE	2	10.5
NOT SURE	2	10.5
DISAGREE	12	63.2
STRONGLY DISAGREE	2	10.5
Total	19	100.0

From the Table above, it would appear, therefore, that there is a general consensus that *Ubuntu* philosophy should be an integral part of African journalism education curricula. However, as African journalism educators debate how *Ubuntu* should be factored into the journalism curricula, they should also grapple with the darker side of *Ubuntu*. *Ubuntu* insists on consensus in society and this can lead to the victimisation and marginalisation of those whose voices are dissenting (Louw, 2001; Sono, 1994). Nolte-Schamm (2006) also cautions that we should not glorify or romanticise *Ubuntu*. She cites Sidane who says *Ubuntu* can be abused by those of a higher rank and status in society.

Be that as it may, Krog (2008) is of the opinion that *Ubuntu* is an important resource that can be exploited for the purposes of establishing a humane society and by extension a humane journalistic profession which puts society's needs ahead of the material needs of the journalists.

3.7 The philosophies of emerging economies[11]

Participants were asked whether African journalism curricula should tap into the philosophies of emerging countries, such as Brazil, China and India. Figure 2 below captured the responses of the participants.

Figure 2: Influence of philosophies of emerging economies in journalism curricula

[11] Ekecrantz (2009:82) identifies the emerging economies as Russia, Brazil, China, to mention but a few.

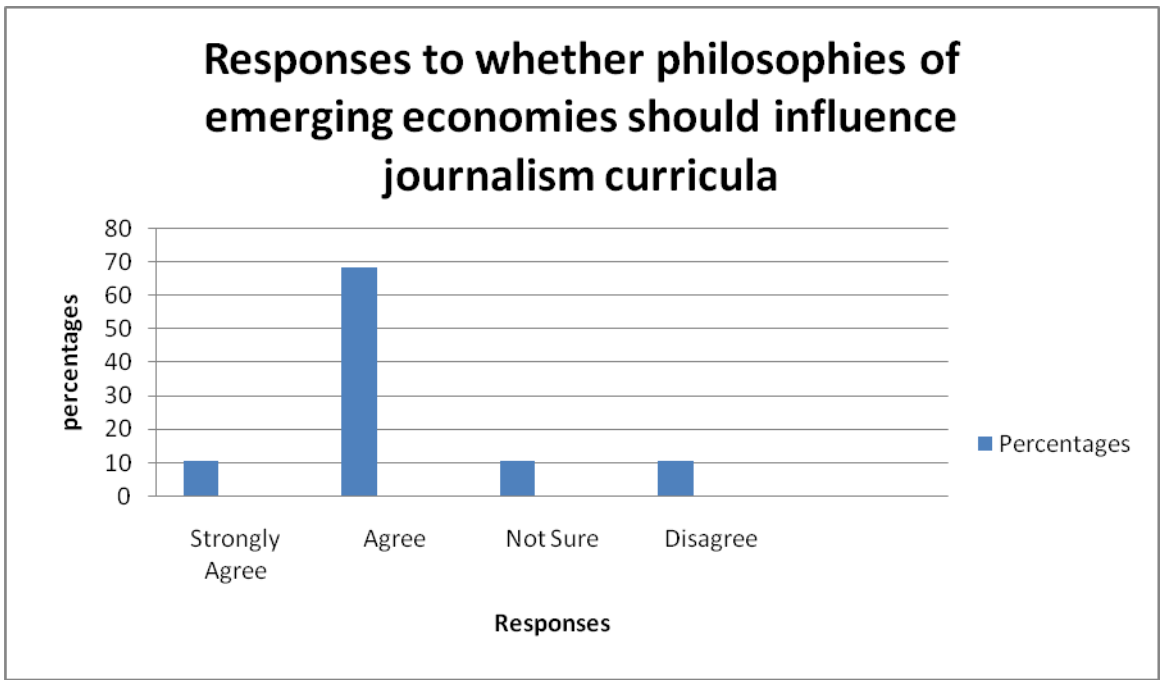

Figure 2 shows that the majority of the respondents (78.8%) [Strongly agree (10.5%) and Agree (64.8%)] were of the opinion that this should be done. This result is line with Thussu (2009:21-22) who notes that emerging economies, such as those of China and India, are challenging the dominancy of the West on the global communication markets. In his view, the "Chindia" challenge may have a long-term challenge on how capitalism evolves and international relations are managed. He believes that it is necessary to "think beyond the idea of the West versus the Rest and the de-Westernizing discourse…. and to 'decolonise' the way research in and about the majority world is conceived and conducted". Mano (2009:291) concurs with this argument when he argues that the de-Westernisation focus should be on critical local academic work and making links with other regional media studies networks such as those of Asia and Latin America, which are also "re-centering…cultural studies outside the Anglo-American axis and

participating cultural politics at a local level, but with an international agenda". Africa can, therefore, not afford to ignore these new powers which are playing a significant role on the world stage. African journalism scholars should thus understand the way global communication systems develop.

3.8 Teaching materials

Participants were asked what they felt about the use of textbooks and materials written by scholars from North America. The majority of the respondents (78.9%) saw nothing wrong with using textbooks and materials written by scholars from the West. Use of textbooks and materials from the West, however, is of great concern to many journalism scholars who believe that it is through these materials that the West dominates the dissemination of information and knowledge (Mano, 2009; Mukasa & Becker, 1992:41). UNESCO also pointed out this concern when it observed that "the content of these publications is, thus, often irrelevant to the social, political, economic and cultural reality in African countries" (UNESCO, 2002:2). According to Mukasa and Becker (1992:41) "teaching materials…from the respective colonizing powers" were aimed at "ensure[ing] the dominance of their [European] culture in their colonial enclaves".

It has to be acknowledged, however, that most developing countries find themselves compelled to use these Western materials because they are poor and do not have adequate resources to run their programmes. Be that as it may, there is need for journalism educators to use textbooks and materials from the West cautiously as these continue to perpetuate Western dominance over knowledge dissemination. What would be ideal is to

use more textbooks written by African authors so as to "infuse some 'Africanness' in … [the] repertoire of teaching / reference materials" Mano (2009:285).

The majority of the respondents (78.8%) also dismissed the idea of using **only** textbooks authored by African scholars. All the respondents, however, were in agreement about using textbooks from other developing countries. The conclusion that can be drawn from the above responses is that African journalism scholars believe that their curricula should be enriched by teaching materials, not only from Africa, but from other continents as well.

3.9 Languages for training journalists

Central to the discussion of the Africanisation of any curricula is the question of which language to use to prepare students to play their roles in society. Talk of africanisation inevitably leads to a discussion about a people's identity and culture, of which language is a fundamental component. Language is intricately woven to a people's self-definition of themselves in relation to the whole world (Wa Thiongo, 1986:4). It embodies within itself the values and norms of the people who speak it. It is not only a medium of communication, but it is also a conduit through which cultural heritage is transmitted from generation to generation (Ramphele, 2009).

Participants were asked if they thought indigenous languages should be used to educate and train African journalists. The responses of the participants are recorded in the Table below.

Table 4: Responses on what language(s) to use to train journalists

Responses	Frequency	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	3	15.8
AGREE	6	31.6
NOT SURE	2	10.5
DISAGREE	6	31.6
STRONGLY DISAGREE	2	10.5
Total	19	100.0

The Table above shows that 9 respondents (47.4%) are of the opinion that indigenous languages should be used to educate and train journalists. However, those who reject the idea (42.1%) are almost equal in number to those who agree. There is, therefore, no consensus amongst scholars whether to use African languages or not. It has to be remembered, however, that use of African languages to report issues will ensure that the media is accessible to the masses, which were formerly excluded because of the use of "foreign" languages. According to Curran (2002:225) the "media briefs the electorate and assist voters to make an informed choice at election time….Above all, the media provide a forum of debate in which people can identify problems, propose solutions, reach agreement and guide the public direction of society". The use of indigenous languages in the media will thus ensure that the formerly marginalized and disadvantaged people of Africa are given a voice to participate actively in the democratisation processes in their countries.

Asked if they considered languages inherited from colonialism such as English, French and Portuguese as African languages which should be used in the training of journalists, 63.2% of the respondents indicated that these languages were now part of Africa's languages and as such should be used in the training of journalists. Thirty-one point six percent (31.6%) were, however, not sure. Only 5.3% disagreed. The frequency results are recorded in the Table below.

Table 5: Use of colonial languages to train journalists

Responses	Frequency	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	1	5.3
AGREE	11	57.9
NOT SURE	6	31.6
DISAGREE	1	5.3
Total	19	100.0

This result, however, is not in line with Wa Thiongo's (1986:16) argument that the continued use of languages which were imposed on the people during colonization perpetuated the "neo-colonial slavish and cringing spirit" at a cultural level (1986:26). He believes that the colonizers used their languages to dominate "the mental universe of the

colonized" and thus calls for the use of African languages especially in literature and education to counteract that.

Appiah (1992) and Gilroy (1993), however, differ with Ngugi when they argue that the African continent has gone through many experiences such as slavery, colonization and apartheid, all of which shaped its cultures, including its languages. According to them these experiences had a profound effect on Africa and, therefore, cannot be wished away. Colonialism, for example, resulted in Africa being divided into Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone countries where English, French and Portuguese are spoken respectively.

All these languages are now widely spoken in Africa and they are intricately woven into the socio-economic and political fabric of postcolonial Africa. In view of this, therefore, continuing to look at these languages as foreign is to refuse to accept the reality of postcolonial African societies. One can conclude, therefore, that whilst it is desirable, if not vital for a journalist to tell Africa's story using indigenous language(s) spoken by the people in their localities, it is also equally important to learn those other languages inherited from colonialism.

3.10 A universal approach to the teaching of journalism in Africa: Is it possible?

Participants were asked whether it is possible for African journalism scholars to use the same approach in the teaching of journalism. The majority of the respondents (78.9%) felt that it was possible to do so. This finding seems to suggest that Africans are a

homogenous entity with the same outlook on the future of the continent. It does not take into consideration the ethno-culturally diverse and unequal population (Dersso, 2008:565). Dersso further notes that the desire by most postcolonial African states to create a culturally homogenous society has led to many ethnic conflicts and tensions in Africa, mostly because of the refusal by those in power to take into consideration the different communities and ethnic groups that make up the nation-state. To achieve some consensus on the africanisation of journalism curricula and avoid these conflicts within the world of academia, scholars, therefore, have to recognise Africa's diversity so as to create institutions and policies that will accommodate the diverse interests and identities prevailing on the African continent.

African journalism scholars also have to acknowledge the numerous influences and different historical experiences that have shaped Africa. Several scholars note, for example, that journalism curricula in Africa has been influenced by many traditions, thus resulting in different outlooks on how Africa should move forward (Skjerdal, 2009; Mano, 2009; De Beer, 2005; Rabe, 2002; Mukasa & Becker, 1992). To expect a universal approach in the face of this diversity is to be unrealistic to say the least.

3.11 The role of journalism

Participants were asked to indicate what role they believed African journalists should be encouraged to play in society. Participants were asked to indicate what role they believed African journalists should be encouraged to play in society. First, they were asked if

africanisation of journalism means encouraging patriotic journalism[12] so as to look after national interests. The majority of the respondents (47.4%) were in favour of patriotic journalism. Thirty six point nine percent (36.9%), however, did not approve of the idea. Their viewpoint seems to be in agreement with that of Ignatius Haryanto (2003) Vice Executive Director of the Institute for Press and Development Studies in Jakarta. He argues that patriotic journalism is a threat to press freedom and that in extreme situations it can lead to journalists lying to the public. Ammu Joseph (2010) also questions the credibility of patriotic journalism. He cites the example of the United States of America' s Department of Defence (also known as the Pentagon) which facilitated media coverage of the war by training journalists, assigning them to different sections of the army and enabling them to travel with the troops. Under those circumstances, one begins to question the credibility of the stories filed by journalists from the war front.

What is of interest, however, is that when asked if African journalism should encourage national interest ahead of individual rights of expression and other civil liberties, the majority (68.5%) disagreed with the suggestion. National interest, according to Joel Netshitenzhe (2002), the then Chief Executive officer of the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) in South Africa, is "the aggregate of things that guarantee the survival and flourishing of a nation-state". The media is expected to partner government in its developmental agenda by promoting governments' development programmes and educating the community. Wasserman and De Beer (2005:47), however,

[12] Patriotic journalism describes the kind of journalism that seems to occur when a country is in a state of war or some distress. Its aim is to give the government's viewpoint of the event.

argue that national interest "constitutes an attempt by government to influence the media to the official line". Because national interest is defined by government, there is a danger of politicians of a ruling party curtailing the reporting of certain issues on the grounds that it is in the 'national interest'. This could effectively muzzle the media and promote abuse of power by government.

With regards to African journalists scrutinizing the actions of their governments and holding them accountable, the respondents were all unanimous in their agreement that this is vital. This response was further affirmed by participants in their responses to the open-ended questions of the questionnaire. According to Curran (1991:86) the critical surveillance of government is an important aspect of the democratic function of the media. He notes that the media can perform a public service role by investigating and reporting malpractice by public officials (1991:86). One can cite examples such as the Watergate scandal in the USA and Armsgate in South Africa.

Asked whether this surveillance should extend to the corporate world and the media industry, the majority (89.5%) of the respondents felt that it should. This concurs with Curran and Park's (2000:14) argument that there is need to scrutinize the actions of media houses as well. They argue that in "many countries the owners of private media are part of the system of power and use their authority to muzzle the criticism of the state". Bagdikian (cited in Curran, 1991:87) is also of the view that some media enterprises form tactical alliances with government as a way of ensuring their dominance in the market. This raises the question, "Who watches the watchdog?" The media have fostered hegemonic values of believing that corporate power is free of controversy by not investigating the activities of big business. Curran (1991:87), therefore, concludes that

the free-market compromises rather than guarantees the editorial integrity of commercial media and impairs its oversight of private corporate media. In his view, "media conglomerates are not independent watchdogs serving the public, but self-seeking, corporate mercenaries using their muscle to promote private interests".

From the foregoing discussion, one can conclude that African journalists want the kind of journalism training that would encourage journalists not only to critique government actions, but also call the corporate world and the media industry to account for their actions.

When asked to articulate in their own words what the role of journalism should be in an African context, most respondents were of the view that journalism should promote national development. The concept "development", however, is open to a lot of interpretations. Proponents of modernization, for example, might explain development to mean applying economic and political systems of the West on Third World countries (Servaes, 1996b:31). Postcolonial governments, on the other hand, define development to mean being supportive, rather than critical of government programmes (Banda, 2006). Governments would thus expect a kind of journalism that works in partnership with it. The danger with this kind of journalism is that it would give national leaders an excuse to justify state ownership of the media and also the power to interfere in the workings of the media. Media freedom and freedom of speech are not considered a priority in this paradigm of development. One respondent captured this concern when she said:

> *Development must not be understood as "sunshine journalism"/pro-government of the day/uncritical.*

Banda (2006), however, defines development as the mobilization of people to participate actively in the democratic processes of the nation. Sen (cited in Banda, 2006) adds that development means people actualising the notion of freedom in their lives. In his view, a people's understanding of what freedom entails is an essential ingredient to development. This would involve a focus on freedoms such as freedom of expression, conscience, assembly and media to mention but a few (Banda, 2006:6).

One respondent captured it thus:

> *The role of a journalist in educating the masses to become critical and self-governing citizens that would hold government accountable is essential.*

Another respondent put it this way:

> *[To] contribute to the strengthening of democracy and development; [to] help people understand the concept of Rule of law and citizenship; [to] serve as a space for public participation.*

From the foregoing discussion, one can conclude that development goes beyond merely promoting government policies and plans on development. It also involves the people evaluating and interpreting the policies and plans so as to determine whether there is merit in supporting them or not.

4. Conclusion

This study set out to explore the perceptions of African journalism scholars on the Africanisation of journalism curricula. The study revealed that journalism scholars from southern Africa are generally agreed that the africanisation of African journalism curricula is vital. The respondents were concerned about the over-dependency of African journalism curricula on Western philosophies and epistemologies.

Despite this concern, the educators were also agreed that Africanisation of journalism curricula does not mean getting rid of Western philosophies and epistemologies completely. These were seen as an integral part of the African journalism curricula. They rejected essentialist views which look at Africa as a continent insulated against outside influences. There is a general agreement that the influences brought to Africa through slavery, colonization and many other historical events cannot be wished away. These influences have become an integral part of Africa and cannot, therefore, be wished away. African culture is not static. African cultures are a rich mixture of influences both from within and from without Africa.

The question of language was also explored in the study. Journalism scholars were of the opinion that it is important for journalists to be trained to report in indigenous languages of the continent. This would ensure that the formerly marginalized and disadvantaged people would participate adequately in national debates. However, the responses also show that it is equally important to use languages inherited from colonialism as these have become an integral part of the postcolonial African identity.

It also emerged from the responses that black people should never be treated as a homogenous entity. Africa is a continent of diversity and this diversity should be taken into consideration in the process of Africanisation.

Southern African scholars were also unanimous in their rejection of a racially based definition of African. For them anyone born in Africa, regardless of race, is an African. The implication of all this is that blackness should not be the only determinant of Africanisation.

Journalism scholars were also agreed that *Ubuntu* philosophy can serve as a basis for the Africanisation of the journalism curricula. The educators seem to be of the opinion that adopting *Ubuntu* values such as humanness, caring, respect sharing and compassion would add value to African journalism practice.

There is also recognition by journalism scholars that focus should not be on the West alone. There are other emerging world powers such as China and India, which are influencing the way information is being produced, distributed and consumed on the global stage. African journalism scholars can only ignore these influences at their peril.

With regards to the role of journalism in Africa, the educators were agreed that African journalism should scrutinize the actions of government and the corporate world so as to hold them accountable for their actions. The scholars were also of the opinion that

African journalism should promote development. However the concept journalism was not interrogated by the scholars.

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