

The knowledge commons, pan-Africanism, and epistemic inequality:
A study of CODESRIA

A thesis submitted to Rhodes University in fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy (Social Sciences)

by

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Abstract

This study is about the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA). Conceived in 1964 and formalised in 1973, CODESRIA is the longest-standing pan-African intellectual organisation on the continent. It was established with the primary objective of fostering greater collaboration between African scholars, and has acquired a reputation for challenging the marginalisation and fragmentation of African scholarship. However, there has been no systematic account of this important organisation. This study aims to cast light on this organisation and its intellectual contributions in the post-independence period.

It examines CODESRIA as a knowledge commons – a community of scholars that creates, manages and shares intellectual goods outside of the state and the market. It asks: what factors have shaped CODESRIA as a pan-African knowledge commons in the context of epistemic inequality? As a way of answering this question, it examines three key debates: the different meanings of pan-Africanism in CODESRIA, CODESRIA's defence of the academic project during structural adjustment, and African feminists' struggles to change CODESRIA. These debates exemplify the ways in which different generations of African scholars in the post-independence period have sought to make sense of and respond to the problems of inequality – both outside of CODESRIA and within CODESRIA.

This thesis approaches CODESRIA as a case study. It combines a document analysis with semi-structured interviews to construct and critique key intellectuals' understandings of the organisational design and practices of CODESRIA, the nature of its community and intellectual work. It supplements this with a descriptive analysis of CODESRIA's bibliometric and administrative data.

The study finds that CODESRIA has forged a distinctive form of pan-Africanism that offers a non-governmental and intellectual alternative to state-centric and bureaucratic forms of pan-Africanism. As a powerful counter-narrative to prevailing ideas of African intellectual inferiority, pan-Africanism has been an important motivational source for establishing and cohering CODESRIA's community. Although its pan-African organisational form has been complicated by the enduring influence of colonial frameworks and limited by the the material and institutional weaknesses of African universities, it has nevertheless acted as a mode of collective enquiry for troubling and expanding the colonial conception of Africa.

This study further finds that structural adjustment fundamentally reshaped the intellectual and material underpinnings of CODESRIA with complex and ambiguous results. In the short term, CODESRIA's analysis of structural adjustment led to considerable intellectual and organisational innovation so that it grew in size and influence. In the long-run, however, structural adjustment eroded the public universities upon which CODESRIA relied. This eroded the mechanisms to maintain its intellectual vigour and democratic character, and increased CODESRIA's dependency on donors.

The study also finds that the struggles of feminist scholars to change unequal gender norms in CODESRIA have been a source of significant intellectual and organisational renewal. Contestations over gender inequality within CODESRIA have given rise to a distinctive form of African feminism, which emphasises the historicity of gender relations in ways that reject essentialist and teleological accounts of African societies. Feminist struggles have also given rise to new standards of scholastic excellence that mark a meaningful departure from the skewed standards introduced under colonial rule. Nevertheless, the persistent minoritisation of female scholars in CODESRIA has significantly limited their capacity to effect institutional change, such that the ghettoization of feminist scholarship and the hollowing out of feminist discourses on gender remains a constant threat.

The central argument of this study is that inequality can motivate marginalised members to engage in the collective action required to create and reshape knowledge commons, but it can also constrain their collective action and threaten the long-term sustainability of the commons. The collective agency of marginalised individuals is therefore central to the flourishing of knowledge commons. Second, knowledge commons are intimately dependent on public goods, such as universities. Public goods are plausibly the source, and therefore the limit, of knowledge commons' capacity to flourish over the long-term. As a consequence, it is likely that knowledge commons are complements to public goods provision, rather than substitutes. Rethinking the knowledge commons in terms of the predicaments of African intellectual communities, I contend, provides new ways of understanding the possibilities, constraints and contradictions of knowledge commons in an unequal world.

This study contributes to the empirical literature on African intellectual communities. In particular, it provides critical knowledge on a scholarly community that has not only endured, but has managed to thrive in a context of profound economic and political instability. This

provides an indication of the institutions, practices, and intellectual resources that are required to ensure that African knowledge systems flourish over the long-term. This study also makes a theoretical contribution to the literature on knowledge commons, which are largely theorised using examples from the global North. It shows how reconceptualising knowledge commons in terms of inequality opens up new lines of empirical investigation. Building on existing commons research, it develops a methodological framework for comparative research on southern knowledge commons, which may also be of use for investigating commons in general.

Key words: African intellectuals; knowledge commons; epistemic inequality; pan-Africanism; structural adjustment; academic freedom; feminism

Declaration

I declare that “The knowledge commons, pan-Africanism, and epistemic inequality: A study of CODESRIA” is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Full name: Nimi Hoffmann

Date: July 2017

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nimi Hoffmann', written in a cursive style.

Signed:

Acknowledgements

One of the most fulfilling aspects of this research was the opportunity to meet many people who have been involved in the emergence of CODESRIA as a truly pan-African intellectual project. I have learnt a great deal from them, and it gives me much pleasure to acknowledge my considerable debts to them in print.

Among the senior scholars who graciously granted me interviews were Samir Amin, Shahida el Baz, Thandika Mkandawire and Fatou Sow. Their insights on the emergence of CODESRIA, in whose creation they played so important a role, were extremely valuable. No less valuable were the views of the second and third generation of post-independence scholars, who have been vital to ensuring that the community continued to flourish during the 'lost decades' of structural adjustment: Jimi Adesina, Isabel Casimiro, Carlos Cardoso, Teresa Cruz e Silva, Ousmane Kane, Sam Moyo, Raufu Mustapha, Jean-Bernard Ouedraogo, Ebrima Sall, Randrianja Solofo and Bahru Zewde. The views of those who have come more recently to CODESRIA have helped immeasurably to sharpen my thinking: Aghi Bahi, Alex Bangirana, Shamil Jeppie, Williams Nwagwu, Ibrahim Oanda and Lyn Osome. As long-standing personnel at CODESRIA's headquarters in Dakar, Francine Adade, Jean-Pierre Diouf, Yves Elonga, Abou Moussa Ndong and Mambinta Sall very generously shared with me their understanding of the nuts and bolts of the organisation.

There were two participants in the Council's history whose cooperation went well beyond anything I might reasonably have expected. Ebrima Sall was at the time the Executive Secretary, a time-consuming and pressurised role. He not only gave generously of his time in a lengthy interview, but also provided me with research space at the Dakar office, assisted me in tracking down several scholars who were more difficult to get hold of, and gave me permission to access CODESRIA's administrative archives.

Jean-Pierre Diouf has been a librarian with CODESRIA since 1987. The breadth and depth of his erudition is exceptional, and yet he insisted that he was too peripheral a figure to interview. This modesty was accompanied only by a generosity of spirit that often left me without adequate words with which to express my gratitude. While in Dakar, he guided my reading immeasurably and helped me to track down a number of important scholarly documents

that have unfortunately passed into some obscurity. When I left Dakar, we continued to correspond, and he always responded promptly to any requests for journal articles or books. Often, I would see that he had replied in the late evening, when his official work at the Council was finished. I am deeply grateful for his kindness, generosity and unflagging encouragement.

This study would not have been possible without the support and advice of Fred Hendricks. As a long-standing member of CODESRIA, his guidance was invaluable in identifying key debates and scholars in the organisation. He helped to check my preparatory interview schedules, advised me on how to plan the research, and lent his support in securing interviews with a number of scholars. Michael Neocosmos likewise gave of his valuable time to inform my understanding of the organisation and, together with Shamil Jeppie, proved to be an invaluable ally in securing a number of interviews during the 2015 General Assembly in Dakar.

During the course of the research, I was privileged to interview two formidable scholars in CODESRIA. I had interviewed the renowned agrarian scholar Sam Moyo in Dakar in 2015, and his enormous love – that is the only word I can use – for the community of CODESRIA, impressed itself deeply on me. Later that year, I was fortunate to interview the feminist philosopher Aminata Diaw, who very kindly pretended not to notice my terrible French, and whose deep insight into African scholarship was clothed in the modesty of a true scholar. Both Sam Moyo and Aminata Diaw have now passed away. It is with deep sadness and regret that I am unable to present them with a completed manuscript.

Just over a month after I had submitted this thesis for examination, I heard with profound sorrow that Raufu Abdul Mustapha had passed away. He had been my teacher at Oxford. For many of us students from the African continent, the disjuncture between our own experiences and the politely pejorative language used to describe the continent became a source of painful alienation. Raufu guided and supported so many of us with patience and humour, humility and wisdom.

And yet, this experience was more complex than a simple North-South divide in scholarship. I recall vividly how Raufu gently tried to dissuade me from taking his course on the history and politics of West Africa, explaining that South African students are typically isolated from broader African scholarship and I would find the course exceptionally difficult. He was right. Every week was a real struggle with debates and theoretical perspectives that I had no understanding of. But under Raufu's careful guidance, I was exposed to a rich and complex

literature. This included an introduction to the writings of Archie Mafeje, for my undergraduate education had resolutely excluded South African scholarship. The rigour and commitment of Mafeje's writings helped to anchor me in an alienating environment, and through him, I discovered the work of other CODESRIA thinkers, such as Ayesha Imam, Mamadou Diouf, Paulin Hountondji and Thandika Mkandawire. This then planted the seeds of an empirical study of CODESRIA. For if I was only beginning to grapple with the dynamics of epistemic inequality, CODESRIA's work had long since sought to articulate and challenge the skewed epistemic norms and practices that underwrote these inequalities.

More than anyone else then, I owe Raufu a profound intellectual debt of gratitude. I shall miss my correspondence with him, his gentle humour and the care with which he approached his vocation. It pains me deeply that I was unable to present him with this work.

No less an acknowledgement of gratitude is due to others who contributed to the making of this thesis. I am deeply grateful for the extraordinary support of my supervisor, Yusuf Sayed. His thoughtful and judicious supervision was undertaken in the finest tradition of intellectual apprenticeship. He consistently challenged me to think clearer and more deeply, generously shared his expertise, and paid keen attention to my queries and contestations. This apprenticeship has been marked, I think, by the mutual respect that is the bedrock of intellectual community.

I have been very fortunate to have Robert van Niekerk as my co-supervisor. His unfailing encouragement and enthusiasm for the project was a cheering brace during some of the more difficult parts of the research. I am deeply grateful for his role in securing institutional support from the university, without which I would have been unable to complete this project.

I owe a considerable intellectual debt to Charlotte Hess, who, together with Elinor Ostrom, helped to pioneer the study of knowledge as a commons. Her scholarship has been foundational to my thinking on knowledge commons, and over the course of our correspondence, she has very graciously guided me through the knowledge commons literature, and helped me to understand its underlying assumptions, gaps and strengths.

I am very grateful to Mala Singh and Wale Adebaniwi, who have, in different ways, urged me to view CODESRIA on its own terms, and not merely in relation to the North. In doing so, they have immeasurably enriched my understanding of African scholarly communities.

Over the course of the research, I have had the privilege of presenting work in a number

of different fora. The thesis proposal was clarified and sharpened by engagements with participants at the International Society for African Philosophy and Society, hosted by the University of Fort Hare. It was further tested by participants at the Berlin Summer School in Social Sciences, hosted by the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung and Humboldt University. I received valuable critiques of the conceptual framework from participants at the World Social Sciences Forum in Durban. My thinking on African feminism was deepened by participants at the International Colloquium on Marginalisation in African Philosophy at the University of Calabar. I am grateful to members of the Centre for International Education at Sussex University, who helped me to clarify my thinking on structural adjustment and its impacts on the academic project. The overall shape of the thesis was tested and refined by participants at the Emerging Researchers' Workshop hosted by the Ali Mazrui Centre for Higher Education at the University of Johannesburg. Throughout this period, the doctoral community participating in the Higher Education Programme at Rhodes University were an invaluable source of ideas, critique and mutual support. I am deeply grateful to the Centre for International Teacher Education at Cape Peninsula University of Technology, which provided a wonderfully warm and supportive intellectual home for much of the doctorate.

All of this would not have been possible without the support of the Flanagan Scholarship, which allowed me to pursue an independent research project and to spend time at different universities. I am also deeply grateful to the Research Office at Rhodes University, and in particular to John Gillam, whose unwavering commitment to young researchers has been critical for ensuring the intergenerational renewal of scholarship at the university.

I give thanks for the grace of my family. Simone, my sister, and Kabelo, umntu wam, Ntuthu and Mbazah, abahlobo bam. We have held each other through difficult times, and we have laughed together in the sweetness of life. This thesis is dedicated in loving memory of my mama, Jutta Ester Gertrud van Rooyen née Hoffmann (1951-2015).

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This study is about the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA). It was initially conceptualised in 1964 and was formalised as an organisation in 1973. As such, CODESRIA is the longest-standing pan-African intellectual organisation on the continent.¹ It was established by African scholars with the aim of strengthening the social science community on the continent, and has acquired a reputation for rigorous and pioneering intellectual work. CODESRIA is managed by a community of African scholars, rather than state institutions, market actors or donor organisations. As such, it is an important example of a pan-African *knowledge commons* that has not only survived, but has managed to thrive during the economic and political crises of the post-independence era. However, there has been no systematic account of this important organisation. This study aims to examine the unfolding of CODESRIA as a pan-African knowledge commons. It focuses on the ways in which different generations of African scholars in the post-independence period have sought to make sense of and respond to the problems of inequality – both outside of CODESRIA and within CODESRIA.

This chapter introduces the study. I begin by describing the context of the study. I explain what a knowledge commons is and why it is useful to view CODESRIA as a knowledge commons. I then outline the motivation for the study, set out the research questions and the central argument of the study, and explain how key terms are used in this study. I end by providing an overview of the methodology and structure of the thesis.

1.1. Context of the study: regional inequalities in scholarship

African scholars have often been concerned with the marginalisation of African scholarship (Hountondji 1990; Mamdani 1990a; Imam and Mama 1994; Mafeje 1998; wa Thiong'o 2005;

¹ CODESRIA has managed to retain its intellectual vibrancy and institutional health while many other pan-continental and regional scholarly organisations have declined or folded, such as the South-South Exchange Programme for Research on the History of Development (SEPHIS) and the Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD)

Devisch and Nyamnjoh 2011; Diagne 2016a). These scholars suggest that African research and teaching is typically characterised by prejudices, both self-imposed and externally imposed, against African research and in favour of that of former colonial powers and hegemons, such as Britain, France and the United States. They point to the way in which African research may be invested with less trust relative to research produced elsewhere, and to the way in which interpretive resources and standards of scholastic excellence on the continent are largely shaped in the global North.²

Furthermore, a number of scholars draw attention to the political and economic underpinnings of this marginalisation (Mkandawire 1988b; Diouf and Mamdani 1994; Federici, Caffentzis, and Alidou 2000; Zeleza 2002b; Olukoshi 2006; Assie-Lumumba 2006; Mamdani 2007). They emphasise that structural adjustment programmes were imposed on African countries by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which are largely controlled by northern countries. This led to state divestment from higher education in the 1980s and 1990s and resulted in the collapse of the research infrastructure necessary for producing quality scholarship. The effect of these programmes was to roll back the substantial post-independence gains in African scholarship. Universities' capacity for research declined significantly as the financial means and political will for research were withdrawn. Academic journals and publishers folded and professional associations collapsed. Scholars left the continent en masse and serious postgraduate training came to a halt. As a result, African scholarship became "fragmented and non-cumulative." (Mkandawire 1989, 12)

These accounts of the marginalisation and precarity of African scholarship are articulated within a context defined by broader regional inequalities in research influence. Scholars resident in the global South tend to have a substantially lower citation impact than their colleagues in the North (Lancho Barrantes et al. 2012; Pan, Kaski, and Fortunato 2012; Bakuwa 2014) and operate on the periphery of research collaboration networks (Boshoff 2009, 2010; Schubert and Sooryamoorthy 2010; Zelnio 2012), while the majority of journals that receive low-to-no citations continue to be located in the global South (Basu 1999; Bredan, Benamer, and Bakoush 2014). Work that explicitly addresses global knowledge flows using network-based citation

² "Global North" typically refers to former colonial powers and their outposts, as well as current hegemons, and "Global South" refers to former colonies (Connell 2007). However, these categories admit of variation in wealth and power.

analysis finds that scholars in the South overwhelmingly rely on scholarship from the North, while scholars in the North draw very little on scholarship from the South; the cumulative impact of this is that “dependence on knowledge produced in North America and Europe has increased [between 2000-2009]” (Mazlounian et al. 2013, 3–4). As a consequence, they argue, ideas are largely born in the North but consumed in the South.

Such regional inequalities in scholarship have both practical and ethical significance. First, the disparity in research influence represents a potentially significant opportunity cost for southern countries, since valuable research may go unnoticed or be under-utilised by researchers and policy-makers. This has implications for the efficiency of investments in higher education and research in Africa and elsewhere. As scholars have pointed out, it is inefficient to make a major investment in developing knowledge when that knowledge is not used (E. Ostrom and Hess 2007, 58). Second, as Fricker (2007) argues, such inequalities have significant ethical dimensions. The capacity to share knowledge speaks to a profound human need to be a knower. It also has a critical hermeneutical function, since it helps create and spread the categories and concepts with which we understand ourselves and our place in the world. Thus, she contends, when individuals are prevented from exercising their capacity as knowers and meaning-makers, their agency is harmed. She calls this epistemic injustice.

Within this context, there is a need to understand the role of southern scholars in resisting their marginalisation and countering the precarity of their scholarly communities. It is especially important to consider their capacity to act collectively, given the apparent scale and institutional depth of regional inequalities in scholarship. By acting collectively, scholars are able to craft intellectual resources and institutions that contribute to the development of thriving intellectual communities. This strengthens their capacity to shape unequal intellectual norms and engage other scholarly communities on an equal footing.

In this study, I concentrate on the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA). It is the longest-standing pan-African intellectual organisation on the continent, and was established “out of a desire to build an autonomous pan-African scientific community that is capable of interpreting social realities in Africa and contributing to scholarly, public and policy debates on African and global issues.” (CODESRIA 2012, 7) Abdalla Bujra, one of the founding members of the organisation, points out that “CODESRIA

was the first major pan-African organisation to be established and to operate on a purely voluntary basis outside the inter-governmental and international systems. It was a pioneering organisation in an untried territory” (Bujra 2003, 8). Understood thus, CODESRIA invites consideration as an attempt to redefine the contours of African scholarship by establishing a community of scholars who create, manage and share intellectual goods through collective action and self-governance.

1.2. The subject of the study: understanding CODESRIA as a knowledge commons

Over the last decade, the perspective of the knowledge commons has increasingly been used as a lens for investigating the ways in which communities produce and govern intellectual goods outside the state and the market. A knowledge commons is a “resource shared by a group of people that is subject to social dilemmas”, such that commons “require strong collective-action and self-governing mechanisms.” (Hess and Ostrom 2007a, 3, 5) The basic characteristic that distinguishes commons from noncommons is “institutionalized sharing of resources among members of a community.” (Madison, Frischmann, and Strandburg 2010, 841) In this section, I provide a historical and institutional overview of CODESRIA as an organisational entity framed in relation to the idea of a knowledge commons. I briefly set out the genesis of CODESRIA, and its objectives, activities and organisational structure. I then explain why it is useful to view CODESRIA as a knowledge commons.

The origins of CODESRIA can be traced to a conference organised by the Rockefeller Foundation in Bellagio, Italy in 1964 (Mkandawire 1988b). This conference aimed to review economic research that had been undertaken in postcolonial Africa. However, of the ten directors of research institutes invited, only two were African – Adebola Onitiri from Nigeria and Omer Osman from Sudan. The rest were either French or British. Three years after the Bellagio conference, Onitiri therefore organised a pan-African conference at the University of Ibadan, which brought together African scholars from across the continent. It was the first of many such conferences, and eventually led to the formal establishment of CODESRIA in 1973. Under the auspices of Onitiri, Samir Amin and Abdalla Bujra, CODESRIA was remodelled after the Latin

American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO) and broadened its mandate to act as a body that produces research, in addition to providing a research repository and organising conferences (Mkandawire, Sawyer, and Sané 2015).

Since that time, CODESRIA's central mandate has been to build "a strong African social science research community and mobiliz[e] it to work towards increasing the scientific understanding of the challenges facing Africa and the world as a necessary step towards overcoming these challenges." (CODESRIA 2012, 7) To this end, the Council engages in a wide variety of activities. It coordinates and funds collaborative research programmes, and publishes the work of African scholars through books, journals and monographs. Through its conferences and workshops, CODESRIA acts as a pan-African forum for collaboratively generating and critiquing intellectual work. It trains and sponsors emerging African scholars, with the aim of ensuring the intergenerational renewal of African scholarship. All of its intellectual work is freely available and can be accessed in English, French, Arabic and Portuguese, the main academic languages of the continent. The Council also provides a repository of African scholarship in general.

Over and above its critical role in fostering collaboration and sharing intellectual resources on the continent, CODESRIA is formally governed by its membership, which is open to all African scholars. However, the nature of this membership is complex. As one of the first organisations of its kind, CODESRIA has had to experiment with different organisational forms as the context has changed, so that it has gradually evolved into a highly complex and fairly unique entity. As it currently stands, the Council is an officially recognised pan-African organisation with headquarters in Dakar and international diplomatic standing, but its constituent members are not states; they are instead individual scholars and representatives of scholarly institutes across the continent.

CODESRIA's membership is in turn both formal and informal, since it is both a formally constituted organisation and an informal network of scholars and institutes. By 'organisation', I mean "a structure within which people cooperate according to accepted and recognized roles." (Carlsson and Wohlgemuth 1996, 6) By 'network', I mean a finite set of social actors and the relations between them (Wasserman and Faust 1994, 20).

As a formal organisation, CODESRIA's Charter stipulates its governing organs and rules,

and sets out its intellectual character and objectives. The Charter specifies that full membership in CODESRIA is limited to individual African scholars and representatives of African research institutions from across the five regions of the continent – North, East, West, Central and Southern Africa. These members constitute the primary governing organ of the Council when they meet at the triannual General Assembly, during which they set the broad intellectual and organisational objectives for the coming three years and elect an Executive Committee to oversee the implementation of these objectives. The Executive Committee in turn selects an Executive Secretariat, which is formally based in their offices in Dakar. The Executive Secretariat is responsible for the day-to-day management of the organisation and must submit the budget and programme of activities to the Executive Committee for approval. The Executive Committee also appoints members to a Scientific Committee, which is responsible for developing an intellectual agenda that satisfies the General Assembly’s intellectual objectives (See Appendix 1: CODESRIA’s organisational structure).

But CODESRIA is also a network of scholars and institutional relationships that spans Africa and beyond. Participation in CODESRIA events does not require membership, and thus, any African scholars on the continent or in the diaspora may play a role in the Council’s intellectual activities; in this way, CODESRIA acts as a site for creating and sustaining informal relationships between individual scholars. Personal relations between individual scholars also enable informal institutional relationships with CODESRIA. For instance, the Universities of Yaoundé I and II hosted its 12th General Assembly in 2008 without being formal partners of the Council. CODESRIA also has formal relationships with other scholarly and political institutions, both in Africa and internationally. For example, the Council has observer status at the African Union, and long-running institutional relationships with regional scholarly organisations such as the Latin American Council for Social Sciences (CLACSO) and the Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD). (See Appendix 3: CODESRIA’s formal institutional partners).

While CODESRIA’s Charter explicitly delineates its organisational character and networking role, it identifies CODESRIA primarily as a community. The preamble to the Charter begins with the statement, “We, the members of the social science community in Africa ... [r]ealizing the importance of consolidating this community,” and then goes on to emphasise that

CODESRIA is a community four more times; in contrast, it describes itself as an “organisation” twice, and mentions its networking role once (CODESRIA 2005). Similarly, its 2010 Research Policy statement uses the word “community” to describe CODESRIA thirteen times; and characterises itself as an organisation four times (CODESRIA 2010), while its 2012 Strategic Plan emphasises its character as a community thirty-two times, and describes itself as an organisation but once. This is just a small indication of the extent to which a *sense of community* pervades narratives of CODESRIA. By this I mean a “feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together.” (McMillan and Chavis 1986, 9) Over the course of this research, this sense of community often played an important role in scholars' accounts of the Council. This study therefore approaches CODESRIA primarily as a community of scholars, who create, manage, and distribute their intellectual work using both an organisational and network structure.

Today one might use the language of the knowledge commons to describe CODESRIA's institutional character. It is a good descriptive fit, since CODESRIA is a self-governing community of scholars that has developed institutions for creating and sharing intellectual resources outside of the state and the market. But it is also a good analytical fit. CODESRIA was founded and continues to operate in a context of widespread regional inequalities in scholarship. Viewed against this backdrop, the knowledge commons is useful for investigating how CODESRIA might contribute to changing these inequalities, because commons scholars focus on investigating how collective action can create new institutions that lead out of the path dependency of existing patterns of practice (E. Ostrom 1990).

1.3. Motivation for the study: examining thought from the South

In this section I provide a personal and scholarly rationale for conducting this study, and explain how this study fits into existing bodies of literature on the knowledge commons and African scholarship.

My interest in CODESRIA can be traced in part to my experiences studying at Oxford

University. Here I began to see that African societies are often an object of analysis, but their intellectual communities and the knowledge they produce are seldom factored into these analyses. I became curious about the causes and consequences of regional inequalities in scholarship, and began to search for a framework that would help me make sense of the broader social dynamics of scholarship. It was then that I turned to literature on the knowledge commons, since it struck me as offering a useful way of understanding the role of communities and institutions in shaping knowledge systems. However, this literature seldom seemed to deal explicitly with problems of inequality and marginalisation. For this reason, Marius Ostrowski, Nina Hall and I motivated for a special journal edition of *St Antony's International Review* devoted to exploring knowledge commons in an unequal world (Hall, Hoffmann, and Ostrowski 2012). In curating research from different disciplines on the topic, it became clear to us that southern intellectual communities were under-theorised, and that little attention had been paid to their capacity to shape intellectual norms. It was then that I began to think of CODESRIA as offering a study of the value and possibilities of a pan-African intellectual community in a deeply unequal world, and an example of how the limits and contradictions of pan-African scholarship might be negotiated.

This study of CODESRIA is intended to help fill the empirical gap in the literature on African scholarly organisations. Scholarship on CODESRIA is limited to a brief analysis of the writings of several CODESRIA scholars in a book chapter devoted to postcolonial theory (Amselle 2008); however, this analysis does not focus on CODESRIA as a scholarly community, and does not draw on primary data, such as interviews with scholars or administrative documents.³ As of yet, there is no systematic published account of this important organisation, other than some informal reflections (Mkandawire 1988b; Bujra 1990, 2003) and bureaucratic evaluations (Brunner, Afonja, and Djeflat 1985; Challenor and Gana 1996; Beckman et al. 2007;

³ It is also difficult to understand the reasoning underlying Amselle's interpretation of CODESRIA's scholarly contributions. He argues, for instance, "En débranchant l'histoire de l'écrit (Mamadou Diouf veut renouer avec une histoire d'avant l'État et l'écriture), c'est l'histoire que [les subalternistes africains] nient, pas seulement l'histoire occidentale. Et cela n'est pas sans rappeler l'ethnologie la plus classique, des sociétés du refus de l'écriture, du refus de l'histoire et donc aussi, du refus de l'État." (Amselle 2008, 164) Leaving aside the contentious suggestion that the advent of writing initiated history, Diouf has done extensive work on the history of the state in West Africa (see, for instance, O'Brien, Diop, and Diouf 2002), including analyses of the changing relationship between the state and intellectuals writing in Wolof and French (see, for instance, Diouf 1994a, 1994c). It is therefore incorrect to claim that Diouf disconnects the history of writing from that of the state, denies historical change and elides the role of the state.

Mkandawire, Sawyer, and Sané 2015).

This study is also intended as a contribution to the knowledge commons literature in two respects. First, this appears to be the first case study of a scholarly commons in Africa. CODESRIA is one of the few pan-African knowledge commons that has not only survived, but has managed to thrive during the economic and political crises of the post-independence era. As such, this study contributes to empirical literature on why some knowledge commons succeed and others perish, particularly in the global South. As commons scholars have emphasised, there is a need for systematic case studies to develop this young theoretical framework:

Structured inquiry [into a series of case studies] will provide a basis for developing theories to explain the emergence, form, and stability of the observed variety of knowledge commons and, eventually, for designing models to explicate and inform institutional design (Frischmann, Madison, and Strandburg 2014a, 2)

Second, this study has theoretical implications for understanding knowledge as a commons. Literature on the knowledge commons has largely focused on cases in the global North and has seldom analysed the role of marginalised groups in developing and governing commons. This study addresses a theoretical gap in the literature, by considering the implications of conceptualising knowledge commons that emerge out of the predicaments of African intellectual history.

While there are still no published scholarly accounts of CODESRIA, this will very shortly change. Over the course of this research, I have witnessed an unprecedented scholarly interest in the organisation. In the same year as I began this study, I discovered that two other doctoral students had begun their own studies of CODESRIA from the perspective of intellectual history and intellectual anthropology.⁴ At the same time, a group of established scholars began to

⁴ Ayanda Nombila, a doctoral student at Makerere University, is currently excavating an intellectual history of CODESRIA, and seems to be focusing on how key intellectuals have grappled with the problem of modernity and the concept of the political, and how they have negotiated questions of culture, nationalism, citizenship and belonging.⁴ In contrast, Michelle Cirne, a doctoral student at the University of Sao Paolo, is currently developing an anthropological account of CODESRIA from the perspective of Afro-Brazilian intellectual history, with the aim of exploring and developing post-colonial theoretical perspectives.

examine CODESRIA's genesis and administration in an attempt to learn from them as to how set up a similar organisation in Asia.⁵ Scholars in Southern Africa have also begun to examine CODESRIA as part of a broader project on genealogies of critical thought on the continent.⁶ All of this suggests that research on African intellectual communities is emerging as a field of study.

This thesis is intended as a small contribution to nascent scholarship on African intellectual communities. It complements and deepens existing studies of the knowledge commons, and will be of use for researchers, practitioners and policymakers concerned with the development of sustainable knowledge systems, particularly in Africa and the global South.

1.4. Research questions and argument

The objective of this study is to cast light on CODESRIA as a pan-African knowledge commons and its organisational and intellectual contributions to African scholarship. The intention is to examine the factors that have contributed to its emergence and persistence as a thriving commons in an unequal world. It is guided by a central question:

*What factors have shaped CODESRIA as a pan-African knowledge commons
in the context of inequality?*

As a way of answering the over-arching question, I examine three inter-related debates in CODESRIA: the different meanings of pan-Africanism in CODESRIA, CODESRIA's defence of the academic project under structural adjustment, and African feminists' struggles to change CODESRIA. Each debate allows for an interrogation of the overarching research question from a particular intellectual and historical vantage point, and yields the following sub-questions:

⁵ These scholars include Kuan-Hsing Chen, who is currently the editor of the journal *Inter-Asian Cultural Studies*, and Gao Shiming, a curator and art critic who is currently the vice-president of the China Academy of Arts. While their goals are fairly pragmatic, they seem to have approached CODESRIA from the perspective of Bandung humanisms – that is, Afro-Asian solidarity and the perspectives of Africa and Asia as a 'method' of social investigation.

⁶ Suren Pillay and Carlos Fernandes at the Centre for Humanities Research at the University of the Western Cape are currently working on a project that traces the genealogies of critical thought in and about Africa; as such, their intellectual history includes key thinkers in CODESRIA.

1. How have different meanings of pan-Africanism shaped CODESRIA as a knowledge commons?
2. How did CODESRIA respond as a knowledge commons to structural adjustment?
3. How have feminist struggles shaped CODESRIA as a knowledge commons?

These debates exemplify the ways in which different generations of African scholars in the post-independence period have sought to make sense of and respond to the problems of inequality – both outside of CODESRIA and within CODESRIA. As such, they allow for an examination of the ways in which CODESRIA has been shaped and reshaped by the interplay between the very concrete political and economic challenges facing African intellectuals on the one hand, and the realm of ideas on the other. These material constraints have had profound implications for the nature of the scholarly community which constitutes CODESRIA and the rules by which it operates. At the same time, ideas have played a central role in the shape and function of CODESRIA. When communities create intellectual resources, they can draw on these resources to design new institutions that lead out of the path dependency of existing patterns of practice. This confluence of ideas and material factors lies at the heart of conceptualising CODESRIA as a knowledge commons.

The first intellectual debate considers the ways in which pan-Africanism informed CODESRIA's genesis. The fluidity and complexity of Africanity has yielded different understandings of pan-Africanism in different times and places. The exhilaration and hope of independence, in particular, gave rise to new forms of intellectual and political solidarity, and CODESRIA's pan-Africanism reflected this expanded imagination, weaving together older ideas of black solidarity with the newer ideas of Afro-Asian solidarity in the 1955 Bandung conference and the emergence of the dependency school in Latin America in the 1960s. This rich and complex interplay of ideas has informed different articulations of pan-Africanism in CODESRIA, which have in turn shaped its organisational logic and intellectual goals.

The second intellectual debate concerns CODESRIA's defence of the academic project under structural adjustment. By the early 1980s, the exhilaration of independence had given way to deep concern about the threat to the continent's autonomy from the combined pressures of

economic recession and externally-imposed economic programmes. Following the oil crisis and a series of droughts in the mid-1970s, African governments approached the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank for emergency financing, which was provided on condition that they implement a package of wide-ranging economic reforms known as “structural adjustment programmes.” These reforms typically included the removal of currency exchange controls, a substantial reduction in export and corporate taxes, the privatisation of state-owned enterprises and the withdrawal of the state from the provision of public goods, including higher education. CODESRIA is perhaps most well-known for its wide-ranging analyses of structural adjustment and the ways in which it eroded the political and economic underpinnings of African societies. Yet, the crises of this period did not leave universities unscathed and fundamentally reshaped the nature of the academic project in Africa. In attempting to understand and defend the academic project during this period, CODESRIA also underwent fundamental intellectual and organisational changes that shaped the nature of its community, the kind of intellectual work it undertook, and the ways in which the community governed itself.

The third intellectual debate centres on African feminist scholars and their struggles to change unequal gender norms in CODESRIA. There has recently been a resurgence of feminist ideas in public discourse on the continent, but much of these ideas rest on older bodies of work by African feminist scholars. One important body of feminist work arose during the crises of structural adjustment, which helped to catalyse feminist contestations over gender inequality in CODESRIA. These contestations have, to a limited extent, shaped its organisational character – its membership, institutions and discourses. However, the intellectual tools that they developed and honed in these struggles are perhaps their more enduring contribution to CODESRIA. Tracing the unfolding dialectic between feminist thought and struggle within CODESRIA provides a way of rethinking what it means to produce African scholarship rooted in the particularities of African experiences.

The central argument of this study is that inequality can motivate marginalised members to engage in the collective action required to create and reshape knowledge commons, but it can also constrain their collective action and threaten the long-term sustainability of the commons. The collective agency of marginalised individuals is therefore central to the flourishing of knowledge commons. Second, knowledge commons are intimately dependent on public goods,

such as universities. Public goods are plausibly the source, and therefore the limit, of knowledge commons' capacity to flourish over the long-term. As a consequence, it is likely that knowledge commons are complements to public goods provision, rather than substitutes. Rethinking the knowledge commons in terms of the predicaments of African intellectual communities, I contend, provides new ways of understanding the possibilities, constraints and contradictions of knowledge commons in an unequal world.

1.5. Key terms used in the study

In this section, I briefly explain how I use key terms in the study: the notion of African identity underlying pan-Africanism, the idea of epistemic inequality, and the concept of the knowledge commons.

1.5.1. African identity and pan-Africanism

In the context of this study, I use the term 'African' to refer to scholars who are African nationals, as this is congruent with CODESRIA's membership and reach (CODESRIA 2012). As such, the term encompasses the peoples of the entire continent, from Egypt to South Africa, from Senegal to Ethiopia. It provides a more narrow focus than conceptions that include diasporas from the continent, encompassing the trans-Indian Ocean diasporas (such as Indians of Ethiopian descent), trans-Mediterranean diasporas (such as Spaniards of Moroccan descent), and trans-Atlantic diasporas (such as Brazilians of Yoruba descent) (Zezeza 2010). This use of the term provides a broader focus than conceptions that concentrate solely on black people South of the Sahara (Metz 2015), and is more consistent with common usage than conceptions that reject the use of landmass and race as unifying concepts in favour of ancient oceanic trade-routes (Bang 2004).

Related to this, I use the term 'pan-Africanism' to denote the aim of fostering mutual cooperation among the peoples of the continent, where this takes on political, cultural, economic and intellectual forms. While pan-Africanism has its genesis in the political and cultural agency

of African diasporas, particularly in the Caribbean and the United States (Mafeje 1990c), I focus on its manifestations on the continent, as this is where CODESRIA locates itself as a pan-African organisation – both geographically and intellectually.

However, the concept of ‘Africa’, and by implication, ‘pan-Africanism’, has a complex and rich intellectual history. As Zeleza (2010, 75) explains:

Africa is as much a reality as it is a construct whose boundaries – geographical, historical, and cultural – have shifted according to the prevailing conceptions and configurations of global racial identities and power, and African nationalism, including Pan-Africanism. At the beginning of the 21st century, the maps and meanings of Africa and Africanness are being reconfigured by both the processes of contemporary globalization and the projects of African integration and diasporaization ... It is an invention as much as ‘Asia’ or ‘Europe’ or the ‘West’ and all such civilizational spaces, but it has a physical, political, paradigmatic, and psychic reality for the peoples who live within or who are from its cartographic and cultural boundaries, themselves subject to shifts.

In this study, I therefore explore some of the contestations over the meanings of Africanness and pan-Africanism, particularly with regard to the ways in which these concepts are inflected by ideas of race, land and gender.

1.5.2. Epistemic inequality

Much of the work on inequality has examined its material dimensions, such as the unequal distribution of resources (Rawls 1971), unequal treatment by law (Dworkin 1977), and unequal capabilities to pursue ends a society has reason to value (Sen 1992). However, scholars are increasingly paying attention to the epistemic dimensions of inequality. This work focuses largely on how the dynamics of race and gender oppression constrain subordinate individuals

from exercising their capacity as knowers and meaning-makers (Fricker 2007), and how this might elide and damage their bodies of knowledge (Ramose 2003; de Sousa Santos 2005).

This study considers the regional dimensions of epistemic inequality, in terms of disparities between the global South and North, where the former typically refers to former colonies and the latter typically refers to former colonial powers and their outposts, as well as current hegemons (Connell 2007). In broad brushstrokes, regional inequalities in scholarship are conceptualised as the cumulative outcome of colonisation and post-independence developments, such as structural adjustment programmes. As such, the epistemic dimensions of inequality are deeply entangled with its political and economic dimensions. There are many examples of regional epistemic inequalities; these include the overwhelming dominance of northern scholars, as measured by citation and co-authorship patterns discussed above, and well-documented accounts of southern governments' preferences for northern expertise in policymaking (Padayachee and Sherbut 2007; Koch and Weingart 2016). As I discuss in the study, however, epistemic inequality is not only a feature of relations between the South and the North, but also occurs within the South along dimensions such as race, gender and region.

This study focuses on the institutional dynamics of epistemic inequality, where institutions are the formal and informal rules that are understood and used by a community and establish the “working do's and don'ts” for community members (E. Ostrom and Hess 2007, 42). In the context of African scholarship, these institutions may include intellectual norms requiring publication in northern journals, familiarity with disciplinary debates within these countries and a mastery of colonial languages (wa Thiong'o 2005).

This study departs from existing scholarship on epistemic inequality, insofar as such scholarship addresses dominant groups and examines the epistemic virtues (Fricker 2007; Masaka 2017) and institutions (Anderson 2012) they should cultivate in order to generate greater epistemic equality. In contrast, this study focuses on the agency of subordinate groups, and the ways in which they may achieve greater epistemic equality through their collective action, most notably, through the development of knowledge commons.

1.5.3. Knowledge commons

The knowledge commons refers to the institutional arrangements that facilitate the shared production and management of epistemic goods through collective action and self-governance. By ‘epistemic good’, I mean those goods that have a broad epistemic function in the sense that they have to do with our enquiry into and understanding of the world. Epistemic goods therefore incorporate a variety of phenomena, such as ideas, theories, ways of seeing and knowing, and bodies of empirical evidence. Commonly-cited examples of knowledge commons include open-source software collectives such as the Linux community, crowd-sourced reference projects such as Wikipedia, and open scientific endeavours, such as the Human Genome Project. As such, the term ‘knowledge commons’ is something of a misnomer, since it refers to a much broader class of epistemic goods than simply ‘knowledge’, understood in the Cartesian sense as true, justified belief.

Scholarship on the knowledge commons, however, has largely focused on examining commons in the global North (Hess 2012). As a consequence, knowledge commons are typically conceptualised as attempts to counteract intellectual property rights regimes, which began to occupy an increasingly hegemonic international position as a result of pressure from the United States and its industrialised allies in the 1980s (David 1993; May and Sell 2006). Yet CODESRIA significantly predates these intellectual property rights developments, and was clearly established to counteract the marginalisation of African scholarship. In this study, I therefore consider the implications of conceptualising knowledge commons that emerge in response to epistemic inequality, many of which are most visibly located in the global South.

1.5. Methodology

This is a case study of CODESRIA. It combines a document analysis with semi-structured interviews to construct and critique key intellectuals' understandings of the organisational design and practices of CODESRIA, the nature of its community and intellectual work. It supplements this with a descriptive analysis of CODESRIA's bibliometric and administrative data as a way of tracking changes in research themes and participation over time.

The document analysis focuses on CODESRIA's scholarly and administrative documents,

which I obtained from its archives in Dakar. The scholarly output includes unpublished conference papers and reports, and published journal articles and books. Administrative documents include annual reports, internal and donor evaluations of the organisation and strategic plans.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with twenty-eight intellectuals and officials in CODESRIA between 2015 and 2017. I supplemented this with secondary interviews that had been conducted by other scholars, as well as intellectuals' own writings that reflected on their time in CODESRIA.

In addition, I analysed bibliometric and administrative datasets. These include a dataset of theses that were published with support from CODESRIA, a dataset of all books published by CODESRIA, and a dataset of articles CODESRIA published in its longest-running journal, *Africa Development*. These datasets were used to identify research themes as well as demographic differences in authorship based on gender and region.

I use the Institutional Analysis and Design (IAD) framework as a way of structuring the case study. This framework was initially developed by commons scholars to investigate natural resource management, and has recently been adapted for the study of knowledge systems (E. Ostrom and Hess 2007; Madison, Frischmann, and Strandburg 2010; Frischmann, Madison, and Strandburg 2014a). This methodological framework is intended to help structure individual case studies in such a way that it becomes possible to compare different knowledge commons and eventually develop theories to explain, predict and design different commons arrangements. However, since this framework has been elaborated to investigate knowledge commons in the global North, it is located within the tradition of intellectual property rights and often conceptualises commons as attempts to prevent the enclosure of public knowledge by private companies. I therefore adapt the framework for the analysis of knowledge commons that emerge in response to inequality, many of which are visibly located in the global South. I use this modified framework to guide the selection of key variables and inform the hypothesised causal schema underlying the observed phenomena.

1.6. Thesis structure

Chapter 2 sets out the conceptual framework of the study, which aims to knit together two concepts that have hitherto been analysed separately – inequality and the knowledge commons.

As a way of doing so, I review bibliometric and historical literature on African scholarship, and use this to develop an analysis of regional inequalities in scholarship, and how this might shape knowledge commons. I argue that processes of colonial incorporation plausibly created epistemic institutions that are skewed towards northern scholarship. When viewed from the perspective of the knowledge commons, these skewed institutions theoretically facilitate collaboration between dominant groups, but impede collaboration among subordinate groups. This creates a situation in which the knowledge systems of subordinate groups become increasingly fragmented and non-cumulative, fragile and unstable. Thus, even if there were no discernible differences in quality to begin with, over time differences in quality between subordinate and dominant groups would emerge, so that these skewed institutions would become self-fulfilling. And yet, a knowledge commons perspective underscores not only the external constraints on the commons, but also the capacity of individuals to shape the commons through their collective agency. It is this interplay between the internal dynamics of the commons, and the external constraints of a deeply unequal world, which informs the study of CODESRIA.

Chapter 3 sets out the methodological framework of the study. Viewing knowledge as a commons brings to the fore the role of community in constituting and sustaining knowledge. I begin by discussing the methodological consequences of this view, regarding the way in which objectivity is conceptualised in relation to researcher positionality. I then set out the Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework, which has been developed and applied principally by commons scholars operating within the new institutional tradition. The framework has historically been used to investigate commons that emerge in response to private property regimes. I therefore use the preceding conceptual analysis to adapt the framework for the study of knowledge commons that emerge in response to the problem of inequality. I then set out the research design in the context of the IAD framework. I examine how the underlying causal schema in the framework clarifies the way in which the three sub-questions in this study are

closely knitted together. I then explain what kind of data the study draws on, the nature of the sampling strategy, how data was collected and analysed, and major threats to internal validity. I end by examining the ethical dimensions of this research and its limitations.

Chapter 4 asks: how have different meanings of pan-Africanism shaped CODESRIA as a knowledge commons? I begin by exploring intellectuals' different understandings of CODESRIA's genesis as a pan-African organisation. I then consider how these understandings are complicated by the political and linguistic divisions bequeathed by colonial rule. I move on to examine how the material and institutional character of African universities has constrained the organisation's attempts to navigate these divisions. I end by considering the ways in which CODESRIA's pan-African imagination enables a mode of collective enquiry into what it means to be an African intellectual.

Chapter 5 asks: how did CODESRIA respond as a knowledge commons to structural adjustment? I first consider CODESRIA intellectuals' analyses of the impact of adjustment on higher education. In light of this, I examine CODESRIA's organisational and intellectual efforts to combat the effects of adjustment on higher education. I then explore the ways in which the impacts of adjustment on higher education shaped CODESRIA's governance and intellectual character. While CODESRIA's analysis of structural adjustment led to considerable intellectual and organisational innovation so that it grew in size and influence, the dynamics of structural adjustment significantly weakened the universities and research institutes upon which CODESRIA relied, and thereby eroded the mechanisms to maintain its intellectual vigour and democratic character over the long term.

Chapter 6 asks: how have feminist struggles shaped CODESRIA as a knowledge commons? As a way of answering this question, I focus on CODESRIA's relationship with the Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD) in the period leading up to the publication of CODESRIA's first book on gender analysis in 1997, *Engendering African Social Sciences*. As feminists in AAWORD moved towards CODESRIA, this catalysed a contestation over gender inequality in CODESRIA. Examining the intellectual and institutional character of

these struggles, I contend, provides a way of rethinking what it means to produce African scholarship rooted in the particularities of African experiences.

Chapter 7 provides an analytical synthesis of the empirical findings as a way of reflecting on the over-arching research question of this study. It brings together the three preceding chapters to consider the intellectual and institutional features of CODESRIA that have contributed to its capacity to flourish as a knowledge commons in a deeply unequal world. Building on this analysis, I argue that the example of CODESRIA points to two inter-related features of knowledge commons that have hitherto been under-theorised: inequality within the commons, and the relationship between the commons and public goods. In light of this, I propose several further modifications to the Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework for investigating knowledge commons. I began this study by proposing modifications that were useful for comparative investigations into knowledge commons that emerge in response to inequality, many of which are visibly located in the global South. However, as this iteration makes clear, it may be useful for commons in general.

Chapter 8 concludes the study. I provide an overview of the findings and discuss how the study contributes to existing scholarship on knowledge commons and African intellectual communities. I then examine potential implications of the study for CODESRIA, and consider how the findings might inform future research. I conclude with personal reflections on the research journey.

Chapter 2: Conceptual framework

In this chapter I set out the conceptual framework of the study. Scholarship on knowledge commons has focused overwhelmingly on theorising commons from the social situations of dominant groups, particularly in the global North, and as a consequence, the role of inequality in knowledge commons is under-theorised. The conceptual framework therefore aims to knit together two concepts that have hitherto been analysed separately – inequality and the knowledge commons. As a way of doing so, I review bibliometric and historical literature on African scholarship, and consider how this might fit into and deepen the existing literature on knowledge commons. This provides a framework for investigating CODESRIA as a knowledge commons in the context of regional inequalities in scholarship.

Much of the work on inequality has examined its material dimensions, such as the unequal distribution of resources (Rawls 1971), unequal treatment by law (Dworkin 1977), and unequal capabilities to pursue ends a society has reason to value (Sen 1992). However, scholars are increasingly paying attention to the epistemic dimensions of inequality. This work focuses largely on how the dynamics of race and gender oppression constrain subordinate individuals from exercising their capacity as knowers and meaning-makers (Fricker 2007), and how this might elide and damage their bodies of knowledge (Ramose 2003; de Sousa Santos 2005). Since a knowledge commons is a community of scholars who create, manage and share epistemic goods through collective action and self-governance, the epistemic dimensions of inequality have a direct bearing on the character of a knowledge commons.

In the first section, I review quantitative evidence of regional inequalities in contemporary scholarship, which indicates that regional inequality in scholarship is widespread, and suggests that epistemic biases against southern scholarship may be one important mechanism underlying such inequalities. In the second section, I examine historical research on colonial universities in Africa, which suggests that these epistemic biases may be rooted in institutions established under colonial rule. These institutions are plausibly skewed towards intellectual traditions in the North, such that judgements about the intellectual superiority of northern

scholarship come to have the appearance of being consistent with good evidential reasoning and meritocratic principles. In pursuing these skewed standards of excellence, African scholars may help further disadvantage their community. As such, regional inequalities in scholarship are likely systemic in nature. In the third section, I review literature on knowledge commons and link this to the discussion on inequality. Knowledge commons are typically theorised as an attempt to counteract intellectual property regimes that restrict the open flow of knowledge vital for maintaining knowledge systems. Building on this theoretical framework, I show that the skewed institutions underlying systemic inequality should have differential effects: they impede collaboration among subordinate groups and facilitate collaboration among dominant groups. This creates a situation in which the knowledge systems of subordinate groups become increasingly fragmented and non-cumulative, fragile and unstable. Thus, even if there were no discernible differences in quality to begin with, over time differences in quality between subordinate and dominant groups would emerge, so that these skewed institutions would become self-fulfilling. I end by considering how a knowledge commons perspective underscores not only the external constraints on the commons, but also the capacity of individuals to shape the commons through their collective agency. It is this interplay between the internal dynamics of the commons, and the external constraints of a deeply unequal world, which informs the study of CODESRIA.

2.1. Evidence of regional inequalities in scholarship

The unequal relationship between scholarship from the global South and scholarship from the global North has increasingly become the subject of policy and scholarly discourse. In this section, I review bibliometric evidence of such inequality. Since this evidence is correlational, it cannot be used to adjudicate between the different potential explanations for regional inequality. I therefore turn to experimental studies for evidence of potential causes, which suggest that biases against scholarship from the South may be one important mechanism underlying regional inequalities.

There is compelling bibliometric evidence of regional inequalities in scholarship.

Scholars in the South tend to have a substantially lower citation impact than their colleagues in the North (Lancho Barrantes et al. 2012; Mazlounian et al. 2013) and operate on the periphery of research collaboration networks (Boshoff 2009; Schubert and Sooryamoorthy 2010; Zelnio 2012), while the majority of journals that receive low-to-no citations are located in developing countries (Basu 1999; Bredan, Benamer, and Bakoush 2014).

A recent analysis of global knowledge flows based on the citations of 13 million papers published between 2000 to 2009 finds that African scholars, and southern scholars in general, overwhelmingly rely on scholarship from the North, while scholars in the North draw very little on scholarship from the South. The cumulative impact of this, the authors note, is that “dependence on knowledge produced in North America and Europe has further increased.” (Mazlounian et al. 2013, 3–4) Despite significant progress in publication and citation rates, they argue, ideas are largely born in the North but consumed in the South.

It is important to note, however, that regions are complex historical constructs which encompass political, economic and cultural dimensions and are inflected by multiple identities that allow for substantial internal variation (Agnew 2000), such that there are likely multiple levels of inequality, between the South and the North, and within the South. In this respect, there is strong evidence of scholarly inequalities within countries and between countries. Within countries, there are substantial differences in university prestige and research influence, depending on the extent to which they are involved in producing elites, where such elite production may take on race, class, gender, and linguistic overtones (Subotzky, Njuguna, and Afeti 2008). There are also regional hegemony, who exert high levels of influence over other countries. Boshoff (2010), for instance, finds bibliometric evidence that South Africa dominates knowledge production in Southern Africa, even as the region as a whole, and South Africa in particular, is dependent on scholarship from Britain and the United States.

The evidence of inequality between the South and the North has strong colonial dimensions. Thus, for instance, Boshoff’s analysis of co-authorship patterns in Central Africa finds that 80% of papers are co-authored with a European or North American scholar, where 57% of these papers were co-authored with scholars from each country’s former colonial power (2009). Boshoff then conducted a survey with a sub-section of these authors, and found that their contributions were largely confined to collecting data for their European and American

counterparts, who defined the research agenda and theoretical framework.

However, such correlational evidence does not identify the causal mechanisms underlying the observed results. There are consequently a number of different posited explanations for regional inequalities in scholarship. On one end of the spectrum, inequality is thought to stem from a deficit of scholarly and technical capacity in the global South as a consequence of relatively lower rates of investment in education. As Koch and Weingart (2016) demonstrate in their empirical analysis of foreign aid experts in African policy-making, this is the dominant discourse in policy-making, and largely stems from northern donors and the institutions they have established in the South. There are different ways of elaborating this view. For instance, Harzing and Giroud (2014) argue that small, poor countries have little competitive advantage when it comes to international academic production. This echoes reports of the World Bank's initial position in 1986 that African countries should close their universities on the grounds that they were too poor to create and sustain high-functioning universities and were better served by outsourcing their technical needs to more competent northern universities (Mamdani 1993, 10).⁷ However, it seems the World Bank gradually softened this position to that of reducing public investment in higher education and initiating privatisation measures (Psacharopoulos, Tan, and Jimenez 1986), while placing research institutions under the pastoral care of northern donors and scholars, who could guide and thereby improve the quality and efficiency of southern scholarship (World Bank 2010).⁸

On the other end of the spectrum, this epistemic inequality is conceptualised as an expression of power. This discourse appears to be less prominent than the emphasis on capacity deficits; however it is important in more “heterodox” accounts of higher education and scholarship in the South. Scholars have emphasised the role of epistemic biases that have their

⁷ This report should be treated with some caution, as Mamdani provides no explanation as to how he came by this information – was he present at the meeting, did he hear it from someone who had attended the meeting, or did he extract this comment from the minutes of the meeting? Given the writings of key World Bank staff such as Psacharopoulos (see, for instance, Psacharopoulos 1982), it is nevertheless likely that some officials were of the view that universities were a luxury good that African states could ill-afford.

⁸ Thus, for instance, the World Bank established the African Capacity Building Foundation (AFCB) in 1991 to create the capacity for Africans to absorb knowledge and know-how from the global North and thereby improve their ability for “good governance and development management.” (African Capacity Building Foundation 2011) The World Bank set up the AFCB at the same time as it required African governments to divest from higher education as a condition of emergency financing. The chapter on structural adjustment addresses some of these contradictions in greater detail.

roots in colonial institutions (Hountondji 1990; wa Thiong'o 2005; de Sousa Santos 2005). They suggest that scholarship and teaching in the global South is often characterised by prejudices, both self-imposed and externally imposed, against southern knowledge and in favour of the knowledge of former colonial powers and current hegemonies, such as Britain, France and the United States. They point to the ways in which education institutions teach young people to invest less trust in southern knowledge relative to northern knowledge, in part by teaching them that the interpretive resources and standards of scholastic excellence are legitimately determined in the North. Other scholars emphasise the ways in which structural adjustment programmes mandated state divestment from higher education in the 1980s and 1990s, which led to the collapse of research infrastructure necessary for producing quality scholarship (Mkandawire 1988b; Olukoshi 2006). Since these economic programmes were imposed on the global South by international financial institutions, such as the World Bank, which are largely controlled by the United States and Western Europe, they have primarily been characterised as a form of neo-colonialism (Bangura, Mustapha, and Adamu 1983; Mkandawire and Soludo 1999; Federici, Caffentzis, and Alidou 2000; Heyneman 2003). While different versions of this discourse may emphasise different elements – institutional bias or economic imposition – common to both versions is a conceptualisation of epistemic inequality as a function of colonial and neo-colonial power.

Linked to this view, some scholars have argued that regional inequalities may also be a function of low levels of South-South collaboration. Gray (2010), for instance, contends that such collaboration is necessary for strengthening the visibility and influence of southern scholarship. However, she notes that there are significant financial, linguistic and institutional barriers to South-South scholarly collaboration. On her account then, the evidence of unequal relations with the North not only reflects the undue influence of northern scholarship, but also reflects barriers to collaboration within the South. Another potential explanation lies in the contemporary push for open scholarship, which may have deepened regional divides, insofar as gold open access standards are prohibitively expensive for scholars in the South and expose southern scholars to a flood of cheap intellectual imports from the North (Chan, Kirsop, and Arunachalam 2011; Contreras 2012). Finally, scholars also note that citation indexing services index a fraction of southern journals; consequently, the data is biased and may not accurately

represent citation and collaboration patterns (Basu 2010; Nwagwu 2010). All of these explanations are variations on the theme of power and the ways in which it manifests – as an impediment to collaboration among subordinate groups, as a means of expanding the influence of northern scholarship, and as a way of biasing data.

Thus, there are really two sets of explanations for regional inequalities in scholarship – one that focuses on power and another that focuses on quality. The discourse on power regards northern institutions as a potential *threat* to the autonomy and quality of southern scholarship; it stands in contrast to the discourse on capacity deficits, which views northern institutions as a *benefit* to southern scholarship. While it is difficult to adjudicate between these two kinds of explanations, the distinctive regional character of this inequality clearly merits further investigation. There is a need to draw causal inferences in the context of how geographical sources of knowledge influence perceptions about its credibility.

In my MPhil thesis I therefore designed an experiment that tests for the causal role of biases against scholarship from the South, by ensuring that university affiliation is randomly allocated and uncorrelated with the quality of an intellectual work (Hoffmann 2012). This was the first study of its kind. In the randomised double-blind experiment, postgraduate and undergraduate students from research-oriented universities in South Africa, India and Britain were asked to choose between two observably similar texts on a development-related issue along several dimensions of epistemic value. Each text was randomly assigned an institutional affiliation from either a university in South Africa or India, or a university in Britain.

I found substantial and statistically significant evidence of regional bias. Participants from South Africa and India indicated their preference for an intellectual work if they believed the author was from a university in Britain. Interestingly, these participants indicated not only that an intellectual work from Britain was more truthful, but also that it was more justified. It did not matter whether an institution was in a participant's home country or not, participants were equally likely to be biased against intellectual work if they believed it was authored at an institution in the South.⁹

⁹ In addition to the regional treatment, the two texts were randomly assigned either a female or male author, and the order of the texts was randomised to control for the well-documented phenomenon of order effect bias (Perreault 1975; Coupé, Ginsburgh, and Noury 2010; Novarese and Wilson 2013). The effect of the regional bias was 40% greater than the order effect bias and, in contrast to recent experimental evidence that female academics are biased

These findings are consistent with evidence that, in situations of entrenched inequalities characterised by narratives of intellectual inferiority, individuals from discriminated groups may hold skewed perceptions of their own intellectual capabilities (Steele 1997; Hoff and Pandey 2006), and may discriminate unintentionally against members of their own group (Beaman et al. 2009; Milkman, Akinola, and Chugh 2012).

All of this suggests that biases against scholarship from the South may be one important mechanism underlying regional inequalities. Furthermore, the bibliometric evidence of subordinate relations with former colonial powers suggests that these biases may have their roots in institutions established under colonial rule. The next section therefore considers the genesis and nature of these colonial institutions. In the third section on the knowledge commons, I return to the question of power versus quality, by exploring how biased institutions may lead to differences in quality.

2.2. The colonial roots of inequality

This section examines historical literature on African universities. I focus on a thematic analysis, which provides an indication of the broad causes and character of regional inequalities in scholarship.¹⁰ While a number of scholars suggest that colonial rule has contributed to regional inequalities in scholarship, the dynamics of this are unclear. I begin by noting that colonial education represents a relatively brief and narrow episode in the continent's intellectual history. In addition, scholars in different parts of the continent appear to have different estimations about the epistemic impact of colonial rule. In order to make sense of the apparently outsized epistemic impact of colonial rule and its differential effects across the continent, I examine how colonial education was shaped by different modes of colonial incorporation. The evidence indicates that differences in colonial incorporation resulted in differential investment in higher education, with the consequence that colonial universities have much deeper roots in labour reserves (or settler

against female students (Milkman, Akinola, and Chugh 2012), there was no statistically significant evidence of a gender bias.

¹⁰ It is difficult to provide an in-depth chronological analysis of higher education under colonial rule given the large number of countries involved. For an in-depth chronological account, see Lulat (2005) and Nwauwa (1997).

colonies). Despite these differences, the processes of colonial incorporation seem to have resulted in a more general, overarching relationship of epistemic subordination to colonial powers. Across regions, colonial universities were designed to educate an elite who would staff the civil service. As a result, I argue, the epistemic norms of colonial powers appear to have carried considerable political and economic heft. When the majority of universities were established in the post-independence period, they carried with them this elite logic, and have therefore continued to be orientated around these norms. A fundamental feature of these norms is that they are skewed towards the North, such that meeting standards of scholastic excellence involves learning to be biased against African scholarship. These skewed institutions therefore underpin a relationship of dependence between African and metropolitan knowledge systems, in which scholars are incentivised to contribute to the further disadvantage of African scholarship. This suggests that regional inequalities in scholarship are plausibly rooted in colonial rule, which gave rise to institutions, or rules, that are skewed in favour of northern scholarship. Within this context, regional inequalities in scholarship are likely systemic in nature.

Discourses on higher education in Africa often give the impression that colonial rule saturates the continent's intellectual history, so that African universities are intrinsically European in character. However, as Zeleza (2014) argues, this view is a result of three widespread misconceptions about the history of African universities. The first misconception is that universities are colonial institutions, in the sense that they were established under colonial rule. However, with the exception of South Africa, very few universities were established under colonial rule. In fact, the overwhelming majority of institutions were established by nationalist governments in the two decades following independence (see also Mamdani 1994a; Olukoshi 2006). As Zeleza notes, in 1960, there were less than three dozen universities on the continent; by 1995, this had grown to more than four hundred.

The second misconception is that universities are European institutions, in the sense that Europeans were the first to introduce universities into Africa. However, higher education long antedated the establishment of 'Europhone' universities in the nineteenth century, in which European languages and scholarly mores govern academic life. The history of higher education institutions on the continent includes the founding of the Alexandria Museum and Library in Egypt in the third century BCE, the establishment of monastic education in Ethiopia in the fourth

century CE, and the rise of Islamic universities, such as al-Qarawiyyin, which was established in Fez in 859 CE by Fatima Al-Fihri, the daughter of a wealthy merchant from Tunisia (see also Ajayi et al. 1996; Lulat 2005).

The third misconception is that the contemporary university as we know it is an innately European institution. However, as Zeleza (2014) notes, what has come to be understood as a distinctively European tradition of scholarship was in fact influenced by multiple traditions. Thus, for instance, Europeans inherited from Islamic scholarship not only their substantial corpus of knowledge, but also their scholarly practices and institutions, including the “the investigative approach to knowledge, an elaborate disciplinary architecture of knowledge, the notions of individual scholarship, and the idea of the college, all of which became central features of the European university exported to the rest of the world with the rise of European imperialism.” (Zeleza 2014, 216; see also Diouf 1994a; Diagne 2016a; Kane 2016)

Nevertheless, African scholars have often drawn attention to the profound impact of colonial rule on higher education. Scholars’ estimation of this impact differs widely. The South African philosopher Ramose (2003, 138) has characterised colonial rule as a form of “epistemicide ... the killing of the epistemology of the indigenous peoples.” In contrast, the Nigerian historian Ajayi (1969) has argued that colonialism was an episode in African history; that is, an episode among many, rather than the pivot upon which African history turns. Commenting on this, the Ghanaian philosopher Sekyi-Otu writes:

Colonialism as an episode in the life of a people, a rude interruption of the rhythms and idioms that sustain their local and common humanity, a digression from the terms of their moral argument with themselves, a distraction, a hell of a major distraction, yes, but a distraction all the same. (Sekyi-Otu 2003, 11)

Indeed, this is the approach that a number of West African scholars take. Diouf (1994a), for instance, has characterised Sufi Wolof intellectuals and Francophone intellectuals as constituting different poles of the same intellectual continuum in Senegal, while Diagne (2016a) has focused on excavating and deepening the relationship between Sufi Wolof scholarship and Francophone scholarship. In contrast, in Southern Africa, the discourse has largely focused on rescuing and

protecting indigenous knowledge from colonial knowledge systems (see, for instance, Hoppers 2001; Maila and Loubser 2003; Le Grange 2007). This suggests that scholars in Southern and West Africa tend to have different estimations of the epistemic impact of colonial rule.

How then, does one make sense of the apparently outsized epistemic impact of colonial rule and its differential effects across the continent? As a way of approaching the problem, I turn to Amin's (1972, 1976) pioneering work on colonial institutions. Amin's historical inquiry into colonial institutions is motivated by an attempt to understand why different colonies have experienced distinct post-independence trajectories, at the same time as African economies have in general continued their subordinate relations with former colonial powers. On the basis of this historical inquiry, Amin develops typologies based on the different ways in which African economies were integrated into subordinate relations with the colonial order. As Mkandawire (2010) shows in his study of tax handles, these different modes of incorporation resulted in different kinds of institutions that persist today. Yet, as Hountondji (1990) argues, the processes of colonial incorporation have not only affected economic activities, but have also shaped scholarly activities on the continent. Applying this insight, if one considers the literature on the history of colonial higher education against this theoretical backdrop, one can begin to see how these different modes of incorporation have also resulted in different levels of investment in higher education, and therefore different levels of institutional rootedness. At the same time, the processes of colonial incorporation have resulted in a more general, overarching relationship of epistemic dependence on colonial powers.

I begin by considering differences in colonial incorporation. Amin (1972) divides African economies into three groups, according to the way in which they were integrated into the colonial order: (1) Africa of the cash crop economies, (2) Africa of the concessionaire companies, and (3) Africa of the labour reserves. Subsequent empirical work has found that the division maps closely onto the mortality rates faced by European settlers (Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson 2001).¹¹

¹¹ Amin (1976, 3128–3319) stresses that this typography is not exhaustive, since there are countries that are based on other systems, such as the feudal structure of Madagascar. Mkandawire (2010, 6) adds to this that some countries exhibit a mix of Amin's typographies. Thus, southern Mozambique was primarily a labour reserve, while northern Mozambique was much closer to the Africa of concessionaire companies. Furthermore, the white settler economy sometimes drew on a labour reserve of dispossessed Africans from within the economy itself (such as in Kenya,

In areas where colonial authorities faced high mortality rates, they seem to have been reluctant to invest in their colonies, focusing rather on extracting as many slaves and as much natural resources with as little expense as possible. This was a form of predatory production, which resulted in cash crop economies such as Senegal and economies treated as the private resources of concession companies such as the Belgian Congo. In such contexts, colonial authorities were unwilling to invest in higher education, viewing it as an additional unnecessary cost (Ajayi et al. 1996). Moreover, in colonies such as the Gold Coast (roughly present day Ghana), the British had designed a system of rule which relied on the identification of men who were willing to rule on their behalf. These men were then designed as “chiefs” who controlled “tribal” lands. It seems that such “chiefs” were often reluctant to support higher education, as this would create a parallel elite with whom they would have to compete for power in the colonial system (Nwauwa 1997).

African intellectuals in cash crop economies and concessionaires were therefore largely educated at the metropole. Thus, for instance, Julius Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania observed, “The British ruled us for 43 years. When they left there were two trained engineers and 12 doctors. This is the country we inherited”. (Nyerere 1999) It was only after the threat of American influence in the form of missionary educationalists, coupled with Africans' post-war agitation in the 1940s, that British authorities began seriously to consider setting up universities in some of these colonies in order to diffuse and manage these pressures (Assie-Lumumba 2006). Some universities were established as national entities, such as the University College of the Gold Coast, established in 1948, but most were regional universities intended to serve a number of colonies, such as the University College of Makerere in Uganda, founded in 1949, or the University College of Ibadan in Nigeria, founded in 1948. These were all off-shoots of the University of London, which provided staff, developed the curricula and awarded degrees (Ashby 1966). The French also set up a small number of overseas campuses after the war. The University of Paris established the Institute of Higher Studies in Tunis in 1945, the University of Dakar in 1950, and the University Antananarivo in 1955 (Ajayi et al. 1996).

In contrast, where mortality rates of Europeans were lower, colonial authorities began to

Zambia or South Africa), but at other times used an entire country as a labour reserve (such as Lesotho, Swaziland and Malawi functioning as labour reserves for the mining sector in South Africa).

develop labour reserves often associated with racial segregation and migrant labour. These colonies functioned to dispose of unwanted labour from Europe and thereby diffuse political tensions in the metropole; they were characterised by a white settler economy that relied on cheap African labour drawn from ghettos or labour reserves. The presence of a large class of settlers with vested interests in the colonial economy and a level of political clout meant that the rate of colonial investment in labour reserves was considerably higher than the investment in predatory economies defined by taxation and plunder (Mkandawire 2010). In the case of South Africa, Britain’s most fully realised settler colony, the University of Cape Town was established as the South African College in 1829 with the aim of educating white male settlers. In line with colonial priorities, it took nearly a century before consideration was given to higher education for black people; the University of Fort Hare was established in 1916 with the aim of educating black men who had converted to Christianity (Johnson 2014). In Algeria, France’s most developed settler colony, higher education was also mostly confined to settlers. It began with the establishment of the School of Medicine in 1857, followed in 1879 by the creation of four institutes of pharmacy, sciences, letters, and law, which merged to form faculties of the University of Algiers in 1909 (Sicard 1964). In comparison, the first accredited universities in West Africa were only established after World War Two (Nwauwa 1997).

Colonial universities have therefore had much deeper institutional roots in labour reserve economies than in cash crop economies and concessionaires (see Table 1 below). This helps explain scholars’ different estimations of the epistemic impact of colonial rule in Southern and West Africa. It suggests that these regions were subject to different forms of colonial incorporation, which resulted in different levels of investment in higher education, and therefore different levels of institutional rootedness.

Table 1: Forms of colonial incorporation

<i>Colonial type</i>	<i>Countries</i>	<i>Colonial universities¹</i>

Cash crop economies (enlarged West Africa)	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda	1948 – University of Ghana 1948 – University of Ibadan 1949 – Makerere University 1957 – Cheikh Anta Diop University
Africa of the concession companies (Congo Basin)	Congo Kinshasa, Congo Brazzaville, Gabon, Central African Republic, Rwanda, Burundi	1954 – University of Kinshasa 1956 – University of Lubumbashi
Africa of the labour reserves (East and Southern Africa and parts of North Africa)	Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe	1829 – University of Cape Town 1866 – University of Stellenbosch 1873 – University of South Africa 1896 – University of the Witwatersrand 1903 – University of Johannesburg 1904 – Rhodes University 1904 – University of the Free State 1908 – University of Pretoria 1909 – University of Algiers Benyoucef Benkhedda 1910 – University of KwaZulu-Natal 1916 – University of Fort Hare 1945 – National University of Lesotho 1951 – University of Antananarivo 1952 – University of Zimbabwe 1956 – University of Nairobi 1962 – Agostinho Neto University 1962 – Eduardo Mondlane University 1964 – University of Botswana 1964 – University of Malawi

1. The names and shape of universities have changed over time. For ease of reference, I use their contemporary names. Source: Constructed from the classification of forms of colonial incorporation by Amin (1972, 1976) and Mkandawire (2010), together with historical accounts of universities by Ashby (1966) Heggoy and Zing (1976), Ajayi et al. (1996), Lulat (2005), Whitehead (2005), Assie-Lumumba (2006) and Zeleza (2006).

This account, which focuses on variations in colonial incorporation, departs from the

dominant approach, which focuses on differences between French and British colonial rule. As Madeira (2009) explains, scholars have tended to conceptualise colonial education as flowing from different policy objectives. British colonial education is often viewed as part of a policy of indirect rule, which would enable colonies to become self-governing within the framework of the empire (see, for instance, Whitehead 2005), while French colonial education is often viewed as a natural outgrowth of their attempts to assimilate Africans into French culture (see, for instance, Heggoy and Zingg 1976). This sharp distinction, Madeira argues, is at odds with the ways in which British and French policymakers influenced each other and adopted each other's policies, such that it is not possible to ascertain a distinctive policy of indirect rule in opposition to that of assimilation. Rather, she urges us to pay attention to the structural commonalities across colonial education systems.

Perhaps the most striking commonality across different modes of colonial incorporation is the role of metropolitan universities in designing and administering colonial universities, which were essentially set up as junior branches of metropolitan universities. British and French academics were seconded to colonial universities, while the bureaucratic structure of the university, its academic tradition and disciplinary outlook, as well as teaching style and language of instruction were intended to approximate that of universities in Britain and France (Hountondji 1988; Whitehead 2005). Moreover, universities in Britain and France, rather than those in the colonies, examined and awarded degrees. In the context of British colonies in particular, the potential to mould the intellectual life of colonies by establishing satellite institutions and thereby enhancing their reputations resulted in British universities becoming involved in a "scramble" for educational influence in the colonies (Nwauwa 1997, 137).

One of the rationales for the pastoral role of metropolitan universities was based on what one might call an early version of the capacity deficit view. Colonial administrators seemed to have struggled to apprehend the value of indigenous scholarship. For instance, the University of Timbuktu, which had flourished since the 12th century in the Kingdom of Mali, was characterised by French administrators and academics as a site of Islamic dogma rather than a place of learning (Nwauwa 1997, xiii), despite rich and influential scholarly traditions in areas such as mathematics, philosophy, jurisprudence and history (Jeppie and Diagne 2008). Moreover, rather than being conceptualised as intellectual agents, it seems that Africans were often conceptualised

as intellectual objects or tools. Thus, for example, Lord Hailey, a colonial administrator of Britain's West African colonies and the chief coordinator of the African Research Survey, argued that the continent was a "living laboratory" in which Europeans might experiment and test out new theories (Lord Hailey 1938, quoted in Tilley 2011, 5).

A second rationale for the pastoral role of metropolitan universities derived from the political pressure exerted by African elites on colonial authorities. The economic and political logic of colonialism meant that colonial education was necessary for entering the civil service, such that it became an important mechanism for young African men to advance their material ambitions, their social standing, and their political agency with regard to the nationalist struggle for independence (Falola 2001). As a consequence, attempts by colonial administrators to adapt universities to local conditions were often resisted as discriminatory, particularly since local graduates found that colonial civil servants considered their qualifications inferior to the qualifications of those educated at the metropole (Nwauwa 1997, 149).

Thus, perhaps the most profound driver of the subordinate relationship between colonial and metropolitan universities lay in the elite logic of colonial higher education, which was designed to educate an elite (settler or native) who would staff the civil service. Since the civil service was part of the colonial state apparatus, the epistemic norms of the colonial power were concretely invested with political and economic heft. In this way, colonial universities came to be associated with social prestige and the potential for material advancement. Since the epistemic norms of these universities located the "geography of reason", as Gordon (2011) puts it, firmly within Western Europe, the idea of a quality education came to mean an education orientated towards Western Europe. Importantly, these epistemic norms were not simply imposed from outside, but rather emerged in the uneasy negotiation between governor and governed, the contours of which were shaped by the political and economic structure of colonialism. As a consequence, the departure of colonial rule did not automatically mean the departure of colonial norms.

Indeed, the elite logic of higher education seems to have largely carried over into the post-independence period, when the majority of universities were established. Commenting on his own experiences in the post-independence period, Mamdani characterises universities as follows:

The new post-independence African university was triumphantly universalistic and uncompromisingly foreign. We made no concession to local culture. None! We stood as custodians of standards in outposts of civilisation. Unlike our counterparts in Asia and Latin America, we did not even speak the cultural languages of the people. The language of the university was either English, French or Portuguese. As in the affairs of the state, the discourse of universities also took place in a language that the vast majority of working people could not even understand. There was a linguistic curtain that shut the people out. (Mamdani 1993, 11)

Mamdani's comments point to the ways in which the university was profoundly shaped by the ethos of the state, such that continuities between the colonial and post-independence state translated into continuities between colonial and post-independence higher education. This does not mean that the post-independence university was designed with colonial rule in mind. Rather, the state sought to educate an elite who would drive a developmental agenda. Yet, as Mamdani emphasises, the colonial conceptualisation of an educated elite who would be the vanguard of "civilisation" remained largely intact. Here, it is important to note that the epistemic centre of "civilisation" subsequently shifted somewhat towards the United States during the Cold War, in part because the United States actively attempted to influence the content and structure of African higher education in order to counteract the influence of socialist ideas on the continent (Guyer 1996; Assie-Lumumba 2006). Yet this exercise of soft power is plausibly contiguous with that of colonial influence, insofar as African universities continued to be shaped by the imperative to act as custodians of bodies of knowledge controlled by institutions in more powerful countries. In this regard, a survey of scholars at six African universities in 2003 provides evidence of this contiguity; it found that the majority of those surveyed believed that African scholarship continues to be determined by institutions and scholars in the North (Crossman 2004).

As a way of delineating the role of epistemic norms in creating inequality, Hountondji (1990) invokes the views of an outsider, De Certaines, a French biologist who was educated at

the University of Dakar (now Cheikh Anta Diop):

In the African universities where I was trained, there was a scientific teaching quite valid in the subject matters I had to learn, but it taught dependence rather than real science. I mean that, for three years I was told how biology had developed through experiments that necessitated the use of facilities unavailable on the spot. Therefore in order to do biology, students had to go abroad. Such and such scientific results were published in such and such journals, but these journals were European or American, and one had to read them abroad. In short, during three years, thanks to teachers who were good ones and of whom up to sixty percent were African, I received good teaching and learned, at the same time – but for me, this was, of course, not as serious as it was for my fellow students who did not return to France – I learned that, in the end, all I could do as a biologist in the future would have to be done under the control of American centers, American periodicals, with European facilities, and that all I could ever do at the University of Dakar was to duplicate European experiments, or to conduct minor experiments that would have to be submitted, for publication, to European journals. All this apparently good teaching only led to a feeling of dependency toward those places where science was really being done. I was told, in a sense: here you are working on the margins of science; if you really want to reach the heart of the matter, you will have to leave. All my fellow students from that time have continued doing biology; some of them have become secondary school teachers, but those who wanted to do research actually left. How could such a dependent teaching lead to real development? (De Certaines 1978, quoted in Hountondji 1990)

De Certaines' testimony brings to the fore the way in which higher education is a process of teaching future scholars particular standards of scholastic excellence. For students in African universities to grasp and adopt these standards is for them to understand that research from northern universities is excellent in virtue of its intellectual and geographic location. By these

rules, the attainment of scholarly excellence in the African academy involves the attainment of the proper understanding that African scholarship is fundamentally derivative of and dependent on northern scholarship. On Hountondji's account then, regional inequalities in scholarship are not accidental or the result of "original backwardness" (Hountondji 1990, 7). Instead, they are an outcome of colonial incorporation that has created a situation in which subordinated groups are taught to become dependent on their subordination.

Thinking about regional inequalities in scholarship in terms of broader processes of colonial incorporation is useful in several respects. First, it situates epistemic inequalities as part of wider historical dynamics that involve the subordination of societies, and thereby draws our attention to the way in which the epistemic is intertwined with the economic and the political. This in turn allows us to think about knowledge as a system, and thereby to consider the institutional character of epistemic inequalities. In the language of new institutional economics, institutions are "the rules of a game in a society or, more formally, [as] the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction. In consequence they structure incentives in human exchange, whether political, social or economic." (North 1990, 1) In the intellectual realm, scholastic institutions arguably consist of rules or standards of excellence that partly favour the North. Individuals in the South who aspire to count as excellent therefore have incentives to follow these standards and thereby derive personal gain. However, in doing so, they contribute to entrenching this skewed relationship, so that their broader scholarly community is placed at further disadvantage. Here, *systemic inequality* refers to these skewed rules and to the way in which they incentivise individuals to contribute to the general disadvantage of their community.

Seen from this perspective, epistemic biases against African scholarship are not at odds with meritocratic principles. Instead, these biases are built into what Merton (1973) considered to be the normative ethos of science, in which the assessment of quality and the distribution of rewards within academic disciplines are determined by the application of universal standards of excellence. Pace Merton, the universality of these standards is plausibly not a function of their unbiased character, but is instead likely a function of the increasingly hegemonic role of northern scholarship. Understood this way, epistemic inequality operates at the level of institutions, and effective resistance to such inequality therefore requires a reconfiguration of these institutions.

So when one considers the evidence of regional inequalities in scholarship, and

particularly the findings of students' diminished trust in scholarship from the South, it seems reasonable to believe that these patterns of thinking reflect and entrench systemic inequalities. These systemic inequalities are plausibly defined by institutions that emerged during the processes of colonial incorporation, and are skewed in such a way that they incentivise individuals to contribute to the general disadvantage of their group. In the next section, I consider in greater detail the way in which skewed institutions affect the flourishing of knowledge systems, using the theoretical lens of the knowledge commons.

2.3. The impact of inequality on the knowledge commons

The knowledge commons refers to epistemic goods that are created and managed by a community; they are held in common. I begin by describing how common goods are defined in distinction to other kinds of goods, such as public goods. I then briefly explain the genesis of this young body of scholarship, and set out the central problem motivating scholarship on the knowledge commons. In contrast to the older literature on resource commons, which was initially motivated by concerns over the negative impact of free access and over-use, the tragedy of the knowledge commons is conceptualised as a *lack* of access and use stemming from intellectual property rights. Such over-fencing, scholars argue, creates artificial barriers to the open flow of knowledge vital for maintaining knowledge systems. Building on this theoretical framework, I show that the skewed institutions underlying systemic inequality should have differential effects. Skewed institutions enable the sharing of knowledge among dominant groups, but constrain the sharing of knowledge among subordinate groups. Consequently, systemic inequality plausibly leads to a form of over-fencing among subordinate groups, such that their bodies of knowledge become increasingly fragmented and non-cumulative, while powerful groups are able to build strong knowledge systems that are cohesive and cumulative. This is one way of explaining how regional inequalities have not only persisted, but have deepened over time. Moreover, since these institutions exclude subordinate groups from governing their own knowledge systems, these systems are likely to be fragile and unstable. Thus, when a subordinate group establishes a knowledge commons, it can be understood as an

attempt to challenge systemic inequality by creating a flourishing knowledge system. This helps us understand the rationale for organisations like CODESRIA, which was founded with the explicit aim of facilitating collaboration between African scholars.

Unlike most goods, epistemic goods are intangible and non-material. By “epistemic good”, I mean those goods that have a broad epistemic function in the sense that they have to do with our enquiry into and understanding of the world. Epistemic goods therefore incorporate a variety of phenomena, such as ideas, theories, ways of seeing and knowing, and bodies of empirical evidence.¹² Their existence is a function of the people who produce, manage and use them, and therefore the institutions or rules that they devise to manage this process (Ghosh 2007). As a consequence, epistemic goods can be characterised in a number of different ways, depending on several factors, including how epistemic goods are conceived, the nature of the communities that epistemic goods are intended to serve, and the kind of discourse in which the analysis is embedded (Chambers and Gopaul 2008; Tilak 2009; Singh 2014).

The language of the knowledge commons refers to epistemic goods that are treated as a common good, and falls within a broader economic distinction of all goods into four kinds depending on the extent to which they are subtractable and excludable, a distinction initially developed by Samuelson (1954), and further refined by Vincent and Elinor Ostrom (1977). Table 2 sets out this categorisation in terms of epistemic goods.

Table 2: Categorisation of epistemic goods

	<i>Excludable</i>	<i>Non-excludable</i>
<i>Subtractable</i>	Private goods (e.g. biomedical patents)	Common goods (e.g. Wikipedia)

¹² As I use it, the term “epistemic good” has the same import as Hess and Ostrom’s use of the term “knowledge” (2007a, 8), however I avoid using this term as its meaning in epistemology is far more specific and contentious.

Non-subtractable	Club goods (e.g. universities as an old boys' club)	Public goods (e.g. state-funded university research)

Since epistemic goods are intangible, the extent to which they are subtractable and excludable is consequently dependent on the nature of the community in which epistemic goods are embedded and its institutional arrangements. Epistemic goods produced within a market, such as the pharmaceutical industry, are viewed as goods that have a high degree of subtractability and excludability, since sharing trade secrets diminishes the profits available to the company and the company is able to exclude access in the form of intellectual property rights.¹³ In this context, they are treated as private goods. At the same time, there is strong evidence that private sector innovations typically rely on a vast storehouse of epistemic goods that belongs to all (Heller 1998; Boyle 2003). Often, these epistemic goods have been produced at state-funded institutions such as universities, and when they are made available for all to use we can think of them as a public good. Sometimes these epistemic goods are produced by members of a collective who are also involved in governing the collective, so that they have a flatter organisational structure than the more vertical power relations between citizen and state, as is the case with crowdsourced data and technologies. In these cases, scholars speak of the knowledge commons, because epistemic goods are managed and produced by a community through a process of collective action and self-governance, although the epistemic goods themselves may not be subtractable (Hess 2012). Finally, epistemic goods may be subject to various forms of gate-keeping and exclusion, with the result that the production and management of epistemic goods resembles an exclusive club. An example of this is the way in which access to university education in South Africa has historically been determined by a hierarchy of race, class and gender, such that the scholarly community is largely constituted by a club of white men. As of 2012, black women constituted

¹³ More carefully, the economic benefits of these epistemic goods are treated as subtractable by the institutional arrangements of the market. However, the benefits of these same epistemic goods can be treated as non-subtractable when provided as a public good. This was in part the reasoning underlying the founding proposal for a Global HIV Vaccine Enterprise, which aims to develop an HIV vaccine for the global public domain as a counter to 'Big Pharma's' attempt to develop and patent an HIV vaccine for profit (Klausner et al. 2003).

just 2% of full professors in the country; in contrast, black men constituted 11% of the professoriate; white women constituted 20% and white men constituted just under 60% (Higgins et al. 2016).

As Hess and Ostrom see it, the perspective of the knowledge commons is a very new one, and emerged particularly with the diffusion of the Internet in the global North in the 1990s:

There appears to have been a spontaneous explosion of “ah ha” moments when multiple users on the Internet one day sat up, probably in frustration, and said, “Hey! This is a shared resource!” People started to notice behaviors and conditions on the web – congestion, free riding, conflict, overuse, and “pollution” – that had long been identified with other types of commons. They began to notice that this new conduit of distributing information was neither a private nor strictly a public resource. (Hess and Ostrom 2007a, 4)

These problems, such as free-riding, are social dilemmas, since they arise from the tension between individual gain and social benefit.¹⁴ This tension is not unique to commons, but it is a strong defining feature of commons, because they are created and governed by a community. The collective action and self-governance required to manage a commons means that a healthy commons is defined by how well the community manages these social dilemmas. In this respect, viewing knowledge as a commons is a useful heuristic, because it focuses our attention on knowledge as a system and the institutions that enable or constrain its flourishing. Moreover, it takes a long-term view of epistemic goods as belonging to all humanity, although they may belong in the short-term to specific nation-states, companies, clubs or individuals. As such, the sustainability of knowledge systems is a central theoretical preoccupation in the knowledge commons literature.¹⁵

¹⁴ Hess and Ostrom (2007b, 350) offer the following pithy definition of free-riding: “Occurs when one person seeks their self-interest at the expense of others by not contributing to a joint effort when the person will benefit from the contributions of others.”

¹⁵ This discussion glosses over the complex legal debates concerning the definition of a commons. As Benkler (2014) argues, the need for a stable, shared definition of the commons within legal scholarship has not been resolved. Moreover, he contends, a single definition of a commons across multiple disciplines and domains has proven to be elusive, in part because different disciplines are motivated by different concerns. Nevertheless, the above examination of the different social modes of managing epistemic goods shows it is easy enough to identify an

The knowledge commons received its first concrete and systematic treatment with the publication of *Understanding Knowledge as a Commons* in 2007, edited by Hess and Ostrom. The volume sets out a theoretical framework for conceptualising knowledge commons, and then uses examples of commons situated in the United States and Western Europe (such as open educational resources and open software collectives) to explore the dynamics of commonly-managed knowledge systems and the conditions under which they are able to survive and thrive. As the editors see it, this approach to understanding knowledge flows from two different intellectual histories (Hess and Ostrom 2007a, 12–13). First, it is rooted in the tradition of resisting the enclosure of resource commons in Europe, such as grazing lands and forests. Over a period of five hundred years, the state removed communal rights and allocated them to private interests. This tradition of resistance informs what Boyle (2003) has called the fight against the “Second Enclosure Movement,” which has sought to fence off the “intangible commons of the mind,” through rapidly expanding intellectual property rights. Second, it is rooted in a tradition in the United States, which emphasises the importance of shared spaces and knowledge in fostering democratic societies that are able to hold political elites to account. This is a narrative associated with the practice of town commons, communal libraries and collective action. These two traditions underscore the activist thrust of much commons literature, which has been used to develop mechanisms to resist enclosure. It is perhaps most closely aligned with the open access movement, which has sought to create legislation, policy frameworks, institutional architectures and political pressure for opening up software, creative works, scholarly publications and data – scientific, governmental and corporate (see, for instance, Willinsky 2005). The open access movement demonstrates the ways in which communities can engage in collective action to create intellectual resources and new institutions that mark a meaningful departure from widespread private intellectual property regimes.

Since the framing of knowledge as a commons is located within the older tradition of the resource commons, it is useful to understand how the resource commons literature is structured in response to the tragedy of the commons. Discussed and elaborated by a variety of theorists, from Thucydides to Aristotle, the problem of managing common-pool resources, such as

instance of a knowledge commons, even if it is difficult to provide a definition that captures all instances of the knowledge commons across different domains and disciplines.

pastures, was perhaps given its best-known formulation by Hardin (1968, 1244):

Each man is locked into a system that compels him to increase his herd without limit – in a world that is limited. Ruin is the destination toward which all men rush, each pursuing his own best interest in a society that believes in the freedom of the commons. Freedom in a commons brings ruin to all.

The problem can be conceptualised as a prisoner's dilemma game, in which the strategy to consume as much as possible dominates each player's approach, although they both know that cooperation will be more beneficial. As a consequence, common-pool resources are likely to be over-consumed and under-produced. Eventually, the pool collapses under the weight of individuals acting in pursuit of their own self-interest to the detriment of all. The tragedy of the commons is intended to illustrate the failure of collective action in the absence of coordinating mechanisms from the state or the market.

Yet, as Ostrom has demonstrated, the problems of free-riding and predation that lie latent at the heart of commons regimes are neither inevitable nor ubiquitous. Drawing on numerous careful empirical studies of commonly-held stores of resources, such as groundwater basins, lakes, woods, pastures and fish-stocks, Ostrom and her colleagues have identified and modelled the social rules which promote successful common management of limited resources. Resource commons are able to survive and thrive when appropriate rules are defined and managed by the community, a system of self-monitoring and graduated sanctions is in place, community members have access to low-cost conflict resolution mechanisms, and there are clearly-defined boundaries to the community (E. Ostrom 1990, 90–102).

However, while empirical work on the resource commons has drawn from a wide array of common pool arrangements, particularly those developed and managed by marginalised groups in the global South, much of the knowledge commons literature focuses overwhelmingly on knowledge systems in the North and pays little attention to the dynamics of social exclusion and inequality, such as those of race, gender, class or region. As Hess (2012) notes in an article that functions as a postscript to *Understanding Knowledge as a Commons*, the rich international flowering of literature in the intervening years has focused overwhelmingly on theorising the

commons from the social situations of dominant groups.¹⁶

A review of the literature on the knowledge commons confirms this view. The *International Journal of the Commons*, the main journal for commons scholarship, published 26 articles dealing explicitly with the knowledge commons between 2007 (the date of its inception) and 2017. All of these articles focus on commons in the global North, with the exception of one article, which analyses the communal management of sacred sites in Kyrgyzstan (Samakov and Berkes 2017). The second full-length treatment of the knowledge commons, *Governing the Knowledge Commons*, provides eleven empirical case studies of commons (Frischmann, Madison, and Strandburg 2014b). Without exception, all case studies are located in the United States and Western Europe, or as is the case with Contreras' (2014) study of the Human Genome Project, focus on international commons that are effectively controlled in the North. Insofar as southern commons receive an empirical or theoretical treatment, scholars tend to focus on the threat that northern intellectual property regimes pose to indigenous knowledge in the form of what Shiva (1997) originally called *biopiracy*: the predatory capture or patenting of southern bio-knowledge, such as the use of indigenous medicinal plants, by northern corporates (see, for instance, Joranson 2008; Abrell 2009; Gupta 2011; Bollier 2014 chapter 9; Ouma 2014; Lucchi 2016; Foster 2016). While this is undoubtedly important, it by no means exhausts the problematic of southern commons, since these are clearly not limited to the common management of bio-knowledge. At the same time, an exclusive focus on biopiracy works to reify the theoretical centrality of northern commons and its emphasis on intellectual property rights.

The emergence of a small, but growing body of literature on scholarly knowledge systems in the South is an important step to addressing these gaps. However, this literature tends to focus on the impact of northern open access regimes on southern knowledge systems, and the ways in which such information philanthropy may crowd out southern scholarship and thereby increase dependency on northern scholarship (Nyamnjoh 2009; Chan, Kirsop, and Arunachalam 2011; Contreras 2012; Nwagwu 2013). Insofar as the dynamics of southern commons are considered at all, they are typically informed by the question of how to develop southern open access regimes, and do not provide much empirical information on the dynamics of existent

¹⁶ It is precisely for this reason that her article was commissioned for a special journal edition of *St Antony's International Review* devoted to examining knowledge commons in an unequal world (Hall, Hoffmann, and Ostrowski 2012).

commons (Chan and Costa 2005; Abrahams et al. 2008). To the best of my knowledge, there is no existing empirical research on southern scholarly communities within a commons framework.¹⁷

Consequently, theoretical work on the knowledge commons is firmly located in response to intellectual property regimes, which have come to occupy an increasingly hegemonic international position as a consequence of pressure from the United States and its industrialised allies in the 1980s (David 1993; May and Sell 2006). Unlike Hardin's tragedy of the resource commons, the tragedy of the knowledge commons is conceptualised as a *lack* of access and use stemming from intellectual property regimes. This is because epistemic goods are conceptualised as a “flow resource” that must be passed from one individual to another to have any public value (E. Ostrom and Hess 2007). Heller (1998) provided the original empirical evidence for this in the context of biomedical research, where he found that expensive, fragmented and complex intellectual private property rights in biomedical research had resulted in a significant decrease in innovation. Subsequent to this, David has used his investigations into the economic history of the scientific revolution in Renaissance Europe to develop a theoretical account of what he has termed *over-fencing* – the creation of artificial barriers to the flow and exchange of knowledge for the purpose of extracting economic rents, with the result that the public knowledge necessary for scientific technological research is threatened with destruction (David 2008). It is worth considering David's argument in some detail because it lays the foundations for understanding how systemic inequality theoretically constitutes a form of over-fencing.

Although the open sharing of knowledge through public testimony is often considered to be a natural practice, David contends that it is actually a social contrivance which took form in the late 16th century, primarily in Europe. Prior to that, he claims, the historical records of scientific endeavour in Asia, Europe and Africa suggest strong and prevalent norms of secrecy.¹⁸

¹⁷ This conclusion follows from an extensive search of proprietary academic databases and databases of commons scholarship, as well as correspondence with key scholars in the field, such as Charlotte Hess and Leslie Chan. In addition to this, I sent out a request for information to SocNet, a large scholarly network focused on social network analysis with a substantive membership focused on the sociology of scholarship. The results suggest that research on the dynamics of how southern knowledge systems operate is still nascent, at least in English, French and German, languages which I read. However, there may very well be empirical studies in languages such as Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic or Chinese. Since I cannot read these languages, and am not familiar with their intellectual traditions, I cannot determine if this is correct.

¹⁸ Strong claims about the dominance of norms of secrecy in African scholarship should be treated with some caution. For instance, historians who have documented the book trade in West Africa and the Maghreb note that

The convention of secrecy seems to have been practiced for a number of reasons, but chief among them was the tradition of aristocratic patronage of intellectual work and of the role of technical guilds. Although the dynamics were complex, the nub of the argument turns on the instrumental value of innovation and invention. If the profits of inventions and innovations pertaining to weapons, ships, new manufacturing processes, and trade routes were to be fully realised by a patron or crafter, then such knowledge would have to be kept secret.

David argues that increasing theoretical sophistication made it especially difficult for patrons and their advisors to judge for themselves the competence of potential client-scholars, and patrons therefore grew more vulnerable to the financial and reputational risks of being duped – that is, their epistemic fallibility increased as the body of knowledge grew. Since they could not verify the quality of a scholar's word for themselves, patrons were increasingly forced to rely on a scholar's standing in the intellectual community as a reliable signal for screening out untrustworthy scholars; only other scholars familiar with a potential client-scholar's work, and with the latest theoretical and technical developments, would be able to judge the client-scholar's quality and corroborate her findings. The survivors of this reputational contest would in turn plausibly acquire broader credibility since the patron would have endorsed the outcome of a more public screening process, rather than exercising her own, purely private, discretion.

In this context, David contends, academic organisations arose at least in part to establish and protect the reputations of scholars in patron-client relationships. From 1660 to 1790, seventy officially-recognised scientific organisations in the model of the Royal Society of London and the Académie Royale des Sciences arose. Although participation in these societies required scholars to forego the gains of jealously guarded knowledge, the returns were substantial. In the first place, membership and dissemination of one's work within the organisation helped secure a scholar's reputation and, at least initially, improved patronage prospects. Second, as these organisations grew in prominence, scholars began to use them as mechanisms for collaboration.

The benefits of scholarly collaboration are intuitive: if two individuals each solve a sub-

paper was a luxury import; the high price of paper could therefore act as a barrier to sharing books (Krätli and Lydon 2011). In addition to economic barriers, aesthetic dynamics have also shaped the book trade. In the Sokoto Caliphate in what is now Northern Nigeria, for instance, the overwhelming preference for manuscripts over printed books may have contributed to a shortage of books during the 15th and 16th centuries, while across the Mediterranean, printed books became widely available during Europe's Renaissance (Last 2011). Nevertheless, although the barriers to the open sharing of knowledge are likely far more complex than David indicates, this does not diminish his argument about the centrality of institutions for sharing knowledge.

problem and share their solutions with each other, it is more likely that they will solve the larger problem more quickly and efficiently, thereby improving the reputation and possibly material gains of each. However, scholarly collaboration takes on the form of a prisoner's dilemma, since each individual has the incentive to withhold her solutions and thereby garner all the benefits of solving the larger problem for herself (what we might call plagiarism today). The standard solutions to this dilemma require that individuals not discount the future too heavily, that interactions are repeated and that each individual expects reciprocal behaviour from her potential collaborator. Moreover, as David notes, this is actually an n -person game with solutions to an m -part problems. If individuals in a network, such as a university or society, adhere to norms that punish defectors with ostracism, then the larger the number of players, and the larger the number of sub-problems, the greater the costs of defecting for each individual. Not only does a defector lose out on the benefits of collaboration within the network, but she may also develop a reputation for defection outside of the network, such that her reputation is generally sullied.

I would add that this shows how collaboration can be an important mechanism for diffusing new ideas. The intuition is straightforward. Those who participate in a network and have a large number of collaborators as connections in the network may be able to disseminate their ideas more widely. However, the broad dissemination of high quality work would also bolster their reputations, thereby improving the credibility of future work, and in turn, contribute to greater acceptance of this work among a higher number of their peers in the future. Collaboration with peers in a prominent network would therefore augment both the individual's reputation and the reach of her work

Furthermore, Hess and Ostrom (2007a, 8) point out that knowledge is *cumulative*: innovation and discovery is made possible by the 'vast storehouse' of knowledge on which it is based. The less preceding knowledge there is to build on, the less innovation and discovery is possible. If only one individual refuses to share her knowledge, and all others cooperate, then she is able to profit from the common knowledge pool without causing noticeable harm to the knowledge pool. However, as David (2001) shows, if the number of organisations that free-ride on the system exceeds a threshold beyond which they will erode the basis for future investigations and innovations, then they will be able to profit from the common knowledge pool in the short-term while significantly eroding the possibility of future innovation and discovery in

the long-term.

While this discussion glosses over the complex and particular histories of scholarly institutions, David's materialist account helps explain how information asymmetries inherent in patron-client relationships helped create the conditions for scholarly collaboration. This collaboration hinged on institutions that allocated scholarly merit on the basis of peer review, and rewarded the sharing of knowledge while punishing secrecy. In doing so, the collective judgements of a scholarly community, and not the appraisal of an individual patron, would come to be the definitive guide of what counts as scholarly excellence. This ultimately led to the demise of aristocratic patron-client relations as the primary source of knowledge production and innovation. In this context then, it is clear that the re-introduction of norms of secrecy through the regime of intellectual property rights threatens the institutions and knowledge base that enabled the rapid increase in innovation. It is in this sense that intellectual property rights constitute a threat to the institutional fibre of knowledge systems.

However, David's account does not pay attention to the role of inequality and discrimination in the development of institutions that enabled collaboration. Such discrimination took on class, religious and gender dimensions within Europe (Kass-Simon, Farnes, and Nash 1993; Fichman 2004), and with the advent of the transatlantic slave trade and colonialism, more explicitly racial and regional dimensions. This does not mean that subordinate groups were wholly excluded from participating in the knowledge commons. European scholars drew heavily on Afro-Arab scholarship, for instance, in the development of mathematics and philosophy (Jeppie and Diagne 2008), while their universities and scholastic norms were deeply shaped by institutions in the Afro-Arab world (Lulat 2005). Rather, as discussed in the previous section, inequality seems to have operated at the level of scholastic standards of excellence which reflected a particular conception of the geography of reason, in the sense that the ideal towards which scholars are encouraged to aim is located within a Western European (and now North American) milieu. Thus, it appears that not only have these Afro-Asiatic influences been 'forgotten' in Western European scholarly traditions (Bernal 1987), but as noted above, the rules of scholastic excellence in former colonies are now skewed towards the North. This includes familiarity with disciplinary debates within the Anglo-American canon, a mastery of the English language, and publication in Anglo-American journals, which require contributors to locate their

work in response to Anglo-American debates.

It follows that the institutions which have theoretically enabled the sharing of knowledge among European scholars, have also theoretically constrained the sharing of knowledge among subordinate groups, such as African scholars. The intuition for this is straightforward: individuals from subordinate groups prefer to use and distribute intellectual work from the dominant group over their own, since the rules of the game stipulate that it has greater intellectual value. As a consequence, intellectual work from the subordinate group may be underutilised and cut off from other ideas that are relevant. Since the dispersion and exchange of ideas plays an important role in producing new knowledge, these skewed institutions can act as a barrier to innovation. In this respect, scholars have commented that African researchers' isolation from and lack of engagement with each other has resulted in a body of research that is typically “fragmented and non-cumulative” (Mkandawire 1989, 12; see also Zeleza 2002b; Mama 2005; Olukoshi and Nyamnjoh 2006). As a form of over-fencing, the skewed institutions underlying systemic inequality are theoretically a non-pecuniary analogue to complex and expensive intellectual property rights. Systemic inequality as a mechanism for over-fencing of the knowledge commons is as yet unexplored in the commons literature.¹⁹

We can see here that the institutions underlying systemic inequality plausibly have differential effects on subordinate and dominant groups. For subordinate groups, these institutions impede collaboration, such that their bodies of knowledge become increasingly fragmented and non-cumulative. This would apply to collaboration among members of a subordinate group, as well as collaboration between subordinate groups. But for dominant groups, these institutions facilitate collaboration, such that they are able to build strong knowledge systems that are cohesive and cumulative. Thus, for subordinate groups, the quality of their scholarship as a whole is likely to become poorer, because they are less able to collaborate among one other and therefore have weaker systems for producing knowledge. As a consequence, these skewed institutions plausibly lead to increasingly divergent knowledge systems, so that systemic inequalities not only persist, but deepen over time.

Even if there were no discernible differences in quality to begin with, over time differences in quality would emerge, so that these skewed institutions would become self-

¹⁹For a discussion of major lacunae in the literature, see Hall et al. (2012) and Hess (2012).

fulfilling. This helps explain the bibliometric evidence of intensifying inequality in the form of increasing dependence on northern scholarship. It also provides a parsimonious account of the mechanisms underlying regional inequalities. Rather than their being two competing accounts of inequality – the low quality of southern scholarship versus the subordinate position of southern scholarship – this perspective suggests that skewed institutions are likely responsible for both the subordinate position of southern scholarship *and* its poor quality, where these two features become mutually reinforcing.

Notice that this formulation of the problem of systemic inequality as a form of over-fencing within the knowledge commons is more fundamental than the standard equity versus quality debate within higher education, which starts from the position that there is a trade-off between equity and quality. On one side of the debate, scholars argue that subordinate groups have lower academic abilities because they have been discriminated against, and are therefore likely to produce lower quality work (see, for instance, Badat 2010). Policies that seek to redress historic discrimination by stipulating quotas for designated groups or providing financial incentives to increase the proportion of designated groups in academia may therefore come at the cost of investing in quality, at least in the short term. Critics respond that this argument is founded on a shaky assumption that dominant groups are of better quality (Gordon 2011). As the prior discussion of experimental work on epistemic biases shows, the story is likely more complicated, since discrimination is a double-edged sword – it casts subordinate groups in a bad light at the same time as it casts dominant groups in a good light. Members of subordinate groups come out looking less capable than they truly are, while members of dominant groups come out looking more capable than they truly are. Affirmative action-type policies therefore theoretically counteract the tendency to include poor quality individuals from dominant groups at the same time as they counteract the tendency to exclude high-quality individuals from subordinate groups. On this view, improving equity is arguably necessary to improving quality.

Regardless of whether one thinks there is a tension between equity and quality or not, there is a danger of the debate staying at the level of demographic representation so that it does not touch the question of scholastic standards of excellence. Sometimes, those who seek to demonstrate that equity is necessary for quality do so by demonstrating how individuals from subordinate groups may be closer than assumed to predefined standards of excellence, and how

individuals from dominant groups may be further than assumed from these standards (see, for instance, Du Bois 1903). But what happens if these standards of excellence are already innately skewed towards the knowledge and intellectual traditions of certain groups? In such a case, the argument for equity may inadvertently end up resembling an argument for epistemic assimilation.

In contrast, the formulation of systemic inequality in terms of over-fencing locates the problem within the institutional make-up of scholarship, so that it is not only a question of who participates in the knowledge commons, but more fundamentally, a question of which of these participants are able to help *govern* the knowledge commons, by shaping the formal and informal standards of excellence so as to include and exclude certain bodies of scholarship and groups of scholars.

The question of how commons are governed in turn focuses our attention on the conditions necessary for its sustainable management. One of the advantages of the knowledge commons perspective is that it can draw on extensive empirical work on the design principles of robust, enduring institutions for managing natural resources. In this respect, a key empirical finding is that sustainable commons are characterised by rules that are well-matched to local needs and conditions, and that individuals affected by these rules can participate in modifying them (E. Ostrom 1990). The insight is immediate: sustainable systems are those that meet the needs of the people participating in the system now and in the future. When members of a commons cannot participate in its governance, they are liable to grow disenchanted and eventually opt out of the commons. Thus, if the rules of scholarship partially *disable* African scholarship, and if African scholars cannot participate in modifying them, then these institutions may result in unsustainable and unstable knowledge systems on the continent.

Indeed, in the last two decades, African scholars have reflected closely on the colonial role of universities, in which scholars and the general public have had little role to play in modifying the institutions such that the nature of higher education and research has been isolated from its broader social context. Scholars have argued that the colonial role of universities enabled unhealthy relationships with the state and the public, with the result that universities were particularly vulnerable to the political and economic instability introduced by structural

adjustment in the 1980s (Diouf and Mamdani 1994).²⁰ To return to the equity versus quality debate, it is important to see that most of the African universities that faced existential threats during this period did so even though universities had experienced complete demographic transformation, such that they were overwhelmingly staffed by Africans. Scholars reflecting on the decline of African universities in this period came to recognise that the demographic transformation had not been accompanied by a corresponding shift in the institutional framework (Mamdani 1993; Mkandawire 1995; Mafeje 1998; Ki-Zerbo 2005; Assie-Lumumba 2006). In this context, their diagnosis of the problem in terms of the persistent colonial function of African universities urges us to consider the ways in which Africans continue to be excluded from governing their own knowledge commons.

The exclusion of subordinate groups from governing their own knowledge commons helps us in turn understand the rationale for establishing organisations and networks, such as CODESRIA, that aim to facilitate collaboration between members of subordinate groups. By fostering collaboration between African scholars and involving them in institutional governance, such organisations are potentially able to create a space in which the over-fencing of the greater commons is mitigated and more sustainable and robust knowledge systems are created. This helps us distinguish such organisations from less socially salutary pooling arrangements, like cartels, in which members share information and collude to restrict competition and typically pose negative social welfare risks for those outside the cartel (Madison, Frischmann, and Strandburg 2010). Unlike cartels, organisations that aim to foster cooperation among subordinate groups do so in order to challenge the problem of over-fencing and thereby create a more open environment in which under-utilised intellectual resources can be shared and developed. The difference between the two is not so much in the form of their pooling arrangement, but rather in terms of the broader historical setting of systemic inequality, and the persistent exclusion of certain groups from intellectual governance. As such, it resembles the distinction between institutionalised discrimination that results in a ‘cartel’ of the privileged, and affirmative action that seeks to empower historically subjugated groups.

In sum, systemic inequality operates at the level of institutions or standards of scholastic excellence. These institutions seem to have arisen in response to growing information

²⁰ I address this in greater detail in the chapter on structural adjustment.

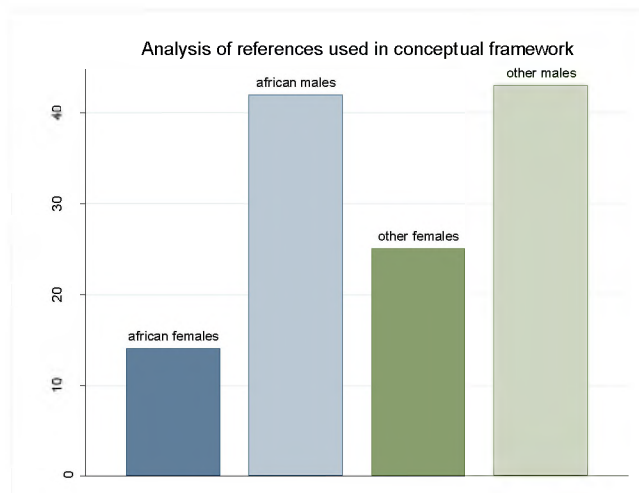
asymmetries in the context of increasingly sophisticated bodies of knowledge, so that first patrons and then scholars began to turn to mechanisms of peer review and collaboration to mitigate their epistemic fallibility. The result is that standards of excellence increasingly hinged on the judgements of a scholarly community, rather than an individual patron. However, in the age of European imperialism and colonisation, it seems these standards of excellence became skewed towards European scholarly communities. The skewed nature of these institutions means that while they facilitate collaboration between dominant groups, they plausibly impede collaboration among subordinate groups, such as African scholars. This helps explain how regional inequalities have not only persisted, but have deepened over time. Moreover, since these institutions exclude subordinate groups from governing their own knowledge systems, these systems are likely to be fragile and unstable. Within this context, African scholars' establishment of a knowledge commons, like CODESRIA, can be understood as a challenge to systemic inequality and an attempt to ensure that African knowledge systems endure.

2.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I sought to knit together two concepts that have hitherto been analysed separately – inequality and the knowledge commons. I argued that processes of colonial incorporation plausibly created epistemic institutions that are skewed towards northern scholarship, such that judgements about the intellectual superiority of northern scholarship come to have the appearance of being consistent with good evidential reasoning and meritocratic principles. In pursuing these skewed standards of excellence, African scholars therefore help to cement their dependence on northern scholarship. When viewed from the perspective of the knowledge commons, these skewed institutions theoretically facilitate collaboration between dominant groups, but impede collaboration among subordinate groups. This creates a situation in which the knowledge systems of subordinate groups become increasingly fragmented and non-cumulative, fragile and unstable. Thus, even if there were no discernible differences in quality to begin with, over time differences in quality between subordinate and dominant groups would emerge, so that these skewed institutions would become self-fulfilling.

While I largely focused on epistemic inequalities between southern and northern scholarship, the chapter noted that there are multiple epistemic inequalities within the global South. In this respect, the discussion of the elite function of African higher education provides a brief indication of the ways in which universities reflect race, class and gender inequalities. Indeed, this chapter is marked by traces of such inequalities. Of the 125 references in this chapter, fourteen references are from African female scholars. By way of contrast, while African male scholars contribute 34% to the citations, African female scholars contribute just 11% to the citations. Figure 1 below illustrates.

Figure 1: Bibliometric analysis of conceptual framework



Note: Chapter 3 explains the methodology of this analysis

It is therefore critical to pay attention to the multiple and layered nature of inequality in scholarship.

The sort of epistemic inequalities analysed in this chapter are clearly troubling examples of what Fricker (2007) calls epistemic injustice, insofar as individuals are prevented from fully exercising their capacity as knowers and meaning-makers. Yet, analysing the causes and the consequences of these epistemic inequalities within a knowledge commons framework provides a broader perspective, which allows for a consideration not only of the harms done to individuals, but also their capacity to resist such harms by acting collectively and thereby crafting intellectual resources and institutions that lead them out of the path dependency of their

situation. This draws attention to the dynamics of subordinate scholarly communities and their intellectual and political creativity. By doing so, this perspective allows for an exploration of the ways in which subordinate scholarly communities operate on their own terms.

This in turn underscores the importance of the internal dynamics of a scholarly community, and the ways in which actors shape institutions that are rooted in history and invested with meaning through the use of symbol and narrative. While the broader institutional context may constrain, and sometimes enable, a knowledge commons, the choices that the community makes matter deeply to the intellectual trajectory and sustainability of their commons. It is this interplay between the internal dynamics of the commons, and the external constraints of a deeply unequal world, which informs the study of CODESRIA.

As this chapter shows, however, the role of inequality in scholarly communities is under-analysed in the literature on the knowledge commons. One of the implications of this is that the methodological tools that have been developed for investigating knowledge commons do not explicitly consider the problem of inequality. In the next chapter, I therefore use this analysis to adapt these methodological tools for investigating knowledge commons that are shaped by inequalities both outside and inside the commons.

Chapter 3: Methodological framework

Viewing knowledge as a commons brings to the fore the role of community in constituting and sustaining knowledge. As the social epistemologist Welbourne (1981, 303) puts it, “It is only to the extent that we think of ourselves as belonging to such a community [of knowledge] that we can engage in acts of transmitting and receiving knowledge, acts which themselves may enlarge and cement the community.” In the first section, I discuss how this view has consequences for how objectivity is conceived in relation to researcher positionality.

In the second section, I set out the Institutional Analysis and Design (IAD) framework, which structures the case study of CODESRIA. This methodological framework is designed to enable comparative research on knowledge commons so as to develop theories for explaining, predicting and designing different commons arrangements. However, since this framework has been elaborated to investigate knowledge commons in the global North, it is located within the tradition of intellectual property rights and typically conceptualises commons as attempts to prevent the enclosure of public knowledge by private companies. I therefore use the preceding conceptual analysis to adapt the IAD framework for investigating knowledge commons that emerge in response to inequality, many of which are visibly located in the global South. I use this modified framework to help identify the general set of elements and questions that comparative research on southern knowledge commons would plausibly need to consider.

In the third section, I set out the research design in the context of the IAD framework. I examine how the underlying causal schema in the framework clarifies the way in which the three sub-questions in this study are closely knitted together. I then explain what kind of data the study draws on, the nature of the sampling strategy, how data was collected and analysed, and major threats to internal validity. I end by discussion ethical issues arising from the study and the limitations of the study.

3.1. Positional objectivity

Understanding that intellectual goods are produced and managed within a community requires one to take into account that different individuals within the community will have different perspectives. These perspectives may differ due to a number of positional parameters including biological abilities, such as the ability or inability to see colour, social categories of dispossession, such as being female or male, and disciplinary affiliations, such as being a biologist or an anthropologist. As a consequence of these different positions, individuals may have different starting assumptions about the likelihood of observing a particular phenomenon (Humphreys and Jacobs 2014), employ different units of analysis in measuring the phenomenon (Ward 1993), have different views about what constitutes a valuable and useful object of enquiry (Lloyd 2009), and they may hold different beliefs about the latent or unobservable causal mechanisms underlying the observed phenomenon.

More deeply, our prior normative and theoretical commitments may involve our perceptual faculties, directly shaping what we observe and hear. For instance, an experimental study of the “invisibility” of black women in the United States found that white participants were least likely to recognise photos of black women, and they were least likely to correctly attribute statements made by black women compared to black men and white women and men (Sesko and Biernat 2010). The results indicate that black women went “unnoticed” and “unheard” by white participants, who saw them as relatively interchangeable and silent despite the empirical fact that the black women in the study were neither silent nor undifferentiated. Moreover, there is strong experimental evidence from social psychology that activated, negative beliefs about social groups are “differentially sticky” with regard to whom they are applied (Banaji and Bhaskar 2000). For instance, black and white participants in the United States were more likely to “remember” that a fictitious black man, rather than a white man, was a criminal (Walsh, Banaji, and Greenwald 1995). This suggests that individuals do not forget negative beliefs about discriminated groups as easily as they might forget negative beliefs about privileged groups. The evidential standards for changing discriminatory beliefs are more difficult to attain than those for enforcing discriminatory beliefs, since greater cognitive weight is given to evidence that members of a discriminated group are of “poor quality”.

The theory-laden nature of our observations is not only evident in the social world, but also extends to observations of the natural world. There are a variety of such cases. For instance, Kuhn points to the strong experimental evidence of “perceptual theory loading”, where subjects need repeated exposure to a phenomenon to conceptualise and identify it, with the result that observers with different conceptual resources will have different visual experiences of natural objects (Kuhn 1962, 111, 113–14, 115). In addition to this, as the conceptual framework sought to make clear, our intellectual values are bound up within communities and their traditions, such that we hold particular conceptions of scholastic excellence and the appropriate subjects and objects of empirical investigation.

The role of positionality in research is sometimes contrasted unfavourably with what Nagel (1989) has called “the view from nowhere”, a conception of the world that is independent of any perspective. This way of thinking about objectivity views positionality as something which undermines objectivity and therefore ought to be minimised. But as Nagel points out, wishing away the positionality of our empirical and theoretical enquiries amounts to wishing away the community in which we are embedded, and therefore the very entity which enables the production of knowledge.

Rather, the view that I favour acknowledges the role of different perspectives in contributing towards objectivity, or what Sen (1993) has called “positional objectivity”. The basic idea is that objectivity has two requirements: first, it requires us to make our positionality clear and second, it requires us to engage with views and experiences that are not our own; in doing so, the various ways in which we might be blind to the world come to be illuminated. This view of positional objectivity implies that no single scholar can hope to provide an objective account by herself. Instead, the process of sharing research and collaborating with scholars who have different perspectives advances us closer to the goal of objectivity; it is a collaborative effort. As such, objectivity is to be striven for, rather than found.

With regard to this research project, the decision to focus on African intellectual communities stems in part from my background normative commitments to pan-Africanism, in the minimal sense that I consider greater collaboration between the peoples of the continent to be a desirable goal. However, it also reflects my uneasy position as a first generation South African of mixed North African and European descent who is socialised as white. I therefore have a

predisposition to regional rather than national identities, and find it easier to associate with conceptions of African identity that allow for non-black membership. This predisposition flows through into my research interest in systemic inequalities that have a regional inflection, in addition to the racial and gender inflections of discrimination in African scholarship. In the chapter on pan-Africanism, it is evident that this shapes not only my line of investigation, but also potentially the nature of interviewee's responses. Furthermore, my own training under Raufu Mustapha, who came to maturity as a scholar during the tumult of structural adjustment, gave me some awareness of the profound impact of this period on African higher education. It was therefore clear to me from the start that structural adjustment would be an important chapter in the story of CODESRIA. In contrast, I had no inkling at the start of this project that African feminism would be a significant intellectual and political feature of CODESRIA. I had initially overlooked this possibility since none of their publications or training institutes are explicitly framed in terms of feminism, preferring to use the less confrontational term of "gender studies". I tacitly associated this with the faux feminism of the "women in development" approach. How wrong I was. But it took external developments for me to see this. During the course of the research, the student movement in South Africa took off, and young students began to articulate an unapologetic and powerful form of black feminism. This prompted me to look more carefully at feminist scholarship in the organisation. As I dug deeper into CODESRIA's intellectual and administrative archive, I began to see a complex form of African feminism. In this case, the political activism of young black women in South Africa pushed me to become aware of the richness and nuance of feminist writings in CODESRIA.

It should be clear that these focal points, while important, miss a multitude of other rich perspectives and important lines of investigation. As I indicated in the introductory chapter, the period of this study has witnessed a wholly new and remarkable interest in CODESRIA and the intellectual life of the continent in general. A number of studies and projects are currently ongoing, and take markedly different perspectives from my own – from asking questions about modernity, to investigating CODESRIA using diasporic theoretical perspectives, to thinking about CODESRIA through the lens of Bandung humanisms. Thus, this study of CODESRIA as a commons necessarily offers a partial analysis of the organisation. It is in the interaction of these different perspectives – in the conversations about this African intellectual community – that a

fuller and more objective account of CODESRIA emerges.

3.2. Institutional Analysis and Development Framework

In this section, I explain the rationale for investigating CODESRIA as a case study, and for structuring this case study within the Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework. I then describe how the IAD framework was initially developed for the study of natural resource commons, and explain in detail how it has been adapted for the study of knowledge commons. Since existing formulations of the IAD framework largely conceptualise knowledge commons as a response to the problem of intellectual property rights, I sketch an iteration of the framework as it applies specifically to knowledge commons that arise in response to the problem of inequality, which are most visibly located in the global South. I consider how the framework can be usefully operationalised to help identify the general set of elements and questions that comparative research on southern knowledge commons would plausibly need to consider.

3.2.1. Rationale for structuring the case study within the IAD framework

Much of the earlier commons research was initially undertaken within a game theoretical framework and therefore drew strongly on experimental methods for investigating the patterns of interaction within a commons. However, game theoretic research typically treats the structure of the commons as a given, and is a less effective tool for investigating the way in which commons arise and change over time (E. Ostrom 2005, 18). Consequently, scholars have increasingly turned to carefully crafted case studies as a useful method for investigating the deep structure of commons. The analytical narratives that lie at the heart of the case study method are particularly valuable techniques for examining the ways in which actors shape institutions that are rooted in history and invested with meaning through the use of symbol and narrative (Bates et al. 1998). The case study approach is therefore a useful and appropriate technique for this research, as it allows for an examination of the confluence of ideational and material factors that have shaped

CODESRIA's emergence as a pan-African knowledge commons.

Regardless of which approach scholars adopt in examining a commons, however, they must be careful to use a consistent language to describe the structure of commons and its underlying causal dynamics, so that empirical studies can be compared in a systematic way (E. Ostrom 2005). The aim here is to improve the transferability of a study, so that its findings can cast light on a different context and thereby facilitate a more holistic understanding of how commons work across contexts. The basic problem of transferability is that, without a deep understanding of the underlying causal mechanisms and the historical context that combine to generate particular outcomes, the results of a study cannot apply to the same context in the future, let alone a wholly different context (Cartwright 1999). The problem of transferability is a thorny one, which bedevils not only small-scale qualitative case studies, but also large-scale, statistically representative policy experiments (Bold et al. 2013).²¹ One response to the problem follows Deaton and Cartwright (2016) in paying greater attention to identifying latent causal mechanisms and investigating their interaction with specific contexts to generate results. Consequently, such empirical work seeks not to generalise outcomes, but instead to identify underlying causal mechanisms that may be salient across contexts, and to contribute to our understanding of how these causal mechanisms could plausibly play out in different contexts. Since causal mechanisms are typically unobserved and not obvious to the eye, their identification requires rigorous theoretical work to buttress and guide empirical work.

This was precisely the rationale for the development of the Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework (E. Ostrom 2005). Developed on the basis of extensive empirical work on many different kinds of commons, it provides a consistent language for describing and theorising the deep causal structure of the commons. The goal is to facilitate rigorous comparative research that builds towards the theorisation of commons. Systematic comparative research is particularly important for the study of knowledge commons, which is still in its infancy. As Frischmann et al. (2014a, 2) put it, “Structured inquiry [into a series of case studies] will provide a basis for developing theories to explain the emergence, form, and stability of the

²¹ Large-scale experiments' claims to generalisability have been critiqued on a number of grounds, not least that the effects in the sample are unlikely to be similar to the effects in the population due to general equilibrium and political economy effects (Heckman 1992; Moffitt 1992; Deaton 2010), while the perception that experiments are non-parametric and theory-free is inconsistent with claims to generalisability (Deaton and Cartwright 2016).

observed variety of knowledge commons and, eventually, for designing models to explicate and inform institutional design.” This case study of CODESRIA has therefore been structured within the IAD framework so as to facilitate future comparative research on southern knowledge commons.

3.2.2. The IAD framework in the context of knowledge commons

The IAD framework is a diagnostic tool that can be used to investigate any subject where people repeatedly interact within rules and norms that guide their choices of strategies and behaviours. The framework has been developed by commons scholars to facilitate the comparative analysis of institutions. Broadly defined, institutions are “the prescriptions that humans use to organize all forms of repetitive and structured interactions.” (E. Ostrom 2005, 3) They are the formal and informal rules that are understood and used by a community and establish the “working do's and don'ts” for community members (E. Ostrom and Hess 2007, 42). The framework is broadly located within new institutionalism, where the importance of culture and symbolism is given much greater emphasis in institutional analysis than that found in “old institutional” analyses of organisations and behaviours, which focus only on political and economic factors (E. Ostrom 2010).

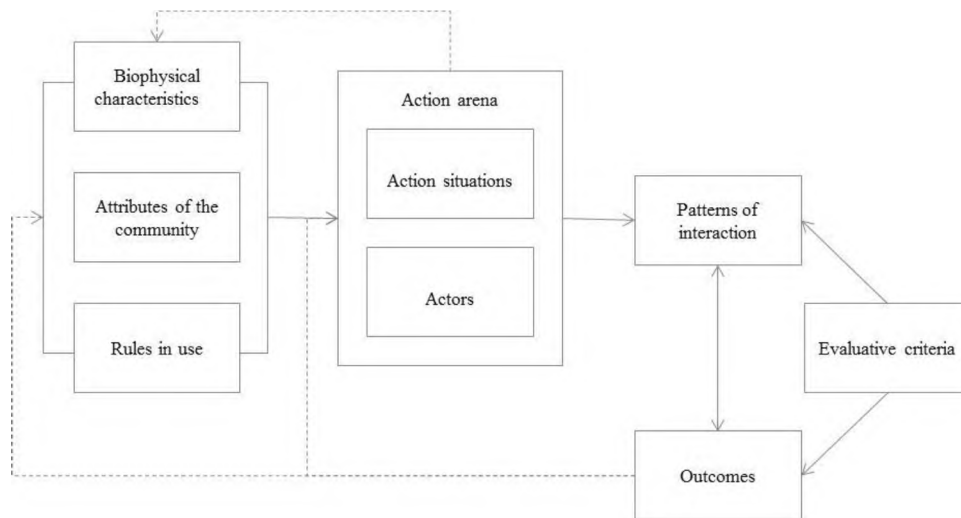
The IAD framework provides a methodological lens that is fluid and dynamic. On one level, it can be understood as a checklist of “those independent variables that a researcher should keep in plain sight to explain individual and group behavior” (Gibson 2005, 229). However, the framework also structures the checklist into a “causal schema while allowing great flexibility in the determination of exactly what factors should be included.” Consequently, while the IAD framework was initially developed out of the need to structure investigations into natural resource commons, the framework is flexible enough to be applied across a wide variety of situations, from banking reform in the United States (Polski 2003) to forest management by First Nations peoples in Canada (Smith 2001). It has increasingly been adapted and used for the study of a variety of knowledge commons. Examples include studies of bio-knowledge systems, such as genetic resources (Schmietow 2012), the development of the international open-source

software commons (Schweik 2007) and digital research repositories (Ghosh 2007), the evolution of racialised demographic data in population censuses (Crane 2012) and the emergence of the Associated Press as a news-pooling agency (Murray 2014).

In the process of applying the IAD framework to knowledge commons, scholars have recognised the need to adapt the framework since the intangible dimensions of knowledge commons seem to play a more central role than in conventional natural resource commons. The first formulation of the framework in the context of knowledge commons was developed by a multidisciplinary meeting of scholars during the “Workshop on Scholarly Communication as a Commons” in 2004 and formalised by Ostrom and Hess (2007). Empirical and theoretical applications of this formulation were largely limited to digital commons. The second formulation was developed by a collaboration of three legal scholars, and sought to broaden the scope from digital commons to include multiple forms of intellectual pooling under the rubric of the “cultural commons” (Madison, Frischmann, and Strandburg 2010). This was subsequently refined on the basis of eleven case studies from multiple disciplinary perspectives (Frischmann, Madison, and Strandburg 2014a). I discuss each formulation in turn.

Ostrom and Hess (2007) provide the first formulation of the IAD framework in the context of the knowledge commons. This formulation retains the basic structure of the framework, but modifies its individual elements. The framework is structured around three broad clusters of variables that are taken to be the basic underlying factors affecting institutional design and the patterns of interaction within a community or organisation. As indicated in Figure 2, the left-hand side describes the underlying situation: the resource characteristics, the make-up of the community and the rules that they use. The action arena describes how specific participants cooperate or do not cooperate with each other given the underlying situation. The combination of the action arena and the underlying situation results in various patterns of interaction with specific outcomes, which can then be assessed using evaluative criteria.

Figure 2: The original Institutional Analysis and Development Framework



Source: Ostrom and Hess (2007, 44)

As Ostrom and Hess (2007) see it, the biophysical characteristics of a knowledge commons are composed of three distinctive elements: (1) artefacts, which are the discrete, observable, nameable representation of ideas, such as articles, books and web pages; (2) facilities that store artefacts and make them available, such as libraries and the physical network infrastructure; and (3) ideas, which are the intangible content contained in artefacts.

The community is in turn composed of individuals who can take on different functions, as users, providers or policymakers. Depending on the nature of the commons, different community members may play some or all of these roles. Thus, for instance, members of open software collectives typically play all three roles; in contrast, only some users of open access journals may act as contributors, and the administration of these journals is typically limited to a small number of people. The values of these members, and the extent to which they are shared, substantially affects the ways in which they interact with each other and the resulting outcomes. As an example, Ostrom and Hess (2007) explain that universities which pursue close ties of corporate sponsorship may be the site of conflicting values, in which some members value commercial interests and others value public interests.

The rules-in-use, or institutions, are normative instructions about what participants are allowed to do in a particular action situation, and are backed by a minimal sanctioning ability for non-compliance. These rules may be written down or simply widely known among the

community. In contrast, rules-in-form are those that are merely written down, but are not known or enforced. Rules-in-use are in turn composed of three types of rules: (1) operational rules for making day-to-day decisions; (2) collective choice rules, where individuals interact to decide the operational rules; and (3) constitutional rules, which define who may participate in making collective choices. For Ostrom and Hess (2007), the most significant set of rules-in-use in the context of knowledge commons are intellectual property rights, which define who may access the commons, contribute to the commons, extract or remove content from the commons, manage the commons, exclude others from accessing the commons, and sell or lease content from the commons.

The action arena focuses on the incentives facing diverse participants, and the ways in which this can affect their choices to cooperate or not cooperate with one another. Thus, for instance, Ostrom and Hess (2007) note that although universities are increasingly introducing institutional incentives for scholars to contribute to university repositories, the low level of participation in open archiving suggests that there are problems with these incentives: they may be unknown, untrusted, or too complex, or they may be insufficiently strong to outweigh countervailing habits.

The patterns of interaction emanating from an action arena in turn reflect the underlying situation as a whole and the incentives structuring the action arena. There are many different ways in which individuals may interact. For instance, they may conflict with each other or cooperate; they may commit to sustained interaction with each other or opt out of doing so; their interactions may be intentional or unfocused.

The outcome of these interactions may then be judged using a number of different evaluative criteria. Ostrom and Hess (2007) identify a number of frequently used criteria: (1) increasing the amount and quality of scientific knowledge; (2) maintaining the sustainability and preservation of the commons; (3) building standards that lead to high levels of participation in the commons; (4) ensuring the economic efficiency of the commons; (5) applying fair standards in the sense that all individuals benefit equally from their contributions; (6) working towards equality in the commons by redistributing resources to poorer individuals. However, as discussed in the conceptual framework, the empirical literature on commons suggests that sustainable commons typically require high levels of participation in the commons, which in part requires

that participants judge the rules of the commons to be fair. Moreover, for commons to persist over the long term they would typically need to be cost-effective. As such, there are arguably three central criteria in their analyses: (1) commons that are sustainable, (2) commons that increase the amount of high quality scholarship, and (3) commons that are equal. For Ostrom and Hess (2007), it seems that much of the ability of a commons to meet these three criteria comes down to the extent to which commons is able to navigate and counter intellectual property rights successfully, in the sense that they threaten the commons with enclosure and thereby pose the problems of instability in the commons, degradation of its epistemic goods, and inequality in access to the commons.

The formulation of the IAD framework by Madison et al. (2010) and Frischmann et al. (2014a) departs from Ostrom and Hess' (2007) underlying schema in four regards. First, they treat the underlying situation of a knowledge commons as a socially-constructed one; consequently, the patterns of interaction emanating from a knowledge commons can go on to shape the underlying situation and action arena. Thus, while the IAD framework typically approaches the underlying situation of natural resource commons as exogenous or externally fixed, this formulation in the context of knowledge commons treats the underlying situation as endogenous. However, as Ostrom and Hess (2007, 68 footnote 2) note, "For longer-term analyses, feedback from the outcomes of interactions tends to change these 'temporarily' exogenous variables. And, when one is analysing a rapidly evolving system with changes occurring at multiple levels relatively rapidly, these feedback loops are very important." Since members of knowledge commons can contribute to its intellectual resources relatively more quickly than members of a natural resource commons are capable of changing an ecological system, this formulation makes this caveat explicit and central to the analysis.

Second, they collapse the distinction between patterns of interaction and outcomes, arguing that certain patterns of interaction emanating from the action arena are themselves outcomes. "How people interact with rules, resources, and each other", they contend, "is itself an outcome that is inextricably linked with and determinative of the form and content of the knowledge or informational output of the commons." (Frischmann, Madison, and Strandburg 2014a, 19) As an illustration of this point, they explain that in an open source software project, the open source development collaborative, the programme itself, and the open source software

license and other governance mechanisms are mutually constitutive.

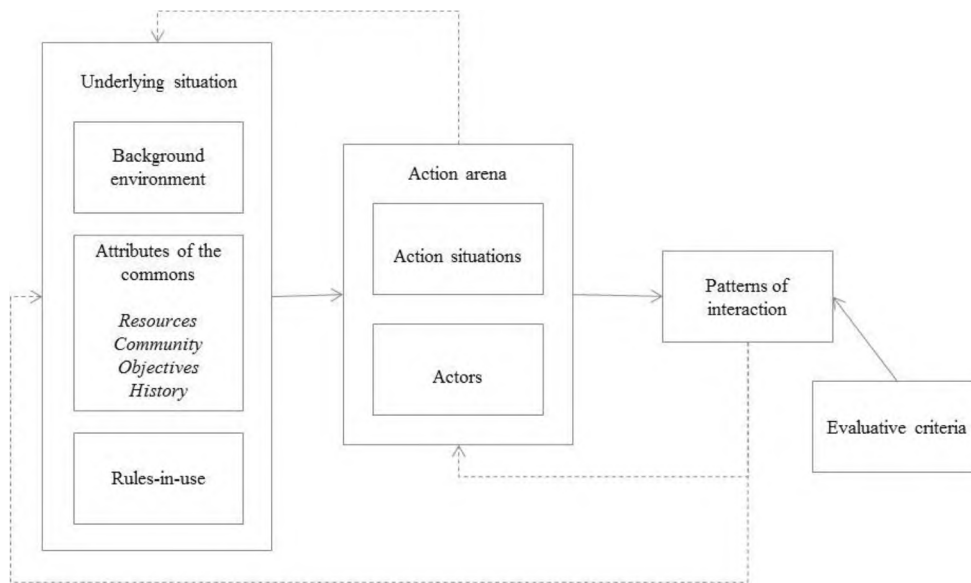
Third, they include elements that examine the objectives and the history of the commons. In doing so, they aim to expand what they call a “functionalist” approach to institutional analysis to include a more metaphorical or narrative approach. Although they do not explicitly define the term, by “functionalism” they seem to mean an approach that examines complex systems in terms of the function of their constituent parts, including its rules, actors, and patterns of interaction.²² They contrast this with an approach that examines complex systems in expressive terms, by “looking to the construction and evolution of meaning in the system as reflected in symbol and narrative.” (Madison, Frischmann, and Strandburg 2010, 673)

Fourth, they deliberately leave the evaluative criteria underspecified. In the context of natural resource commons, long-run sustainability is a widely-accepted goal since these commons are faced with increasingly degraded and unstable ecosystems. In contrast, they argue, the evaluative criteria for knowledge commons are likely to be much more contested. As Cole (2014) points out, this is likely in part because knowledge commons are not threatened with over-use, but are instead at risk of being under-used as a consequence of fragmented and complex intellectual property rights. Related to this, the enormous growth in the production of epistemic goods – and bads – poses new risks, such as the problem of pollution or spam. More deeply, however, Frischmann et al. (2014a, 37) argue that knowledge commons emerge in response to a number of different problems, so that the evaluative criteria for judging the outcomes of a knowledge commons are a function, at least in part, of the problem that the commons was constructed to address.

Although the authors do not provide an updated schema that illustrates these revisions, Figure 3 indicates what the revised framework would plausibly look like.

²² In this sense, they do not seem to have classic structural functionalism in mind (as epitomised in the writings of Durkheim and Spencer for instance), since new institutionalism within which the IAD framework was largely developed is typically considered to be a departure from structural functionalism. Unlike classical functionalism, new institutionalism broadens the focus to include theories of institutional change and not just institutional continuity, and explicitly makes room for accounts of conflict as well as cooperation.

Figure 3: The Institutional Analysis and Development framework as applied to knowledge commons



Source: Constructed from Madison et al.(2010) and Frischmann et al. (2014a)

This formulation of the framework shows how moving from natural resource commons to knowledge commons involves a change in methodological approach. Studies of natural resource commons typically focus on one element of the IAD framework, depending on the subject of interest. Ostrom and Hess (2007, 44–45) use this approach in examining knowledge commons:

Entering the analysis with the physical/technical and institutional characteristics is most appropriate when one is trying to understand the nature of the resource being shared ... The action arena, often at the heart of the analysis, is particularly useful in analyzing specific problems or dilemmas in processes of institutional change. Within knowledge commons, it is an appropriate place to start when trying to think through the challenges of creating a new form of commons such as a new digital repository within an organization. Beginning with the outcomes makes sense with questions such as why and how information is being enclosed. Why do authors not voluntarily contribute to a repository?

However, one of the consequences of viewing a knowledge commons as largely constructed is that the causal story ceases to be linear: the underlying situation, the action arena and the patterns of interaction may all influence each other. This means that the boundaries between each part of the framework are more porous and fluid than is the case when applying the framework to natural resource commons. Viewed in this way, it may be more useful to analyse knowledge commons as a whole, by looking at the relationship between all three areas in the framework. Thus, as Frischmann et al. (2014a, 20) point out, the enquiry is likely to be an iterative one, in which learning “more about goals and objectives is likely to result in the identification of additional shared resources, understanding the makeup of the community will lead to new questions about general governance, and so forth.”

Since Madison et al (2010) and Frischmann et al. (2014a) are concerned with developing a structure for the comparative study of knowledge commons, they use the framework to generate buckets of potentially useful questions that can guide case studies of knowledge commons. These buckets of questions are intended to be useful in two ways: as a guide in planning interviews with actors in the commons, and as a framework for organising and analysing the information gained from interviews and document reviews. As with Ostrom and Hess (2007), these questions are largely structured in terms of the relevance or irrelevance of intellectual property (IP) rights. As I argued in the previous chapter, this framing arises from a strong focus on northern knowledge commons and the ways in which complex and expensive IP rights can act as a form of over-fencing in the knowledge commons.

3.3.3. Adapting the IAD framework for knowledge commons in an unequal world

When adapting this framework to the context of southern knowledge commons, a different form of over-fencing may be more relevant: that arising from systemic inequality which is institutionalised in the form of skewed standards of scholastic excellence. In addition, inequality can exist both outside and inside the commons. It is therefore useful to consider how the IAD framework can be adapted to generate questions that address external and internal inequalities.

Table 3 sets out a detailed specification of the IAD framework as it might apply to

knowledge commons that arise in the context of inequality. The first column sets out each element of the IAD framework as specified by Frischmann et al. (2014a). The second column outlines the questions that could guide a case study of the knowledge commons in the context of intellectual property (IP) rights. This combines issues raised in the first formulation of the framework (E. Ostrom and Hess 2007) with its second formulation (Madison, Frischmann, and Strandburg 2010) and subsequent refinement (Frischmann, Madison, and Strandburg 2014a). The third column indicates how the buckets of questions could be usefully adapted to studying knowledge commons that arise in the context of inequality. It is important to note that this framing is tentative, and just one way of thinking about southern knowledge commons. Indeed, as Frischmann et al. (2014a, 20) stress, the framework is a fundamentally provisional one, and is subject to being refined and reworked on the basis of empirical studies.

Table 3: IAD framework for studying the knowledge commons

<i>Formulation in the context of IP rights</i>		<i>Formulation in the context of inequality</i>
1. Underlying situation		
1.1 Background environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent are IP rights salient to the context? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent is inequality salient to the context? What is the institutional nature of this external inequality?

1.2. Attributes of the knowledge commons		
i. Resource characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How is access to resources defined in terms of a spectrum ranging from IP rights to no IP rights? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How do the institutions underlying external inequality shape the intellectual and material resources of the commons? How does inequality within the commons shape access to resources?
ii. Community characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Who participates in the community? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How is participation inflected by vectors of inequality within the commons, such as race, class, gender, age, nationality?
iii. Aims and objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is the commons constructed to address problems arising out of IP rights (such as over-fencing) or aside from IP rights (such as gathering together and curating ideas that are freely available but dispersed)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is the commons constructed to address problems arising out of inequality outside of the commons (such as over-fencing) or problems that arise aside from such inequality (such as curating research that is linguistically fragmented)?
iv. History and narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How has the commons changed over time? What are the narratives of its creation and operation? How do changes in the narrative over time, or conflicts embedded within the narrative illustrate debates over purpose, illuminate the normative foundations of commons and highlight points of conflict? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How has the commons changed over time? What is the narrative of its creation and operation with regard to inequality? How do changes in the narrative over time, or conflicts embedded within the narrative illustrate debates over purpose, illuminate the normative foundations of commons and highlight points of conflict, particularly with regard to inequality within the commons?

1.3. Governance and rules-in-use (spanning the attributes of the commons and its action arena)		
i. Openness and control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Who can use resources, contribute resources, and govern the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How is access and governance inflected by vectors of

	commons?	inequality within the commons, such as race, class, gender, age, nationality?
ii. Exogenous governance mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is the legal setting – IP rights, subsidies, contracts, antitrust provisions? How does this shape the boundaries of the commons? ▪ How is the community accessible to and interconnected with related institutions and social practices? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are the prevailing external standards of scholastic excellence in terms of language, style, intellectual tradition, intended audience? Who and what do they rule in and rule out? To what extent do these standards discourage collaboration within the commons? ▪ How is the commons nested in broader social systems? Which organisations fund the community, and how do they play a role in governing the community?
iii. Endogenous governance mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Who does the community serve – markets, government, or the public? Does the pool bridge gaps created by the edges of formal institutional structures? ▪ What are the self-governance mechanisms: membership rules, resource contribution and extraction requirements, conflict resolution mechanisms, monitoring rules, sanctions for rule violation? ▪ To what extent do self-governance mechanisms rely on formal legal mechanisms? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Who does the community serve – scholars, international donors, international organisations, social movements, trade unions, markets, national governments? How does the broader context of inequality shape its capacity to serve its constituencies? ▪ What are the self-governance mechanisms? How do they differ from the exogenous governance mechanisms? How do conflicts or points of convergence between formal and informal rules reflect inequalities inside and outside the commons? ▪ To what extent do self-governance mechanisms rely on external institutions?
iv. Rules and norms for particular action arenas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are there rules and norms for specific action arenas? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are there different rules and norms for different action arenas? What does this reveal about the ways in which inequality is contested and reproduced?
2. Action arena		
2.1. Who are the subjects?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Who participates in the action arena and what are their incentives to cooperate? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How are participation and incentive structures inflected by vectors of inequality within the commons, such as race, class, gender, age, nationality?
2.2. How do subjects interact?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What actions are taken, with what objectives and what 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How do participants respond to inequality inside and outside

consequences?	the commons?
<p>3. Patterns of interaction and outcomes</p>	
<p>3.1. Patterns of interaction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are the patterns of interaction? How do they solve the underlying collective action problem? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do patterns of interaction suggest that actors are isolated from one another or are there clusters of strong collaboration? What light does this cast on inequality outside and inside the commons? ▪ Are the patterns of interaction stable over time, or do some actors opt out of participating? What does this reveal about the dynamics of inequality outside and inside the commons?
<p>3.2. What are the benefits?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are the benefits in terms of resources and who benefits? For instance, to what extent does facilitate the production of high quality intellectual resources, promote equality within the commons, and ensure its sustainability? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do patterns of interaction result in standards of excellence that promote collaboration within the commons? ▪ Do patterns of interaction result in research that is connected and cumulative, and who benefits from this? ▪ Do patterns of interaction ensure that the commons is able to renew itself over generations? What are the likely impediments to this? ▪ What is the relationship between these standards of excellence, the nature of scholarly production, and the sustainability of the commons?
<p>3.3. What are the costs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does the commons operate as a cartel, which is anticompetitive, and can result in increased costs and/or reduced supply of a good and/or reduced quality? ▪ What are the administrative costs of constructing, monitoring and enforcing compliance with the rules of the pool? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are the costs and risks of the outcomes emanating from the commons?

This formulation of the framework in the context of inequality introduces several changes. In the first place, it nuances the questions to deal with inequality outside and inside of the commons. In the case of external inequality, for example, while earlier formulations ask how the boundaries of the commons are shaped by intellectual property rights, this formulation asks how the boundaries of the commons are shaped by skewed standards of excellence with regard to language, style, intellectual tradition and intended audience. In the case of internal inequality, for instance, while earlier formulations ask how access to the commons is determined by intellectual property rights, this formulation asks how access is shaped by vectors of inequality, such as race, class, gender and nationality.

More deeply, however, this formulation introduces three major conceptual changes. First, this formulation considers scholastic standards of excellence as a key institutional feature of the commons. In doing so, it broadens the conceptualisation of governance to include epistemic institutions. Since the main distinguishing feature between knowledge commons and natural resource commons is the central role that epistemic goods play in knowledge commons, the inclusion of epistemic institutions is arguably critical to examining knowledge commons.

Second, this formulation brings into focus the interplay between inequality outside the commons and inequality within the commons, by considering how internal inequalities shape the capacity of the community to craft standards of excellence that differ from the skewed standards underlying the systemic inequality between southern and northern scholarship.

Third, this formulation introduces three evaluative criteria for judging the flourishing of commons that emerge in response to inequality: (1) the extent of collaboration within the commons; (2) the extent to which research is connected and cumulative; and (3) the extent to which the commons is able to renew itself over generations. These criteria are based on the view that systemic inequality theoretically constitutes a form of over-fencing. In the conceptual framework, I developed the argument that the skewed standards of excellence underlying systemic inequality discourage collaboration between members of a subordinate group. This leads to fragmented and non-cumulative scholarship. Insofar as members of the subordinate group cannot participate in modifying these standards, they are liable to grow disenchanting and eventually opt out of the commons, so that the commons becomes unstable and fragile. As such, systemic inequality can impede the growth of high quality scholarship among members of a subordinate group, and endanger the sustainability of their commons. Consequently, this

formulation identifies an analytical relationship between the three evaluative criteria that Ostrom and Hess (2007) use to judge whether a commons is flourishing – sustainability, quality and equality – where sustainability and quality are in part a function of equality.²³ This suggests that not only are the evaluative criteria for judging a knowledge commons dependent on the problem that the commons was constructed to address, but that a detailed specification of the evaluative criteria requires careful empirical and theoretical buttressing. As a consequence, this formulation of the framework deliberately leaves the costs and risks of the outcomes emanating from the commons underspecified. The aim here is to use the empirical study to cast light on the potential costs and risk of a knowledge commons that emerges in response to inequality.

While this formulation in the context of inequality is clearly different from formulations in the context of intellectual property rights, all these formulations share several key characteristics that are a function of the underlying framework. First, the framework focuses on the way in which the collective action of individuals can influence the underlying situation of the commons. In order to understand processes of institutional change in knowledge commons, it is therefore useful to examine the relationship between all three areas of the IAD framework, where this is likely to be an iterative process.

Second, and related to this, the framework emphasises that a community can create intellectual goods and institutions that shape their underlying situation, even as this situation contours the commons as a whole. This confluence of ideas and material political and economic factors is therefore central to the shape and function of a knowledge commons.

Third, the framework draws attention to contestations over meaning and institutions as a way of excavating the normative foundations of the commons. Thus, for instance, Madison et al. (2010) explain that conflicts in the narrative of an organisation illustrate debates over purpose and thereby illuminate the normative foundations of the commons that are reflected in the values and beliefs of participants in the organisation, and in the formal and informal rules of the organisation that shape participants' practice. The formulation of the framework in terms of inequality in particular emphasised the way in which such contestations may reflect the dynamics of inequality within the commons.

In sum, the IAD framework provides a consistent language for structuring a case study of a knowledge commons. It allows one to specify carefully-delineated and theoretically-connected

²³ There are clearly other determinants of sustainability and quality, such as the scarcity of economic resources.

research questions, which are situated within a causal schema and nested within a broader institutional setting. This is useful for getting an analytic handle on knowledge commons that operate at many levels of complexity, and provides a framework for conducting comparative research on commons. In this section, I adapted the framework for comparative research on knowledge commons that arise in response to the problem of inequality, which are most visibly located in the global South. This formulation provides the following guidelines for investigating a southern knowledge commons: (1) that the enquiry examine the confluence of ideas and material factors in shaping the commons, particularly its epistemic institutions; (2) that it analyse the interplay between inequality outside and inside the commons; (3) that the outcomes for evaluating the commons should be identified in terms of the problems that inequality theoretically generates – fragmented and non-cumulative knowledge systems that are unstable and fragile; (4) that it focus on the commons as a whole, by investigating the relationship between all three areas in the framework in an iterative manner.

3.3. Research design

This section sets out the research design in the context of the IAD framework. The research is designed as a case study of CODESRIA, and is structured around three key intellectual debates in the organisation: pan-Africanism, structural adjustment and African feminism. As a way of exploring these debates, I combine a document analysis with semi-structured interviews, and supplement this with a descriptive analysis of CODESRIA's bibliometric and administrative data. This allows to me to investigate how the confluence of ideas and material political and economic factors has shaped the nature of CODESRIA's community, its institutional architecture and its intellectual work. As such, I use the IAD framework as a transversal framework: it specifies the broad underlying causal structure for examining these three debates and the ways in which they cast light on the underlying situation of CODESRIA, its action arena and the patterns of interaction emanating from it.

In this section, I begin by explaining the research strategy. I describe how the objectives, research questions and choice of intellectual debates are structured in terms of the IAD framework. Since the empirical investigation is made up of three components – documents,

interviews, and bibliometric and administrative data – I address each separately. For each component, I explain the rationale for selecting the data, its relation to the other components of the investigation, the sampling strategy and sample characteristics where relevant, the process of data collection, and the techniques used to analyse the data. I then consider major threats to internal validity, ethical issues arising from the study and the limitations of the study.

3.3.1. Research strategy and questions

The objective of this study is to cast light on CODESRIA as a pan-African knowledge commons and its organisational and intellectual contributions to African scholarship. The intention is to examine the factors that have contributed to its emergence and persistence as a thriving commons in an unequal world. It is guided by a central question:

*What factors have shaped CODESRIA as a pan-African knowledge commons
in the context of inequality?*

As a way of answering the over-arching question, I examine three inter-related debates in CODESRIA: the different meanings of pan-Africanism in CODESRIA, CODESRIA's defence of the academic project under structural adjustment, and African feminists' struggles to change CODESRIA. Each debate allows for an interrogation of the overarching research question from a particular intellectual and historical vantage point, and yields the following sub-questions:

1. How have different meanings of pan-Africanism shaped CODESRIA as a knowledge commons?
2. How did CODESRIA respond as a knowledge commons to structural adjustment?
3. How have feminist struggles shaped CODESRIA as a knowledge commons?

These debates exemplify the ways in which different generations of African scholars in the post-independence period have sought to make sense of and respond to the problems of inequality inside and outside of the commons.

As I argued in the discussion of the IAD framework, ideas play a central role in the shape and function of a knowledge commons, and this is particularly true for CODESRIA. It was founded as an explicitly pan-African organisation and continues to espouse strong pan-African ideals in its organisational form and its intellectual work. The period of its founding was a time of relative prosperity on the continent, during which African universities expanded considerably and new forms of political and intellectual solidarity emerged. In order to understand the historical context of CODESRIA's genesis and the evolution of its normative underpinnings, it is therefore important to pay attention to the richness and complexity of its pan-Africanism.

By the 1980s, however, the combined pressure of the oil crisis and externally imposed economic programmes in the form of structural adjustment gave rise to deep concerns about the continent's autonomy and the role of intellectuals in society. The collapse of universities fundamentally reshaped the nature of the academic project in Africa. In attempting to understand and defend the academic project during this period, CODESRIA also underwent fundamental intellectual and organisational changes that shaped the nature of its community, the kind of intellectual work it undertook, and the ways in which the community governed itself.

While young scholars often bore the brunt of structural adjustment, they were also the source of intellectual ferment in the organisation. Young feminists in particular, began to contest the patriarchal nature of CODESRIA's institutions and intellectual work. In order to do so they developed a rich body of scholarship that has helped lay the foundations for a distinctive form of African feminism, which has contributed to changing the institutional framework of CODESRIA. Tracing the unfolding dialectic between feminist thought and struggle within CODESRIA provides a way of rethinking what it means to produce African scholarship rooted in the particularities of African experiences.

These three intellectual debates therefore roughly track three different generations of scholars, although all generations have had a role to play in the debates. The notion of different generations draws on a typology developed by Mkandawire (1995), who identifies three generations of post-independence scholars. The first generation was trained in the 1950s and 1960s, mostly in northern universities, and was instrumental in establishing pan-African networks such as CODESRIA. The second generation was trained in the 1970s and constituted the first wave of "brain drain" during structural adjustment. The third generation was trained in African universities in the 1980s and 1990s, and therefore bore the brunt of structural

adjustment. In the interim, a fourth generation has emerged. Many, but not all of these scholars, have been trained in northern institutions as a consequence of the rapid decline of African universities during structural adjustment. Through the lens of these different intellectual debates, one can begin to see how each generation has played a role in the organisation.

These different intellectual debates also track the changing political and economic situation underlying African scholarship, and the ways in which different kinds of inequalities have become more or less salient within the organisation. This is particularly apparent in the case of feminist debates, but it also plays a role during structural adjustment, when the collapse of graduate training made it difficult for younger scholars to engage with older generations on an equal footing. With regard to pan-Africanism, debates also emerge around forms of inequality structured along regional and linguistic lines.

These intellectual debates are not hermetically sealed from the broader international community. Rather, they are often vigorous responses to both domestic and international intellectual and political developments. It is therefore important to trace the interplay between these external and internal factors. Linked to this, CODESRIA has institutional relationships with other organisations. These include scholarly organisations and donors, both on the continent, in the broader global South and in the North. Paying attention to these institutional relationships is important for understanding CODESRIA as an institutional actor which shapes, and is shaped by, the broader institutional landscape.

Structuring the investigation around these debates is therefore a useful way of meeting the requirements for investigating a southern knowledge commons. It allows me to examine the confluence of ideas and material factors in shaping the commons. It provides a way of investigating struggles over inequality outside and inside the commons. It facilitates an analysis of how the commons has changed over time, in order to get a sense of the extent to which the commons has managed to deal with the problem of inequality. And it enables an iterative analysis of the relationship between the three areas of the IAD framework: the underlying situation, the action arena and the patterns of interaction or outcomes.

3.3.2. Data collection and analysis

In order to explore these intellectual debates, I collected and analysed three types of data: (1) scholarly and administrative documents; (2) interviews with key scholars and officials and (3) bibliometric data on publications and participation in CODESRIA. I used the IAD framework to guide the collection and analysis of the data, on the basis of which I then crafted an analytical narrative for each intellectual debate. The synthesis chapter then returns to the overarching research question to systematically examine key elements of the IAD framework and the evolving nature of CODESRIA as a pan-African knowledge commons.

3.3.2.1. Documentary data

The first component of the research commenced with a preliminary document analysis of the writings of intellectuals who are affiliated with CODESRIA, in the form of published journal articles, monographs, and books. Since I had not yet determined which intellectual debates to focus on, I attempted to read as widely as possible, so that the sample of scholarly texts was limited only by what was immediately available and accessible to me. On the basis of a rudimentary thematic analysis, I identified five potential debates for structuring the investigation: structural adjustment, academic freedom, social movements, pan-Africanism, and endogenous scholarship. During this period, I also conducted a round of preliminary informal interviews with three established scholars who are familiar with CODESRIA so as to identify potentially important debates in the organisation. These three scholars were Fred Hendricks, Michael Neocosmos, and one scholar who wished to remain anonymous.

Thereafter, I visited CODESRIA's office in Dakar from June-July 2015 to locate scholarly and administrative documents that had not been digitised. The scholarly output includes unpublished conference papers and reports, out-of-print books and journal articles. Administrative documents include the various iterations of CODESRIA's Charter since its founding, its strategic plans and annual reports, as well as internal and donor evaluations of the organisation (see Appendix 5: Primary administrative documents). I now conducted a more thorough-going thematic analysis in order to develop a basic annotated bibliography of the major intellectual debates in CODESRIA, as well as the changing political and economic context of African higher education. I used this analysis to revise and narrow the choice of intellectual debates to the following three: pan-Africanism, structural adjustment, and feminism.

On the basis of this, I confined the sample of documents to those which addressed these three intellectual debates. I then employed a kind of snowballing strategy, by which I drew on the citations in key texts to point me to further texts and so on. The more I read, the more I was able to identify significant intellectual works and discover lacunae in my understanding. In addition, formal interviews and informal conversations with scholars in CODESRIA often pointed me in the direction of new materials and ideas. As a consequence, the process of curating and analysing documents was a continuous and iterative one.

I did not conduct a bibliometric analysis of all 431 references used in this thesis. However, as the analysis of the references used in the conceptual framework indicates, the sample of scholarly documents that I drew on likely reflects gender and regional inequalities.

The document analysis has been useful in several respects. On the one hand, the document analysis is valuable on its own terms, since the scholarly documents constitute the main intellectual outcomes of the commons, while the administrative documents are often important institutional outcomes. In addition, both scholarly and administrative documents cast important light on its underlying situation and debates within the action arena. On the other hand, the document analysis also has instrumental value. It informed the sampling strategy and the development of the interview schedule, and has helped me to deepen and check insights from the interview data.

3.3.2.2. Interview data

The second component of the research involved conducting interviews with key scholars and administrative staff in CODESRIA.

I began with identifying the sample. The sampling strategy is partly purposive because I selected interviewees on the basis of intellectuals who appeared to be significant contributors to the debates identified in the document analysis, as well as those who have played a key role in the governance of the organisation (see Appendix 1: CODESRIA's organisational structure and Appendix 2: CODESRIA's leadership). I also used the informal interviews I had conducted during the preliminary documentary analysis to check that my interview sample did not omit key informants. However, the sampling strategy is also partly convenient, because I was unable to interview some individuals due to their location or their unavailability to be interviewed.

I then used the document analysis to develop the preliminary schedules for the semi-structured interviews, and then gave it to two of the CODESRIA scholars I had informally interviewed as a way of member-checking its content and structure. The schedule was structured into three components: one set of questions examined the underlying situation of CODESRIA, another set examined its action arena, and the third set examined its outcomes. However, I kept the interview in a semi-structured format so as to allow for emerging insights to guide the interview. For an example of how this played out in practice, see Appendix 7: Selected interview transcript.

The process of developing the interview schedule was an iterative one. I often found it important to tailor the schedule to reflect the interviewee's intellectual or governance contributions to CODESRIA. I also refined and adapted the schedule as new issues emerged over the course of conducting interviews.

I eventually conducted semi-structured interviews with twenty-eight intellectuals and officials in CODESRIA between 2015 and 2017. I supplemented this with secondary interviews that had been conducted by other scholars, as well as intellectuals' own writings that reflected on their time in CODESRIA. I had initially hoped to conduct two rounds of interviews: a first round at CODESRIA's General Assembly in Dakar in June 2015, and a second round at the World Social Sciences Forum in September 2015. However, very few CODESRIA scholars were present at the World Social Sciences Forum, and it took longer than expected to secure the interviews I required. As a consequence, only one round of interviews was undertaken, however this was done over eighteen months, which allowed me to reflect on emerging themes, gaps and contradictions in the data, and revise interview schedules accordingly. I attempted to ensure that interviewees received the interview schedule at least one week in advance so that they were able to reflect on the questions before providing a response, but practical constraints sometimes meant that this was not possible. All interviews were recorded with interviewees' permission.

Table 4 below provides a breakdown of interviewees in terms of their current or former administrative roles in the Council, their gender and the generation of scholars to which they belong. Their administrative roles are defined in terms of the organisational structure of CODESRIA (see Appendix 1: CODESRIA's organisational structure). It is important to note that, as a self-governing community, many scholars have at one time or another played an administrative role in CODESRIA, and this accounts for the high proportion of interviewees who

have administrative insights into the organisation. A more detailed breakdown of the sample can be found in Appendix 4: List of interviewees. It lists all interviewees, along with brief details on their past or present administrative roles in the organisation, their gender, generation, and nationality. I do not provide a breakdown of scholars' intellectual contributions to CODESRIA, as these are too wide-ranging and complex to capture in a short list.

Table 4: Sample characteristics

<i>Administrative roles(past and present)</i>		<i>Gender distribution</i>		<i>Generational distribution</i>	
Scientific committee	3	Female	8	1st generation	4
Executive committee	5	Male	20	2nd generation	7
Executive Secretary	3	Total	28	3rd generation	12
Research	2			4th generation	5
Training, grants and fellowships	1			Total	28
Publications	3				
Administration and finance	2				
CODICE	2				
No role	7				
Total	28				

The analysis of the interview data was a continuous and iterative process. First, I kept a research journal to reflect on my perceptions of the interview on the day and refine interview schedules as appropriate. In most cases, I transcribed the interviews myself, which provided me with an additional opportunity for reflection. The analysis of the transcripts involved selecting relevant content from the text, using this to construct thematic categories, and then carefully evaluating these themes in terms of the research objectives (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison 2007, 20). Throughout this process, I kept a basic audit trail. I found this useful in keeping track of different data sources so that I had a clear sense of the process of data collection and analysis.

3.3.2.3. Bibliometric and administrative data

The third stage of the research involved constructing and analysing bibliometric and administrative datasets. This was useful, as it allowed me to track changes in research themes and participation in CODESRIA over a period of time. For instance, I looked at demographic

differences in authorship and participation in CODESRIA based on gender and institutional location. I could then use these basic analyses as a way of checking themes which emerged in the document and interview analysis. If interviewees claimed that CODESRIA became “experts” on structural adjustment, I could check the bibliometric data for evidence of publishing in this area. Similarly, if interviewees claimed that women’s participation in CODESRIA has remained low, I could check these claims against time-series data on changes in women’s authorship and participation in the General Assembly. To this end, I constructed four datasets on CODESRIA’s scholarship and the nature of its community:

- a dataset of masters and doctoral theses sponsored by CODESRIA from 1987-2009
- a dataset of books published by CODESRIA from 1979-2010
- a dataset of articles published in CODESRIA’s flagship journal, *Africa Development*, from 1976-2012
- a dataset of participant characteristics in CODESRIA’s four General Assemblies from 2002 – 2015

In addition to this, I constructed a bibliometric dataset of the citations used in the conceptual chapter as a way of reflecting on the way in which my citation practices reflected regional and gender inequalities. One final dataset that I constructed drew on UNESCO’s data on government spending on education from 1975-2015. This was simply a check on various claims in the structural adjustment literature that education spending in Africa had declined (but these claims were provided without reference to data on government spending, or with figures that were not traceable).

Table 5 provides a brief description of each dataset, the descriptive analysis conducted on each dataset, and the procedures used to clean and code the dataset. For a detailed description of data sources, see Appendix 6: Bibliometric and administrative data. In order to allow the data and analyses to be checked, I provide a separate file “data.xlsx”, which contains all six datasets as discrete spreadsheets. The file “stata_do_files.txt” contains all the do files for the analysis and can be run in Stata.

Table 5: Overview of datasets, analyses and procedures

<i>Title</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Analysis</i>	<i>Procedure for cleaning and coding the dataset</i>
Catalogue of Theses and Dissertations Sponsored by CODESRIA	Dataset of all 1004 masters and doctoral thesis published with financial support from CODESRIA, 1988-2009. Source: CODESRIA	Analysis of changes in gender composition of postgraduate students from 1988-2009	Individuals' gender was coded on a binary scale in the following way: 1. Eyeballed the dataset for identifiably gendered names 2. Conducted an image search of the person on Google 3. Found that most naming conventions that I was not familiar with were West African in origin. I then asked West African colleagues to check the gender identity of these names. 4. The remainder whose gender could not be identified were coded as such
List of CODESRIA Publications	Dataset of all 372 books published by CODESRIA, 1979-2010. Source: CODESRIA	Analysis of growth in publications and changes in gender composition of authors from 1979-2010	For the gender analysis, gender was coded in the same way as with the analysis of theses published by CODESRIA. In the case of multi-authored books, a book was coded as being authored by a female if at least one of the authors was female. This weights the contributions of females more heavily, on the grounds that at least one female author is a marked improvement from no female authors
List of <i>Africa Development</i> journal articles published by CODESRIA	Dataset of the 502 articles published in its longest-running journal, 1976-2012. Source: JSTOR	Analysis of topics published in <i>Africa Development</i> from 1980-1990, the first decade of structural adjustment	This analysis focused on the content of article titles. To do so, I conducted a word search for the following terms and their French equivalents: IMF; World Bank; Structural adjustment; Crisis; Development; Economic; University; Social Science; Academic freedom On the basis of this, I generated the following two binary codes for articles: - article concerns structural adjustment and/or economic development - article concerns the academic project
Participation in CODESRIA's General Assembly	Dataset of participant characteristics in CODESRIA's four General Assemblies from 2002 – 2015 (this is the period that CODESRIA began collecting this data). Source: CODESRIA.	Analysis of changes in the gender composition of participants from 2002-2015	The gender analysis was straightforward, as the administrative dataset provided the gender identity of each participant

List of citations used in the conceptual framework of this thesis	Dataset of the 125 references used in the conceptual framework of this thesis	Analysis of the gender and regional composition of authors cited in the chapter	For the gender and regional composition of authors, I followed a similar procedure to that of the thesis and publications data.
Government education spending as percentage of GDP	Dataset of government spending worldwide as percentage of GDP, 1975 – 2016. Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics	Analysis of changes in government spending on education for adjusted and non-adjusted countries in Africa from 1975-1990	Using the list of countries that undertook structural adjustment programmes provided by Noorbakhsh and Paloni (2001) and Oberdabernig (2013), countries were coded as adjusted or non-adjusted. I then calculated the average government spending on education for each group and compared changes in spending over time. I focused on the period 1975-1990 in order to compare trends in pre-adjustment spending with spending during adjustment.

3.3.3. Internal validity

Internal validity refers to the extent to which other scholars can agree that the conclusions of a study are plausible based on the data collected and its analysis. I begin by discussing the general principles of internal validity with regard to qualitative methods, since this is the primary method of investigation for the project. However, I find it beneficial to think through qualitative methods by contrasting them with experimental methods, as I am more familiar with this approach. I then explain which strategies I used to improve the internal validity of this study, and factors that threaten its internal validity.

The criteria for determining internal validity arguably flow from the techniques for identifying causation in empirical work. In the context of experimental research, the criteria for internal validity flow from a view of causation as counterfactual: *A* only causes *B* if, in another world where everything was precisely the same except that *A* was absent, *B* would not occur. Randomising the sample and the application of the treatment (the cause), approximates this counterfactual logic, since the difference between the treatment and the control group ends up being precisely the difference between this world and the counterfactual. Experiments therefore only seek to identify the effects of a cause; they never seek to identify the causes of an effect, since there are potentially many causes that together result in an observed effect and it is therefore not possible to make counterfactual claims about them (Holland 1986). As a consequence of this view of causation, experimental research is undertaken in a linear fashion: the researcher first designs the experiment, then she collects the data, analyses it and finally interprets it. Indeed, underlying assumptions about causation in experimental research require linearity: iterative research design and sampling is a threat to internal validity since it interferes with the random selection of the sample and application of the treatment that are necessary to identify causal relations.

Unlike quantitative experimental research, qualitative research is essentially non-random and purposive; in place of considering fictional counterfactual worlds, qualitative research is deeply steeped in this world. As such, one can think of it as a form of narrative, in which the closeness of fit between two events establishes the causal connection and rules out spurious correlation (Humphreys and Jacobs 2014). In turn, the closeness of fit seems to be established primarily through the richness of data and the sensitivity of interpretation. In this regard,

Mamdani (2012, 142) comments that history, and indeed, the social world, is “written as a narrative, and the mode of the narrative – such as romance, tragedy, comedy and farce – is not self-evident. It has to be chosen.” However, the mode of narrative, and more deeply, the conceptual schema used to explain and knit together social phenomena is not simply a matter of choice. Reflecting on African historiography, Usman glosses the problem thus: “The person with a perception of history who is studying history has been produced and moulded by history. The very concepts he uses are historically determined and produced. And he is involved in looking at what has produced and is moulding him.” (Usman 2006a, 41–42) The problem is of trying to look at oneself from the outside, so to speak, so that it is “impossible to reconstruct history without some specific categories, conception and assumption ... unless this is done consciously one becomes a conceptual prisoner of certain types of primary sources, without being aware of it.” (Usman 2006b, 21) Qualitative scholars argue, therefore, that reflection on the nature of one’s positionality and the way in which this shapes one’s theory-laden observations can help one avoid the reproduction of personal biases in scholarly work.

My view differs from this. As I argued in the section on perspectival objectivity, scholarship can only hope to become objective as a communal enterprise, never as an individual one, for positionality enables enquiry. Reflexivity cannot eliminate this positionality, although it may allow for a more sophisticated and nuanced outlook. While reflexivity is an important epistemic virtue, so too are the virtues of humility and an openness to critique from one’s community.

Still, positionality is recognised as an issue that can often bedevil both qualitative and quantitative research. It is just that the tools for dealing with this positionality may sometimes differ. In the context of experimental research, the experimenter may try to ensure that the identity of the experimenter and the participants is adequately probed and controlled for, by for instance, gathering data on the identity of participants and ensuring that those who carry out the experiment are drawn from an array of different backgrounds. Qualitative research is different. Rather than focusing on randomisation and identifying potential confounding factors, qualitative research is deeply iterative (Onwuegbuzie and Leech 2007). It can be characterised as a process that is “a loop-like pattern of multiple rounds of revisiting the data as additional questions emerge, new connections are unearthed, and more complex formulations develop along with a deepening understanding of the material.” (Berkowitz 1997 quoted in Srivastava and Hopwood

2009, 77) Iteration is a mark of researcher sensitivity to her empirical context. It therefore provides a way of critically reflecting on her positionality, for the complexity she observes in the data may help persuade her to reconsider her underlying assumptions about which categories of analysis to employ, and which theories to draw on. While randomisation is the central criterion of internal validity for experiments, one can think of reflexive iteration as the central criterion of internal validity for qualitative research (Morse et al. 2008). In this regard, Srivastava and Hopwood (2009) present an iterative framework for reflexive analysis, which poses three simple questions:

- i. What is the data telling me?
- ii. What do I want to know?
- iii. What is the relationship between the data and my questions?

In light of these questions, the researcher may choose to gather more data and refine her instruments, on the basis of which she will conduct a second round of analysis. In this way, iterative interviews reduce the possibility of inaccurate representations of interviewees' thoughts and allows for them to reflect and deepen their responses. It can also act as a check on the researcher's analysis with regard to categories, themes, gaps and tensions.

In addition to the deeply iterative nature of qualitative research, there are a number of secondary criteria that researchers can employ to ensure internal validity. These are set out in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Establishing internal validity in qualitative research

	<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	Ensuring methodological coherence (Morse et al. 2008)	The method fits the research question
2	Selecting an appropriate sample (Morse et al. 2008)	The sample is sufficiently well chosen to provide rich and useful data
3	Avoiding confirmation bias (Creswell and Miller 2000)	The researcher pays attention to outliers, potential counter-evidence and gaps and silences in the data

4	Triangulating findings (Creswell and Miller 2000)	The researcher uses multiple sources of data, multiple kinds of data and multiple theories as a check on her interpretation. A single source of evidence could suggest the way forward, but when it is confirmed by another independent source it starts to become a credible guide.
5	Keeping an audit trail (Creswell and Miller 2000)	This is a post hoc method for ensuring that data collection and analysis is transparent and clear; includes research log of all activities, chronology of data collection and record of data analysis procedures
6	Drawing modest conclusions and being open to critique (Sen 1993; Deaton 2010)	This refers to the extent to which the researcher considers her positional objectivity, the theory-laden nature of observation, and the extent to which her findings may be confounded by unobservable or latent phenomena that she did not consider; she is therefore cautious and modest in her conclusions, and open to critique from her community

In the context of this case study, I employed several of these strategies for improving internal validity. First, as the preceding section on the research strategy shows, I tried to ensure that there was a close fit between the IAD framework and research questions. Second, and related to this, the research questions were structured in such a way as to allow for an iterative examination of CODESRIA. Moreover, while I was unable to conduct iterative interviews, the long period over which the interviews were conducted allowed me to analyse the interview data and reflect and refine interview schedules appropriately. Keeping a research journal to allow for continuous reflection helped in this iterative process. Third, I attempted to avoid confirmation bias by paying careful attention to outliers, tensions and gaps in the data and kept a rudimentary audit trail. Fourth, I weighed the claims made in documents against the claims in interviews, and then checked them, where possible, against the bibliometric and administrative data. This is a very basic form of triangulation.

Major threats to the internal validity of the study stem from sampling bias and the quality of data collected. First, since the sample selection is guided by normative considerations about scholastic influence and excellence, it is also subject to epistemic biases. As I noted in the first section of this chapter, this is because our observations are shaped by prior normative and theoretical commitments, which are historically bounded and influenced by a range of

parameters including gender and race. Consequently, I am likely unaware of biases that other scholars in different historical contexts perceive all too clearly. I think that reflexivity and member-checking helped guard against these biases, but probably did not eliminate them.

Second, at the outset of this research, I anticipated that some scholars in CODESRIA might be concerned with their role as custodians of the organisation and with their own legacy, and that this would influence their responses. I thought this would likely be the case because the organisation is largely donor dependent, and any potential reputational damage poses a significant risk to its financial sustainability. I decided that I would be careful to avoid unnecessarily raising issues that could pose reputational risk when these were tangential to the research, particularly since this would force me to balance the competing interests of a donor-dependent organisation against the requirements of research validity. In this regard, foremost in my mind was the financial and organisational maladministration of the Council, which threatened donor funding in the early 2000s (Bujra 2003; Beckman et al. 2007).

Yet, no matter how careful I was, some interviewees were determined to discuss this topic; it had evidently angered them greatly and it felt as though the interview was at times an opportunity for them to get this off their chest. I found that, in general, interviewees tended to be less guarded in their remarks and more willing to engage in unvarnished critique than I had anticipated. Indeed, my experience of the 2015 General Assembly suggested that CODESRIA's community as a whole is characterised by a high degree of frankness and a refusal to shirk away from uncomfortable topics. Moreover, since the problems of maladministration seem to have largely been resolved, they no longer pose the reputational risk I had envisioned at the start of the study. As a result, this episode has worked its way, albeit in a tangential manner, into the chapter on pan-Africanism. However, since the protagonist of this story – Achille Mbembe – was unwilling to be interviewed, I have sought to be very careful in the kinds of conclusions I could draw from scholars' reflections on this period.

3.3.4. Ethical considerations

Since the research involved human participants, I successfully sought approval from the University Ethics Committee in March 2015. As discussed above, I had initially believed that the

most significant ethical issue arises in the context of CODESRIA's donor-dependency, since it must safeguard its reputation in order to ensure its financial sustainability. I therefore sought and gained permission from the Executive Secretary at the time, Ebrima Sall, to conduct the empirical component of the study, and provided him with a clear and detailed outline of the proposed study. During the course of the research however, I have come to realise that CODESRIA's community is generally less concerned with issues of reputation management than I had initially envisioned.

In addition to this, I am ethically committed to the principle of open data. This commitment flows from an understanding of knowledge as a commons. Perspectival objectivity and the overarching ethical aim of adding to a common knowledge pool imply a commitment to openness and transparency. This applies both to the data collection and analysis, and to making the data visible and accessible to all so that other researchers may use the data for their own research and check my analysis.

With regard to interview data, I have followed the conventions and guidelines of open data research (Dietrich et al. 2014). Thus, each interviewee provided informed consent and stipulated the level of data privacy in the study, ranging from complete anonymity and privately-secured data, to being clearly identified and giving permission for the interview data to be uploaded on an open-access digital repository, so that other researchers can use and analyse the interview data. I am still in the process of creating this repository, which requires quite a bit of work. However, as an interim measure, this thesis includes a sample transcript (see Appendix 7: Selected interview transcript), and is accompanied by a supplementary file which contains all quantitative data and analyses.

3.3.5. Limitations of the study

The study has several limitations. First, CODESRIA's pan-African organisational form implies certain trade-offs in the analysis. For instance, a focused analysis of its regional context comes at the expense of a deep analysis of the individual countries that constitute the region. Similarly, CODESRIA is a pan-African organisation, and as such, its working languages are French, English, Portuguese and Arabic. The majority of interviews were conducted in English, with

some French. However, given that I do not understand Portuguese, and have only a smattering of Arabic, interviews with Lusophone and Arabophone scholars were limited to those with proficiency in English or French.

The second limitation stems from the richness and complexity of CODESRIA's intellectual contributions. CODESRIA has generated a large body of scholarship in many different areas. The selection of three intellectual debates – pan-Africanism, structural adjustment, and feminism – by no means exhausts its intellectual contributions. There have been many other key debates, such as the role of social movements, and the relationship between democracy and economic growth. More recently, xenophobia in South Africa, the role of the International Criminal Court, and the socio-ecological dynamics of Ebola have been at the forefront of discussions. Thus, this study of CODESRIA as a commons necessarily offers a partial analysis of its intellectual contributions.

Third, and related to this, the sheer quantity of scholarship produced by CODESRIA means that it is exceptionally difficult to analyse its scholarly outcomes through qualitative analysis alone. In particular, analysing the extent to which CODESRIA's scholarship is connected and cumulative would plausibly require a citation analysis of its journal and book publications, which would seek to identify the extent to which scholars in CODESRIA draw on each others' work. However, when this study began, CODESRIA had not yet digitised journals published prior to 2001, had not uploaded any of its journals to a fully-searchable digital library, and had not subscribed to a citation indexing service. Without a citation dataset to draw on, I would have needed to create a dataset from scratch. I initially explored this possibility with the bibliometric scholar Ion Georgiou, but as our discussions made clear, this would be an extremely time-consuming process (for a methodological overview of this approach see Georgiou and Heck 2015). A citation analysis of CODESRIA's scholarly outcomes would therefore come at the expense of a detailed examination of its intellectual and organisational dynamics. CODESRIA has subsequently secured an agreement with the digital library, JSTOR, to digitise and store its flagship journal, *Africa Development* and is currently in the process of developing an African Citation Index (Nwagwu 2015). Once this is complete, it would undoubtedly be useful to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the citation and co-authorship patterns in CODESRIA's publications.

3.4. Conclusion

Viewing knowledge as a commons has a distinct methodological advantage, for one can then draw on the IAD framework to structure a case study of a commons in such a way that it allows for future comparative analyses. Systematic comparative research is an important component of building theories to explain, predict and design different commons arrangements. However, one of the implications of theorising out of the North is that existing formulations of the IAD framework largely conceptualise knowledge commons as a response to the problem of intellectual property rights, and do not systematically consider the problem of inequality. I therefore used the conceptual analysis to adapt the IAD framework for investigating knowledge commons that emerge in response to inequality, many of which are visibly located in the global South. Conceptualising commons in terms of inequality yielded several distinctive methodological insights for investigating southern knowledge commons: that the role of epistemic institutions is central to understanding the dynamics of a knowledge commons; that the enquiry should be structured to examine the interplay between inequality outside and inside the commons; and that the outcomes for evaluating the commons should be identified in terms of the problems that inequality generates – fragmented and non-cumulative knowledge systems that are unstable and fragile. I then outlined the design of this study, namely a case study of CODESRIA. I showed how the revised IAD framework clarifies the way in which the three research questions are closely knitted together. I then explained what kind of data the study draws on, the nature of the sampling strategy, how data was collected and analysed, and major threats to internal validity. I ended by examining the ethical dimensions of this research, and its limitations.

Chapter 4: The meanings of pan-Africanism in CODESRIA

CODESRIA was founded as an explicitly pan-African intellectual organisation. As Bujra reminds us, “CODESRIA was the first major pan-African organisation to be established and to operate on a purely voluntary basis outside the inter-governmental and international systems. It was thus a pioneering organisation in an untried territory.” (2003, 8) Working out the idea of pan-Africanism in practice has meant that different intellectual and political strands were brought together in new and untested ways, giving rise to multiple and sometimes contested meanings of pan-Africanism. Moreover, as Mafeje (1990c, 159) observes, “whatever the ‘Africanist’ conception of the self might be, it could not mean or represent the same thing throughout time”, or one might add, over space. The fluidity and complexity of the concept is therefore marked by different understandings of pan-Africanism.

This chapter asks: *how have different meanings of pan-Africanism shaped CODESRIA as a knowledge commons?* This allows me to examine CODESRIA’s pan-Africanism as a dialectic between intellectual debate and organisational response. This chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section I explore intellectuals’ different understandings of CODESRIA’s genesis as a pan-African organisation. In the second section I consider how these understandings are complicated by the political and linguistic divisions bequeathed by colonial rule. In the third section I examine how the material and institutional character of African universities has constrained the organisation’s attempts to navigate these divisions. I end by considering the ways in which CODESRIA’s pan-African imagination enables a mode of collective enquiry into what it means to be an African intellectual and do African intellectual work.

4.1. The genesis of CODESRIA as a pan-African organisation

This section explores intellectuals’ different understandings of the genesis of CODESRIA as a pan-African organisation, since these differences help illuminate the ideational and normative basis of the Council. What emerges clearly from the analysis is that CODESRIA was forged within a melting pot of new ideas and social forms emerging from the anti-colonial struggle and

the first flush of independence. While different narratives stress different ideational elements, all of them point to the enormous creative energy of CODESRIA's founders, who sought to imagine and thereby bring into being a fundamentally new kind of organisation grounded in the principles of autonomous thought and intellectual solidarity. The pan-African form of this organisation, however, is not confined to the idea of the African continent. Its pan-Africanism is larger than this, in the sense that the idea of the global South and the global North is embedded in it. Its pan-Africanism is also smaller than this, in the sense that it is entangled with the idea of the state. Moreover, CODESRIA's pan-Africanism is a deeply generative one, in that it is orientated to bringing about an imagined Africa. The richness and complexity of its pan-African form, I argue, give rise to ambiguities and incongruities, and lay the ground for tensions between the idea of pan-Africanism and the material exigencies of the continent.

Interviews and document analyses indicate that there are two different kinds of accounts as to when CODESRIA was founded. The most common narrative indicates that the organisation was established in 1973. This view is fairly authoritative, as indicated by the Council's official overview of its activities, founding principles and mandate:

CODESRIA was established in 1973. It was born of the will of African social scientists ... to develop scientific capacities and tools that would further the cohesion, well-being and development of African societies. This principle underscores the sense of active commitment that was at the origin of the Council and which fired its founders. It was considered to be meaningful only if a conscious effort was made to foster a pan-African community of scholars active in and connected to the continent ... It also called for the nurturing and all-round protection of the intellectual freedom of members of the African academy ... the intellectual community ... not only challenges but also transcends the fragmenting effects of the colonial heritage. (CODESRIA 2002, 6)

This narrative emphasises the way in which the Council's pan-African structure was developed in response to internal debates about the fragmenting effects of colonialism on intellectual communities in particular and African societies in general. Indeed, in interviews, senior scholars

tended to emphasise these internal dimensions. Sam Moyo, for instance, glossed the historical context of CODESRIA's genesis in this way:

In 1973 when CODESRIA was getting started, it was founded by deans of social science. [This was] the first decade of the experiment to officially develop pan-Africanism. The Organization of African Unity was developed around 1963 and the idea of pan-Africanism was very important. In a way, 1972 was the first decade of independence in Africa. On average, most African countries got independence between 1960 and 1963 – a few before that. That first decade saw a first generation of African scholars and professors who were now occupying the African academia ... Related to that was the euphoria of independence, of autonomy, and people trying to think autonomously intellectually: what was our own perspective? People were still reacting to very strongly-dominated British or French social sciences, and increasingly there was also American political science. So that's the issue: the first wave of people who were trying to establish a community with ideas, partly about autonomous intellectual projects ... They were African progressives with leftist leanings, not necessarily just left, but with the idea not only that Africa shared a common history of oppression, but also that European influence is divided territorially and intellectually. There was a lot of pan-African spirit. It's one of the important values underlying the foundation of CODESRIA ... By 1973 or 1974, the crisis began, there was the oil shock, and the currency-dollar regime. It was a very shaky period. The east – west confrontation in Africa was strong: there was the liberation movement in Angola, part of Mozambique, and Rhodesia was not yet Zimbabwe. The spirit was pan-Africanism, so it's also about liberating the rest, of the contention towards imperialism and so on. All these factors brought a sense of urgency. (Moyo 2016)

This narrative emphasises that ongoing anti-colonial wars on the continent were central to African scholars' decision to establish CODESRIA. But it also implies that colonial regimes acted to undermine the epistemic agency of Africans in ways that made it difficult to disentangle

the epistemic from the political and the economic. In this regard, a number of interviewees stressed that CODESRIA was established to counter the epistemic dimensions of colonial rule. Jimi Adesina explained these epistemic dimensions as a kind of epistemic occupation:

The whole colonial venture wasn't simply a political conquest ... it's essentially about taking somebody completely out of their cultural milieu, you know. A whole framing of sense-making and converting that person into something completely different. And in many cases, most cases, it required a self to embrace the condemnation and denigration of the belief system and everything that went before. And in most cases, the fiscal occupation, in terms of actual political dimensions of the colonial, would tend to come much later. But even within that context, the whole educational process you know, involving a complete change of mind orientation ... So that the colonial project itself – it was at a more fundamental epistemic level.

If you were to think about it, the political in many cases lasted less than a hundred years, lasted less than eighty years. Lagos for instance – 1880 right? And the liberation was in 1960. But it was at that more fundamental, soft-spoken level that is more profound. And you know, contesting it has always been you know in many ways – it was impossible to simply go back to whatever existed before, in the full sense of it. And I think, those who became subjects of colonial domination had to contend with that in a more profound way. (Adesina 2015)

The colonial, Adesina added, is “a more fundamental, a more foundational, epistemic thing. It isn't just an academic thing. It's about how you dream, it's about how you live your day, it's about the inner fears.”

Situated within this context, the anti-colonial struggle that informed CODESRIA's genesis was not only a struggle for political and economic autonomy, but was also a struggle for the autonomy of the imagination. In this regard, Shahida El Baz glossed CODESRIA's pan-Africanism as an attempt at self-definition, which in the context of colonialism and neocolonialism, is necessarily an act of rebellion:

It was this group of people who realised how fooled are we, following old western social science and we cannot understand our societies properly ... They are very colonial all of them, because they see us as colonies and they see us as different and they see us from the point of view of how to benefit from us. Not how to co-operate for instance, and colonisation, and imperialism was legitimate for them ... I think they made people feel that they cannot do except what they are told to do. [CODESRIA] intellectuals realised because, they were very intelligent people and they were rebelling against colonialism, against racialism and all these kind of things ... So they decided to have an organisation, in which the main issue is to work to produce authentic social science, or to decolonise what they have learnt. They were not throwing away everything ... but seeing the elements in social sciences they learnt which controls their society and controls them ... So it started like that and it started basically for this for decolonising ourselves intellectually. (El Baz 2015)

El Baz's comments imply that CODESRIA's pan-Africanism was fundamentally a project at decolonising thought, where this involved a struggle within the self to recognise one's capacity to act outside of colonial imperatives. This in turn requires an imagination of a different possible world, so that pan-Africanism is orientated towards thinking about the future. In this regard, Aghi Bahi notes that this has continued to be an important element in the organisation's pan-Africanism: "The period I came to CODESRIA [in 1990] was a very romantic one, pan-Africanism yeah! The actuality of these goals, Africa and Africans should be respected. We can live together with all of our identities ... We live in Babylon and we are going to a foreign place. That's a vision of the future. (Bahi 2015) Consequently, as Ousmane Kane explained, CODESRIA was established as a project that was both intellectual and political:

The first stage of CODESRIA in the 1970s was a nationalist stage in which African scholars were trying to reflect on Africa, with the hope that independence would lead to prosperity, in the need to decolonise scholarship and to look for alternative historical sources. Cheikh Anta Diop, Samir Amin

and Mahmood Mamdani characterise this stage. The quality of scholarship was high although resources were poor, and this was because scholars were committed. They viewed their work not just as an intellectual project, but also as a political project. (Kane 2015)

Indeed, interviewees tended to stress that CODESRIA's community is characterised by scholars "who are committed to the ideal of African solidarity" (Kane 2015) such that their work "is academic, but not in the dry sense of the word, it's more combative." (Zewde 2015)

This kind of narrative therefore stresses the internal debates on the continent about the lingering effects of colonialism on both scholarship and society at large. It emphasises the ways in which scholars have seen CODESRIA's continental solidarity as a contribution to broader political struggles by African societies, who have sought to reimagine and remake Africa. This suggests that CODESRIA's community is guided by a belief in the possibilities of autonomous thought and undergirded by a normative ethos of committed scholarship, which involves loyalty to an idea of Africa that has yet to be realised. In this sense, it is not only a scholarly project, but also a political project, at the heart of which lies an imagined Africa.

However, a handful of accounts indicate that CODESRIA did not have its genesis in 1973 in Dakar, but rather in 1964 at a Rockefeller meeting in Bellagio. Consider this more recent narrative, drawn from Mkandawire's (1988b) first-hand account of the founding of CODESRIA:

The origins of CODESRIA can be traced to a conference on 'Economic Research in Africa' organized in Bellagio, Italy, on 27 September – 2 October 1964, under the auspices of the Rockefeller Foundation. The purpose of the conference was to review the type of research that had taken place in post-colonial Africa. Significantly, of the 10 directors of research institutes invited, only two were African – Professor Adebola Onitiri from the Nigerian Institute of Economic and Social Research at the University of Ibadan, and Professor Omer Osman from Sudan. The rest were either French or British ... Three years after the Bellagio conference, Professor Onitiri organized a pan-African Conference of Directors of Economic and Social Research Institutes in Africa (CODESRIA) at NISER, University of Ibadan. It was the first of many to

follow. In those early years the organization was an informal body, its main activity being to convene the directors of research institutes ... The first meeting of the Executive Committee of CODESRIA was held in Dakar on 1 February 1973. Institutionally, the meeting had particular significance for securing the autonomy of CODESRIA from the host institution – IDEP [Institute for Development Economics and Planning]. The charter was amended, especially with respect to the mission of the Council. At the Nairobi Conference, IDEP was designated as the official CODESRIA Depository Centre (CDC), with Samir Amin, IDEP's Director, elected Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee. Soon thereafter, the role of CODESRIA was redefined from being merely an informal organization of directors and a depository of research, to one of animating analytical research. Professor Onitiri spent his sabbatical at IDEP and, together with Samir Amin, helped lay the foundation for a new, more formalized CODESRIA. Drawing lessons from the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO), the team transformed CODESRIA into a body that would carry out research on a broad range of themes. CODESRIA thus became a 'council' for sustained work, rather than simply an event-driven (conference) organization with a documentation centre. To enable it to carry forward its new mandate, CODESRIA received a small grant from the World Bank for its Secretariat, while the Ford Foundation promised to fund the Documentation Centre. (Mkandawire, Sawyer, and Sané 2015, 6)

By recounting this older history of CODESRIA, this narrative draws attention to a number of different elements in CODESRIA's genesis. First, it indicates that the original catalyst for the establishment of CODESRIA was African scholars' experience of marginalisation in Europe, where such marginalisation occurred within an intellectual setting sponsored by an American philanthropic organisation that had chosen to invite predominantly French and British scholars to discuss African scholarship. This is significant for it suggests that African scholars were forced to confront what Gordon (2011) calls a "geography of reason" that locates thought firmly within the global North, which implies that thought in former colonies is either absent or nascent and

must therefore be guided towards the standards of intellectual excellence achieved within the North. Onitiri and Osman's experience of marginalisation in Europe is consistent with the intellectual history of pan-Africanism, which, as Mafeje points out, has typically been conceived outside of the continent by those in the diaspora, studying abroad or in exile (1990c, 161). As such, pan-Africanism represents "an ontology of being black in a white-dominated world" and is therefore intimately connected to experiences of racism and alienation in the global North. (1990c, 162) "Properly understood," Mafeje adds, "racism is not a problem of the South but of the North which has an objective interest in it. For that matter, even the definition of 'African' and the existing racial hierarchies in the ex-colonial world are attributable to this." (1990c, 167) This suggests that CODESRIA's pan-Africanism has not only been a function of internal debates on the continent, but has also been an outcome of scholars' external experiences of racism and marginalisation in the North, so that the idea of the North is deeply embedded in its pan-Africanism.

A second significant element in this narrative is the emphasis on the Council's relationship with regional organisations in the global South. As Bujra (2003) notes in his first-hand account of the organisation's establishment, CODESRIA was initially modelled on CLACSO, the Latin American Council of Social Sciences, because of ideological affinities between African and Latin American researchers. These ideological affinities coalesced around the dependency school, which holds that resources flow from a 'periphery' of poor states to a 'core' of wealthy states, so that the latter are enriched at the expense of the former.²⁴ This situation is characterised by strong vertical relationships between the periphery and the core, and weak horizontal relationships within the periphery, which makes it difficult for peripheral states to organise and resist the core. Consequently, a central tenet of this framework holds that horizontal links between peripheral states are important for resisting the hegemony of core powers. Amin explains how this theoretical context underpinned his offer of financial and administrative support to CODESRIA in 1973, which he was able to provide as the director of the UN's Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) in Dakar:

²⁴ This was part of the broader emergence of the political economy approach in African scholarship. For a careful analysis of its intellectual history on the continent, see Ake (1983).

The idea of strengthening exchanges in each continent among third world academics and intellectuals with an interest in development had also come of age. Not surprisingly it had first appeared in Latin America. There were several reasons for this. The most fundamental was that, thanks to the activity of Raul Prebisch, a 'developmentalist' theory or ideology had taken shape around the analyses, studies and debates at ECLA [Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean]. By the mid-1960s this had led in turn to a counter-theory, associated with the 'dependency school', which won massive support among intellectuals critical both of the 'dependent capitalism' on offer in their countries and of the orthodox dogmas of Latin American Communist parties signed up to the official Soviet line. This gave birth to the Latin American Council for the Social Sciences (CLACSO), a project all the easier to realize because Latin American intellectuals traditionally moved from one university to another, often because of political exile, taking advantage of the shared Spanish language or, in the case of Brazilians, the similarities between Spanish and Portuguese. I thought that a similar kind of institution in Africa could overcome the stupid opposition between 'French-speakers' and 'English-speakers', North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, West, Central and Eastern-Southern Africa; the idea of CODESRIA emerged against this background. (Amin 2006, 222)

For Amin then, the pan-African character of CODESRIA was conceived as part of a broader "third world nationalist" vision, the aim of which was "to give critical third world thinkers the means to begin correcting the fundamental imbalance within all international bodies, where the world is always seen from the North. A different perspective had to be opened up, and a pluralist critique developed of 'Eurocentrism' (now centred more on young North America than on old Europe). Marxist currents obviously had their place within this, but so did other approaches. The main thing to avoid was imprisonment in any orthodoxy; our ambition was to become not one school among others but a centre for critical debate." (Amin 2006, 223) As the director of IDEP, he therefore not only provided support to CODESRIA, but also helped found the Third World Forum, which aims to provide a "cross-frontier exchange of views among intellectuals" from the

global South (2006, 222). For Amin, the establishment of the Third World Forum was an expression of what he calls the “Bandung period.” By this, he meant the Bandung Conference in 1955, which represented the “founding moment of Afro-Asian solidarity and the Non-Aligned Movement ... [and] ushered in a first cycle of national liberation.” (2006, 244–45) Reflecting on this period, Moyo describes it as the first round of a “counter-body of knowledge”:

In terms of the broad political economic context, at that time we had a first generation emerging. On an intellectual level, the mid-1970s was an important moment on the level of theory – the dependency school. Through CODESRIA, Samir Amin and others, you had an articulation and different books: Walter Rodney’s *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Samir Amin’s *Unequal Exchange*, Issa Shivji on internal factors and class and race in Tanzania, and so on. There was a first round of a counter-body of knowledge, linking up with the Latin American debate on dependency theory. They had also the dependency school in CLACSO and ECLA. So it began to mobilize and you had a first set of publications right up to about 1982. (Moyo 2016)

In this respect, CODESRIA established organisational links with CLACSO, which became particularly strong in the 1980s. During this period, CODESRIA’s *Bulletin*, the organisation’s newsletter and discussion forum, contained a number of references to representatives from both organisations attending each other’s conferences, as well as joint research projects. In addition, as Bujra (2003, 9) notes, “CODESRIA inspired the Arab researchers to begin thinking of setting up their own social science organisations to compete with those which had been established by American and European support. The end result was AICARDES” – the Association des Instituts et Centres Arabes de Recherche pour le Developpement Economique et Social, headquartered in Tunis.²⁵ Moreover, as Challenor and Gana note, CODESRIA helped catalyse and strengthen national and regional social science research organisations on the continent. It provided financial support for the creation for the Organisation for Social Science Research in East Africa (OSSREA) and it gave technical assistance to ‘midwife’ the Zimbabwe Institute for

²⁵ It is not clear what happened to AICARDES, but it now seems to have been replaced by the Arab Council for the Social Sciences headquartered in Beirut.

Development Studies (ZIDS) in Harare. It provided critical administrative support to the Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD), and housed its Secretariat in its offices until the late 1980s. It also gave financial support for the annual meetings of organisations such as the Association of African Philosophy, the Association of African Political Scientists, and the Academic Staff of Universities (Challenor and Gana 1996, 77). Thus, in an interview, Amin stressed that it was precisely CODESRIA's location within the broader logic of the non-aligned movement that enabled the Council to apply successfully for Swedish funding, so that the organisation could develop and sustain an autonomous intellectual agenda through 'no strings attached' core funding:

In terms of funding, I then approached Olof Palme, the Prime Minister of Sweden at the time, who had been instrumental in driving the non-aligned movement. Palme had an interest in strengthening the non-aligned movement, and saw CODESRIA as part of this. So he was sympathetic to the need to fund autonomous social science research. (Amin 2015)

This narrative therefore indicates that CODESRIA's pan-African character is in part an expression of and contribution to third world nationalism.²⁶ Moreover, it suggests that CODESRIA was able to attract the resources necessary to maintain its intellectual autonomy by appealing to the broader discourse of third world nationalism.²⁷

A third important element in this narrative is the suggestion that 1973 was not so much the genesis of CODESRIA, but rather a turning point. This was when the Council was formalised and changed its mission from organising conferences and archiving research to acting as a centre for producing research. Bujra indicates that the immediate catalyst for this turning point was

²⁶ In this respect, Mafeje argues that "we can talk of African nationalism as well as Third World nationalism ... without contradicting ourselves." This is because African nationalist invoke "their African heritage not to glorify it but to draw valid clues and sustenance with the express purpose of bringing about a structural transformation of society as a whole, which is the ultimate antidote to Northern structural racism. This creates a common ground or structural convergence among those who are similarly engaged within Africa and elsewhere in the Third World." (Mafeje 1990c, 174)

²⁷ Sweden's interest in CODESRIA is undoubtedly more complex than its appeal to third world nationalism. Commenting on the history of African Studies in Sweden, Zeleza explains, "Swedish interest in Africa and African studies was motivated by the needs of small-power global diplomacy, specifically, political solidarity with the liberation movements in Southern Africa and economic support for development cooperation, which was spawned by the ideological correspondence between the Swedish social welfare state project and the developmentalist state projects in the new African states." (Zeleza 2009, 122)

UNESCO's attempt to create the Center for Research and Documentation for Africa South of the Sahara (CERDAS) in Kinshasa in 1972. Onitiri, then President of CODESRIA, and Bujra, then head of the Sociology Department of the University of Dar es Salaam, had attended the preparatory meetings for the establishment of CERDAS that UNESCO organized in Lomé in 1971, and were concerned about the threat to academic freedom that CERDAS posed:

The main concern was that if the UNESCO initiative remained unchallenged, then there was great danger that establishment, i.e. governments, would in effect gain control over social science in Africa. The major worry was over academic freedom and the prospect of a legitimizing rather than influencing role of social scientists. The second reason was to counter the strong influence of former colonial powers in universities and research institute. And the third reason was the strong belief of African scholars at the time that (a) the governments had rightly assumed the responsibility for developing their countries, and (b) that the scholars had the responsibility of informing and influencing the governments to carry out relevant and appropriate development policies. The scholars at the time sincerely believed that the governments would listen to them or that they would be able to influence critical personalities and forces in government – especially if the scholar's voice came from a Pan-African body of scholars. (Bujra 1994, 143)

Reflecting on this in his interview, Mkandawire argued that CERDAS was part of a broader attempt to undermine independent, pan-African scholarship:

There was an attempt by the US and UNESCO to set up a counter-CODESRIA – CERDAS. It was based in Kinshasa. At that time Mobuto wanted to pour money into that. And they were trying to argue that African governments would know something about it, would have membership in it. We thought we had to react to that political fact, to argue that CODESRIA is the pan-African organisation. We saw this as an attempt to split Anglophones and Francophones. But it's closed now! UNESCO tried it again in the early 1990s.

The African Council of Social Sciences in Harare. It collapsed. The African Union has been trying to do so something similar. They haven't worked. For many reasons. One reason is that our governments are not tolerant anyway, so if you set up a council that a government is running, it won't be free, it won't attract much attention to researchers. (Mkandawire 2017)

For these reasons, Amin argued that it was important to him to ensure CODESRIA's autonomy from both unsympathetic African states and the United States government working through the UN²⁸ and the World Bank:

And CODESRIA needed a home outside of the UN. So I approached Leopold Senghor, who was a man of culture. Senghor believed in negritude, and even though he replicated neo-colonialism in his policies, as a thinker, as a man, he believed in the independence of Africans, and that African scholars needed a space to think. (Amin 2015)

Amin, Onitiri and Bujra subsequently organised the first General Assembly of CODESRIA in 1973 to formalise the organisation. Attended by representatives of fifteen African social science research institutes, the Charter adopted by the General Assembly stipulated that CODESRIA would be a non-governmental pan-African organisation, with the following changes to its structure:

The old CODESRIA was a club of Directors while the new CODESRIA is open to all Institutes/Faculties and their researchers and therefore more democratic. Secondly while the function of the old CODESRIA was mainly to

²⁸ Commenting on the imperative to establish CODESRIA's organisational autonomy, Bujra explains, "The plan was to recruit a fulltime Executive Secretary for CODESRIA and establish it as a separate legal entity but to be housed in IDEP. IDEP was to finance CODESRIA's Secretariat on loan to be repaid when CODESRIA had raised enough resources. The use of UN funds to fund a non-UN organization (CODESRIA) gave fodder to the anti-Communist UN bureaucrats in New York who ruthlessly used this situation to attack and undermine Samir Amin. The UN pressure on Samir continued until his resignation early in 1980. But this situation presented a serious dilemma and challenge to CODESRIA ... until CODESRIA physically moved out of IDEP [in 1980]" (Bujra 2003, 5–6) For a more in-depth account of tensions with the American leadership of the United Nations during Amin's tenure at IDEP see Amin (2006, especially chapter 8).

collect bibliographic data of research already carried out, the new one is mandated to initiate research and to generate comparative research outcomes. Thirdly while the old CODESRIA had focused on economic research, the new CODESRIA extended its focus to social science – all the disciplines generally included under this title. (Bujra 2003, 19)

As a consequence of this non-governmental and more democratic structure, Bujra notes, CODESRIA's pan-African form represented a clear departure from the state-centric form of pan-Africanism that had come to dominate this period. This form of pan-Africanism “was largely captured by the states which created the OAU [Organisation for African Unity] and confined Pan-Africanist ideals and thinking to the stultifying bureaucracy of the OAU – which eventually killed it as a movement.” (2003, 20) But maintaining an alternative form of pan-Africanism, which was critical of the state, came with costs. As an early evaluation of CODESRIA in 1985 indicates, the Council's “orientation did not appeal to African Governments, who felt threatened by the new crop of African social scientists ... [so that] it was unable to raise enough funds within Africa to support its programme.” (Brunner, Afonja, and Djeflat 1985, 73)

And yet, the founders of CODESRIA seem to have been ambivalent about the nature of state-centric forms of pan-Africanism. On the one hand, the non-governmental character of CODESRIA represented an alternative to state-centric pan-Africanism. On the other hand, when CODESRIA was formalised, its founding Charter bound the Council to the organisational structure of the OAU, by specifying that “The Council shall function under the auspices of the OAU. The OAU Charter shall be binding on CODESRIA.” (CODESRIA 1976) In an interview, Mkandawire explained the reasoning behind this as follows:

It wasn't initially modelled on the OAU. It was a Council of Directors of Research Institutes. So it didn't matter how many directors came from certain countries. If a country has twenty institutes, they have twenty directors as members. And that was Latin American, CLACSO. Then there was a transition, where Bujra was very keen on getting CODESRIA recognised by the OAU. We were looking for protection from the OAU. In Dakar we enjoyed complete diplomatic immunity. But outside Senegal we had no protection. So I

could be locked up, I was locked up at the airport in Nairobi. And I said, okay, wait I'm the secretary of CODESRIA, which is an OAU observer. So he thought maybe getting an OAU passport would help in our movement around the continent. (Mkandawire 2017)

Thus, the main motivation for adhering to the state-centric organisational form of the OAU seems to have been an attempt to seek recognition and protection from the OAU given African governments' increasing hostility to scholarly critique. However, as Bujra remarks, CODESRIA also hoped to "influence critical personalities and forces in government" (Bujra 1994, 143). One way of doing so was to engage with African states through the OAU. Indeed, as the former Executive Secretary Ebrima Sall commented, it has sought to influence the OAU, as well as its successor, the AU, in part through its successful application for observer status at these continental governmental organisations (Sall 2015).

This ambivalence also seems to be at work in Bujra's analysis of African intellectual centres that informed the establishment of CODESRIA. He observes that those who helped reshape CODESRIA in 1973 "were drawn from the two most important African centers advocating ideologically radical social science – namely Dakar (University of Dakar/IDEP) and the University of Dar es Salaam – the Dakar/Dar axis of radicalism." (2003, 20) By such radicalism, Bujra means the mingling and competition of different kinds of ideological perspectives in the immediate post-independence period, ranging from pan-Africanism, to black solidarity, nationalism, Marxism and the dependency school. However, he argues, African states often repressed the free discussion of ideas in their universities. As a consequence:

Only a few countries (such as Tanzania and Senegal) freely allowed such competition [of ideas] and in such cases the 'radical or critical' social science became a vocal voice as critique of the emerging post-independence societies, and advocating alternative forms of development. (2003, 21)

The intellectual traditions of Dar es Salaam and Dakar were eventually brought together through the Arusha Declaration of 1967 in Tanzania, which outlined the ruling party's policy on African socialism and self-reliance. Bujra traces the confluence of these two centres through the figures

of Abdul Rahman Babu and Ngombale Mwiru, two Tanzanian intellectuals who helped formulate the Declaration. Mwiru had been sent to Guinea in the 1960s to learn from their anti-colonial struggle, and had subsequently studied at the University of Dakar, participating in student protests against ongoing neocolonial forms of education in Senegal. In contrast, Babu was a “‘product’ of the radical wing of the British Labour Party, the 1968 Pan-African Accra Conference and the strong link with the Chinese Communist Party ... and Samir Amin had strong contacts with Dar es Salaam, particularly with Babu.” (2003, 21) The linkages between Dakar and Dar es Salaam, Bujra argues, were not extensive, but were nevertheless important. They were both ideological “fellow travellers”, and the two centers became the “roots, the home ground” of the new CODESRIA (2003, 23). Moreover, Bujra argues, “the Arusha Declaration provided the moral and political legitimacy for the now famous radicalism of the Dar es Salaam University. And it was scholars from Dar [es Salaam] who had very intensive contacts with IDEP and through it with the University of Dakar, who were deeply involved with Samir Amin and others in the transformation of the old CODESRIA to the new CODESRIA.” (2003, 23) For Bujra then, the Arusha Declaration formed the intellectual underpinning for reformulating CODESRIA in 1973:

When therefore the new CODESRIA was formed on 31st January 1973, its fundamental mission, which could not at the time be stated in its constitution or other formal documents, was that it would further a radical and critical social science – a social science which would focus on the issues raised by the Arusha Declaration. These issues were not new and several well-known writers – Fanon, Nkrumah, Amin and others – had written and advocated them earlier in the sixties. But the importance of the Arusha Declaration was that it was a manifesto of an African nationalist political party which was in power and which began to implement policies within the framework of the Declaration. It thus gave legitimacy not only to the principles behind the Declaration, not only to openly discuss these as respected principles, but it provided an alternative model of development which claimed to be specifically suitable to the poor agrarian societies of Africa. At the same time it offered a better vision of a possible future for a largely peasant society. Furthermore, in terms of the

international environment of the time, Tanzania was not a communist country and therefore the Declaration could not easily be dismissed as ‘communist propaganda’. (Bujra 2003, 23)

As a founding member of the organisation, Bujra’s analysis carries weight. But it is also backed up by a position paper that CODESRIA published in its flagship journal *Africa Development* in 1978. In this paper, “Social Sciences and the Development Crises in Africa”, Amin and his co-authors (including Bujra and Mkandawire) argue that the “ideology of development” is a construct of former colonial powers, designed “to negate or obviate any alternative patterns of development other than the capitalist one” so as to “reconcile the newly acquired political independence with the economic dominance of the metropolitan countries on African countries.” (Amin et al. 1978, 26) As an ideological counter, they therefore propose that the idea of national self-reliance, which was central to the Arusha Declaration, become the overarching organising principle for a new research agenda on class formation and social struggles on the continent (1978, 43–44). This position paper therefore explicitly committed CODESRIA to what the organisation has sometimes called “critical social science,” which may take many different forms, but is at heart a critique of the “ideology of development” (1978, 23).²⁹

To be clear, Bujra is not suggesting that this ideological commitment was an *outcome* of adherence to the Arusha Declaration. Rather, it was an outcome of an older anti-colonial and pan-Africanist intellectual pedigree, and reflected broader intellectual currents in the global South that attempted to re-tool political economy to interrogate the dynamics of imperialism and capitalism in the periphery.³⁰ Critical social science represented the confluence of these different traditions, which was then given a particular historical form and legitimacy by the Tanzanian

²⁹ Indeed, this is a common theme in descriptions of CODESRIA’s ideological character. Reflecting on the genesis of CODESRIA, Challenor and Gana comment that Claude Ake’s critique of social science as “imperialism” reflected the mood of the moment, “as most African social scientists found their research findings at variance with the realities of their respective societies.” Ake’s critique, they observe, provides a clear precis of the founders’ concerns with the ideology of development: that this approach to theorising social change was based on the historical experiences of colonial powers, that it was teleological and assumed a linear view of history, and that it was tethered to the imperial logic of the North. Ake’s conclusion about the future trajectory, they add, therefore sets the Council’s ideological character in its historical context: “What is needed is a social science which meets the real needs of the people of the third world, the need to get the basic amenities of life, the need for self-determination, the need to create conditions which allow the people of the third world to realize their potentialities, the need to end their exploitative dependence on imperialist powers ... a social science, which tries to promote the realization of this ideal of development will be radically different from the received social science prevailing today.” (Ake 1982 quoted in Challenor and Gana 1996, 22–23)

³⁰ For a more detailed intellectual history of the development of political economy in Africa, see Ake (1983).

state in the first flush of independence. Nevertheless, the association with a particular state meant that its legitimacy was plausibly a function, at least in part, of the legitimacy of the state that underwrote it. By the 1980s, this model of development was put under increasing strain by a series of economic crises and the imposition of structural adjustment policies (which I discuss in greater detail in the following chapter). Thus, for instance, the challenge to the Council's ideological commitment is a strong theme in the 1985 evaluation of the organisation. Interviews with 24 member institutions found that "Involvement and identification with CODESRIA was perceived to hinge on ... its representative character. There is in fact a majority who think that CODESRIA does not adequately express the manifold composition of the African social sciences as they actually exist." (Brunner, Afonja, and Djeflat 1985, 116) In particular, while a majority indicated that it was legitimate for CODESRIA to be committed to an ideological position, they also indicated that it was not legitimate to exclude those who were not like-minded and thereby function as a "closed club". This indicates that, while an ideological commitment to "critical social science" may have initially enjoyed consensus within CODESRIA circles, by the mid-1980s, this consensus was increasingly open to contestation.

Bujra's account of the intellectual underpinnings of CODESRIA therefore suggests a tension between scholars' concerns about the post-independence state and the potential risk that it posed to intellectual freedom, and the same scholars' adoption of a state policy as the implicit underpinning of a pan-African organisation. In addition, evidence that the organisation may have tacitly been committed to particular ideologies complicates the narrative of CODESRIA's fidelity to a norm of ideological pluralism.

To conclude this section, there are two kinds of accounts of CODESRIA's genesis. One kind of narrative locates CODESRIA's establishment in 1973. By doing so, it suggests that CODESRIA's pan-African form was principally informed by anti-colonial struggles within the continent and convictions about the possibilities of national autonomy in the first flush of independence. Its pan-Africanism was therefore a political commitment to reimagining and remaking Africa. This is not inaccurate, given the fundamental transformation that the organisation underwent in 1973. However, a second kind of narrative recounts an older history of CODESRIA, and in doing so, provides a more complex picture of the organisation. This narrative points to the ways in which the Council's genesis was informed by experiences of racism in Europe and nascent expressions of third world solidarity in the form of the non-aligned

movement. Moreover, it indicates that scholars' concern about the threat to intellectual freedom posed by African states was the catalyst for formalising the Council as a non-governmental organisation. This concern was in turn linked to their worries about the overly statist and bureaucratic direction of pan-Africanism at the time. The Council's organisational form was consequently woven from these different ideational and political strands to create a new form of pan-Africanism. As a non-governmental entity it departed from the state-centred model of the Organisation of African Unity, and it therefore represented a way of thinking about pan-Africanism that is centred on people rather than states. At the same time, its structure reflects the entanglement of different kinds of factors – internal and external, local and global, southern and northern. Viewed this way, the organisational form of pan-Africanism that it embodies appears to reach beyond the African continent to reference both the global South and the global North.

Yet, I have argued, this organisational complexity was also accompanied by tensions and ambiguities. First, CODESRIA seems to have been ambiguous between state-centric and popular forms of pan-Africanism. Second, the evidence of tacit ideological commitments to the Arusha Declaration signals potential limits on its founders' claims to ideological pluralism, which in turn raises the possibility of contestations over the intellectual direction of the organisation. Third, the fact that the Council required donor funding to formalise the organisation and sustain an autonomous intellectual agenda indicates that, from its genesis, there were already tensions between its normative claims to autonomy and the practical problem of resource scarcity. The following section considers the ways in which these features have informed tensions and contestations within the organisation.

4.2. Tensions and contestations in CODESRIA's pan-African structure

At its inception CODESRIA faced “monumental difficulties of mobilizing the then nascent and fragmented African social science community.” (Bujra 2003, 5) This was partly due to the expense and difficulty of traveling within the continent as a consequence of its extraverted infrastructure. But as interviewees stressed, it was also a function of a geography of reason where the compass of intellectual value was firmly orientated towards the North. In this context, the imagination of pan-Africanism had important practical value. By affirming the possibilities

and value of African scholarly collaboration, it counteracted these skewed intellectual norms, and helped scholars cope with the practical difficulties of intercontinental exchange and communication. And yet, there is also a disjuncture between the imagination of pan-Africanism and the lived reality of those striving to embody its ideals. This is in part, as Moyo emphasised, because their lives continue to be marked by vestiges of the colonial. This section explores the ways in which these traces of the colonial have led to tensions and contestations within CODESRIA, focusing in particular on the factors that informed its genesis. It first explores how different forms of solidarity have marginalised scholars from regions that are not fully contained within these expressions of solidarity. In particular, black solidarity and continental solidarity were formulated in response to colonial aggression, but in doing so carry the risk of excluding regions that do not self-identify as unambiguously black or are not located on the continental mainland. These creolised identities therefore challenge the colonial conception of Africa as an entity defined by a unitary black identity and a contiguous landmass. Second, the section explores how adherence to statist forms of pan-Africanism, in terms of the OAU/AU, have informed the governance structures of the organisation, and in doing so, forced the question of representation in CODESRIA to become one of political affiliation along the linguistic and regional divides bequeathed by colonial rule. These linguistic affiliations have then been expressed in terms of intellectual affiliations, so that political contestations are cast in terms of intellectual differences. Thus, while CODESRIA was founded to combat the marginalisation of African scholarship, these contestations suggest that it has also been the site of contestations over marginalisation within its own community.

As noted above, pan-Africanism was historically developed by those in the diaspora and in exile as a form of black solidarity. In this respect, several interviewees articulated CODESRIA's pan-African project as an intentional expression of black solidarity. One officer in CODESRIA glosses its establishment as a positive assertion of blackness in an anti-black world:

Conversations started in the 1960s and it was formally established in 1973. This was coming out of the colonial project – the violence wasn't only physical it was also intellectual, disparaging everything black. It was coming out of the perspective that maybe having some control over our story, our narrative, is important for our liberation. So the idea was to promote the voices of African

social scientists. I think that was the goal and still it's the goal. (Anonymous CODESRIA officer 2015)

A documentary analysis suggests that the first sustained conversation on race and identity in Africa occurred relatively late in the organisation's history, in a CODESRIA seminar on this topic in 2000. In a concept paper for the seminar, Mwangi and Zaaiman argue that "the early and insistent symbolic associations between Africa and blackness, which still mediate the production of images of the continent, have allowed each term to be used as a synecdoche of the other", such that the "notion of the 'African' can be said to be the organising principle of the modern concept of 'race'." The conflation between Africanity and Blackness, they add, has "clearly been the fundamental anti-thesis in the construction of Western identities, and in encounters between the West and Africa, [where this] has been deployed as the rationalising principle for the domination of the latter." (Mwangi and Zaaiman 2000, 60) By this logic, Romdhane observes in his contribution to the seminar, "We North Africans are not an integral part of Africa, but of the 'Middle East' according to the classification of the United Nations and all its agencies and affiliated institutions." (2000, 72)

And yet, CODESRIA was established as an organisation that encompasses the entire continent and its islands, and therefore includes areas that have, at one time or another, been excluded from the colonial imagination of 'Africa' or 'blackness', such as Egypt, Madagascar and Ethiopia. Indeed, the Council was established by both black and non-black intellectuals: these include Onitiri and Mkandawire in the former category, and Amin and Bujra in the latter category. Mahmood Mamdani, an early and long-standing member of CODESRIA, recalls the period immediately before he joined CODESRIA as follows:

When I went back to Kampala in 1972 [from the United States], I went back as a pan-Africanist – Marxist, that's how I would describe myself, but really a radical pan-Africanist. And, of course, I was thrown out as a non-African. The decision to return, to come back to Dar es Salaam, was very much a return to Africa. When I returned to Dar es Salaam I very soon became part of a Ugandan movement to replace Idi Amin, but not a disciplined member of a party or anything like that. It was an intellectual group. When Amin was

overthrown it was automatic for me to think of going back to Kampala and not anywhere else. (Mamdani 2016)

This more expansive, albeit contested, understanding of Africanity, Romdhane argues, was a function of a period marked by the growing recognition that “our history is also a history of shared oppression: the oppression suffered by ‘Black’ and ‘non-Black’ Africans under the yoke of colonialism.” He adds:

[During] the ensuing struggles for national liberation, did not the peoples of Africa, through their solidarity movements, come closer to a ‘common identity of Africanness’? It seems to me that the 1950s and 1960s, when the anti-colonial movement reached its height, were the years when that identity – if ever it did exist – was most widespread. Those decades were also when pan-Africanism reached its heights. However, as soon as ‘independence’ was achieved, states were formed and a process of identity assimilation with the ‘nation-state’ developed. Even though a similar ‘national disillusionment’ finally emerged on both sides of the Sahara, the pan-African project (and, a fortiori, the project of building a common Africa, if not a ‘common identity’ across the Sahara) died on the vine. African identity – even minimal – appears as the product of a struggle against a common enemy. (Romdhane 2000, 72)

This suggests that, while blackness continues to be an important anchor in ideas of pan-Africanism, it does not exhaust the possibilities of the concept. Rather, as Mafeje cogently argues in his contribution to the seminar, Africanity “is an assertion of an identity that has been denied; it is a Pan-Africanist revulsion against external imposition or refusal to be dictated to by others. In this sense it is a political and ideological reflex.” (2000, 68) Consequently, for Mafeje, Africanity is a “combative ontology”, and as the terms of combat change, so too does the concept.

This narrative therefore suggests that pan-Africanism is layered with different meanings, which are sometimes at odds with one other. For instance, a number of interviewees drew attention to the etymology of the term ‘Africa’, a Berber/Amazigh term which was originally

used to describe Carthage (now part of Tunisia), and was progressively extended by Europeans to cover the entire Maghreb and eventually the whole continent, at which point its usage was changed again to cover only 'sub-Saharan' or 'black' Africa. As Bahi observed in his interview, the social imagination of Africa is therefore a contradictory one: "What is Africa? Even the name of Africa is not African. Even the name ... When they say that Africa, the origin is Ifriqiya, it's from North Africa. Even the name." (Bahi 2015) And yet, he argues, contradictions in the imagination of pan-Africanism create opportunities or conceptual space for new ways of thinking in CODESRIA "We have a chance, a double chance, to build a new *villes ensembles* and we are avoiding all this, we are rejecting all this with essentialisms. We have these temptations, you can find that Africa has been built as a synonym of black people. Black people is not necessarily African today. The most important thing is we have to build something new, something sustainable. This is my position." (Bahi 2015)

For some scholars, the diasporic notion of black solidarity that initially underpinned pan-Africanism has acted as an identity that excludes or marginalises some regions from CODESRIA. This emerged most clearly in interviews with the Malagasy scholar, Randrianja Solofo. Here he explains how he came to CODESRIA:

Yes, so I've been here for, I'd say twenty years ... and of course I succeeded to get some scholarships and to set some programmes related to Madagascar and the Indian Ocean islands but this area is still marginalised, from here to mainland countries, in terms of funding, in terms of themes. For instance, there is nothing on the islands, no study on the islands in CODESRIA and maybe you've heard that for years I was battling to get a section which could be devoted to the African islands. [These] are African but are also more than this, they are something like the Maghreb. (Solofo 2015)

For Solofo, the Indian Ocean, like the Maghreb, facilitated the flow of trade between different regions, cultures and peoples. And the islands of the Indian Ocean, like the city states of the Maghreb, therefore gave rise to multiple identities.³¹ Consequently, he argues, the peoples of

³¹ One indication of this is that Tunisian researchers have been part of both CODESRIA and its Arab equivalent, AICARDES.

Madagascar tend to deploy the concept of Africanity strategically and it does not have a strong ontological resonance for them:

Africanness ... it's instrumentalised, that's quite normal. When it's interesting to be seen as an African okay, we are African. Otherwise we are, we have Asian roots or we are just Malagasy, no ties with any part of the world as in rooted ... The idea of Africa being the cradle of humanity, it doesn't work in Madagascar, the Malagasy cannot identify themselves with the Negritude movement. If the Malagasy people could have some influence they would say, we are part of an African and Malagasy union, because they want to cultivate this double belonging of Asian and African, and this is not accepted inside CODESRIA, not fully accepted. (Solofo 2015)

Solofo therefore suggests that the hybridity of Malagasy identities is at odds with the dominant interpretation of Africanity both in Madagascar and in CODESRIA. Their physical isolation, he argues, is compounded by a kind of intellectual isolation from the mainland: "I would say that 95 or more percent of scholars from Madagascar, in social sciences, ignore African authors apart from people like Samir Amin you see, but if you quote for instance Achille Mbembe or Mamadou Diouf they won't know." (Solofo 2015)

In her contribution to the seminar on race and identity in Africa, Vergès comments on how mainland scholars have viewed the Indian Ocean:

To African post-colonial scholarship, the islands of the Indian Ocean are not 'African' islands. If African means 'black and living in Africa', they are excluded from African studies. Since their populations are descendants of Asian, Indian, European and African groups, they do not strictly belong to the 'African diasporas'. They are the result of miscegenation and hybridity. Could the islands even be said to constitute a region? The main obstacles to the global study of the islands have been the very things that scholars adduce to define a region: its fragmentation, its instability, its lack of historiography and historical

continuity, its contingency and impermanence, its syncretism, etc. (Vergès 2000, 69)

For Vergès, the exclusion of the islands reflects the “battle lines of colonialism and post-colonialism”, which have been waged over the relationship between the African mainland and Europe and North America. Shifting intellectual focus to the islands, she argues, would destabilise this terrain:

New lines of transaction, new sites of exchanges, new spaces of mixing would be mapped out. Indeed, considering the history of the Indian Ocean would mean shifting the gaze and establishing a connection between Africa and Asia, between Africa and its margins that predated European imperialism. It means going beyond the battle lines of European colonialism, beyond the nationalist or imperialist perspective founded on a pattern of domination where the core radiates outward. (Vergès 2000, 69)

Vergès’ comments draw our attention to the way in which colonial topographies might continue to shape contemporary ideas of Africanity. She suggests that the marginalisation of the Indian Oceans islands is not only a reflection of the ways in which anti-racist struggles against colonisation have anchored and complicated understandings of Africanity. This marginalisation, she argues, is also a function of the pan-African imagination, which centres a landmass as a unit of analysis or organising principle precisely because of colonial interests in this landmass. These tensions are reflected in an interview with Mamdani, in which he comments on the pan-African scope of CODESRIA:

I wondered about turning political state boundaries into boundaries of knowledge production. Even when radical area study scholars linked developments in the colony with those in the imperial country, they seldom crossed boundaries between colonies ... The CODESRIA tradition was radically different. We never stopped at state boundaries in pursuit of knowledge: when it came to the agrarian question, we studied the Chinese,

Russian, Korean, Indian, English yeoman, German Junker, Latin American, any and every experience, without fear that we would be trespassing. At the same time, we never lost a sense of location. We were always clear that we were looking at the world from a particular place, and that place was within Africa. (Mamdani 2016)

His observations are interesting because they suggest a contradiction: if turning a political boundary into an intellectual boundary is a problem with regard to the nation state, why is this not a problem with regard to the continent? There are two ways of glossing this problem. First, Mamdani suggests that pan-Africanness is a rejection of colonial state boundaries and is therefore an attempt at self-definition, or what Mafeje calls a ‘combative ontology.’ Yet the concept of Africa as a continental landmass, Vergès suggests, was developed as a consequence of colonial interests in this landmass, and it is therefore, in part, a received concept. The danger here, she stresses, is that the concept of pan-Africanism may reproduce that which it aims to repudiate. A second way of glossing Mamdani’s remarks is to think about the empirical foundation for using Africa as an organising principle or unit of analysis in scholarship. In this regard, it is useful to consider Appiah’s (2016) argument that there is no such thing as western civilisation. It is an imagined construct, he contends, and when subject to careful analysis, the concept of a bounded and discrete western civilisation dissolves as the multiple influences and interactions from different parts of the world become clear. On this account, the assertion of western civilisation is an ideological statement, but it is not a useful organising principle for scholarship. If this is true for western civilisation, it is difficult to understand how this is not true for other imagined political identities, such as Africa or Asia. Consequently, both ways of approaching Mamdani’s remarks suggest that pan-African identities carry a risk of re-inscribing colonial patterns of thought.

In this respect, the theme that emerged most strongly from interviews was the way in which CODESRIA’s pan-Africanism is inflected and complicated by the political boundaries bequeathed by colonial rule.³² As several internal reviews point out, one of the main reasons for

³² Debates about linguistic and regional representation emerged more strongly in interviews relative to debates about race and Africanity. Interviewees’ reticence over race may have been due in part to my own identity, which is a mix of that of the Maghreb and central Europe, and anchored in a South African context that has often been isolated from, and hostile to, the rest of the continent. As a consequence of my non-black identity and my South African

this is that the founding Charter informally bound the Council to the organisational structure of the OAU. Adhering to the OAU Charter meant that questions of representation in the organisation were cast in terms of political affiliation, rather than intellectual affiliation. Importantly, the OAU conceptualised these political boundaries in terms of states, the regional blocs which arose from these states, and the colonial powers that had governed these states. The result was an informal division of CODESRIA into five regions – North, South, East, West and Central Africa, overlaid with colonial linguistic divisions into Francophone, Anglophone, Lusophone and Arabophone. When the Charter was amended in 2005, the reference to the AU was removed, but the political divisions were formalised. Henceforth, the Executive Committee would be comprised of two elected representatives from each region, where “Not more than one elected member of the Executive Committee shall come from the same country.” (CODESRIA 2005) The Charter further specified that French, English, Portuguese, Arabic and African languages would constitute the official languages of the Council, and the Executive Committee could then choose from amongst these the working languages of the Council. One of the effects of this, Mkandawire observed, has been to cast intellectual quality in opposition to representation within the organisation: “[although] the aim is to get a space where [scholars] can debate and where merit matters, that’s difficult in CODESRIA because you have to reconcile merit to the politics of regionalism and language.” (Mkandawire 2017) He added that this in turn distorts intellectual representation in the organisation: “We use a political criterion from the African Union, which is one country one vote. So a country like Nigeria with I don’t know how many universities has the same vote [for representation in the Executive Committee] as a country like Malawi with three universities.”

In interviews, the divisive role of colonial languages in shaping political representation in the organisation emerged as a strong theme. Thus, Moyo characterised CODESRIA’s attempts to overcome colonial fragmentation and ghettoization by ensuring a balance of colonial languages in the organisation:

[From the beginning] they were thinking to translate into French and English so it’s accessible to the different countries, as well as to do simultaneous

birth, some interviewees plausibly saw me as something of an outsider, and guarded their comments more carefully. However, linguistic and regional representation was also more strongly accented in the document analysis, which provides some grounds for believing that these debates have played a central role in the organisation.

translation at conferences. We didn't want barriers of language, colonial languages, or of country. So although people were writing country studies you had an interaction, people were beginning to open up their thinking, apply some critical methods and ideas, and come up with new findings ... because they were also included by IDEP, the African Union, [they] were all multilingual and tried to have a balance. You must always make sure you have some people from different regions, and you are bringing diverse people together. Arabic was not. It was not a formal translation until much later – the same with the African Union. It was mainly French and English, and also Portuguese. Portuguese is only applicable to three or four countries anyway. There was always difficulty in getting people from Portuguese-speaking countries. Even now, we have some but not so many. It's still growing. (Moyo 2016)

His remarks suggest that the initial principle dividing line was between 'anglophone' and 'francophone' scholars. In this regard, it is telling that CODESRIA's first internal reviewers would observe that the organisation was an "anomaly", for although it is "headquartered in a francophone state, historically its Secretariat leadership has been principally anglophone." (Challenor and Gana 1996, 10) Commenting on the emergence of this "anomaly" in an interview, the Senegalese philosopher Souleymane Bachir Diagne argued that it was a result of CODESRIA functioning as a refuge for anglophone scholars:

Yeah, you have Samir Amin and around Samir Amin are a number of Anglophone refugees, I mean; if you look at the profile in the case of Thandika, it is very telling. Thandika was a refugee from Malawi who ended up having a Swedish passport. Samir Amin created that structure of CODESRIA along with a certain number of intellectuals who were in the situation that Thandika was in, and, you know, CODESRIA has officially been thanked a few years ago by the Government of Senegal and Senghor for one thing; Senghor believed in intellectuals and academics so, they were on the left, very critical of him of course; but he insisted on giving CODESRIA the status

of a diplomatic institution in Senegal. That would allow the CODESRIA staff to have the kind of passports and diplomatic immunity and diplomatic facilities that helped CODESRIA grow; but it was an institution for refugees, non-Senegalese settling there and it was created by Samir Amin who also co-opted people who were also working in the field of political economy, and that is the origin of CODESRIA, that explains why it was right from the beginning, very Anglophone and these intellectuals were not Senegalese although the headquarters was in Senegal; so Senegal offered CODESRIA this kind of security that these refugees were seeking. (Diagne 2016b)

This then was one of the reasons for Diagne's invitation to join CODESRIA: "I remember Boubacar Barry calling me ... and saying that I should get involved with the work that CODESRIA was doing ... the idea then was that CODESRIA, although it was based in Senegal, did not have enough Senegalese involved, did not have enough intellectuals and academics from the Francophone universities involved, it was very much a kind of Anglophone institution." (Diagne 2016b) This sensitivity to colonial linguistic groupings is also manifest in CODESRIA's evaluations, which have tended to use this linguistic framework as a unit of analysis when considering training, publications and governance. This is true for both internal evaluations (Challenor and Gana 1996) as well as donor evaluations (Brunner, Afonja, and Djeflat 1985; Beckman et al. 2007). It is also true for the way in which CODESRIA curates its internal meta-data on participation in General Assemblies and training institutes, as well as the Annual Reports that it makes available to the general public.

Interviewees also suggested that colonial linguistic divisions in the organisation have sometimes assumed intellectual dimensions. This was clearest in discussions about the selection of Achille Mbembe as the Executive Secretary in 1996. On the one hand, interviewees concurred that it represented the "first time since the inception of CODESRIA that someone other than an Anglophone or Arabophone has headed CODESRIA." (Challenor and Gana 1996, 93) On the other hand, it also represented an intellectual shift in the organisation. Diagne, who was a member of the Executive Committee that selected Mbembe, explained:

Although it was social sciences in general and humanities also, precisely the humanities sector was not very developed, almost non-existent actually. So we, they, needed to have more philosophers also and also literary people, so the humanities were being, the humanities side of CODESRIA was being developed because until then, and this was normal given its origin, it was heavily about political economy ... [this] explains at one point why Achille Mbembe was appointed; he seemed to be the ultimate incarnation of that kind of humanities and also Francophone and so on and so forth, so that is the very first moment when this question of orientation became controversial; Achille was seen to be introducing this postmodern, postcolonial orientation, into something that had been until then a political economy and Marxist tradition. (Diagne 2016b)

Indeed, Mbembe would go on to publish an article in the *Bulletin*, which critiqued African Marxism for falsely presenting itself as “radical and progressive”, when it in fact developed an “imaginaire of culture and politics in which a manipulation of the rhetoric of autonomy, resistance, and emancipation serves as the sole criterion for determining the legitimacy of an authentic African discourse,” such that it was, at root, a “cult of victimology” (Mbembe 2000, 5) It is significant that Mbembe explicitly addressed this critique to the intellectual traditions of Dar es Salaam, CODESRIA, and the Third World Forum (2000, 17 footnote 11), since as we have seen, the intellectual communities from these three centres were closely intertwined, particularly through the Arusha Declaration, which tacitly informed CODESRIA’s genesis and ideological orientation. Within this context, interviewees indicated that Mbembe’s tenure marked a deepened linguistic and intellectual divide within the organisation:

And that opposition having two different camps continued for a certain number of years during Achille’s tenure and you had very often this five against four type of vote like the American Supreme Court ... until the moment when everybody was almost unanimously thinking ‘ok, Achille had to go in order for CODESRIA to continue’ ... You also have the managerial aspect and also the point when the donors just stopped. And CODESRIA had to examine itself.

And that's what CODESRIA did. The assessment was that this fight between Francophone and Anglophone was just absurd. (Diagne 2016b)

Diagne's comments refer to the "crisis" of CODESRIA, during which concerns about the financial and administrative mismanagement of the Council under Mbembe's tenure placed donor funding in jeopardy. As Raufu Mustapha put it:

CODESRIA has always been able to impress upon its foreign backers, the Scandinavians and all of that, to give it money in an open-ended way, to spend that money in a responsible way, and to account for it intellectually and financially. I think for most of its history it has done that. In fact, what really, really got me angry about the – you must have heard about the Achille Mbembe affair ... under Achille, you had when people are being encouraged to just spend money for this or spend money for that. They'd say, no no, you can't spend people's money like that! Those who gave us this money, if they spend it like that, we'll have nothing for them to give to us. (Mustapha 2015)

Interviewees indicated that things came to a head in the 1998 General Assembly, when delegates questioned how funds were used. This critique in turn prompted SIDA to initiate a series of meetings with the Council over their "major concern [with] the lack of transparency in financial transactions." (Beckman et al. 2007, 12) SIDA suspended payments in April 2000, after which Mbembe resigned. From their perspective, the "problem of financial maladministration was central to both the internal and the external dimensions of the crisis." (Beckman et al. 2007, 12)

It is telling that the problems of administration would subsequently be characterised in ideological terms by some scholars in CODESRIA. Bujra, for instance, argues that "the core of the crises, as I understand it, rested on two platforms (a) on the personal behaviour and conduct of the Executive Secretary, and (b) the shift initiated by the Executive Secretary in the direction of CODESRIA's fundamental social science paradigm – from a critical and indigenised social science relevant to the African conditions to post-modernism." (Bujra 2003, 17) Indeed, in his General Assembly address as the new Executive Secretary, Olukoshi obliquely referred to Mbembe's critique of CODESRIA's intellectual traditions as a form of "Afro-pessimism", which

the organisation would need to guard against:

[S]ome within the African academy, succumbed, sometimes unwittingly, to the temptation to self-denigrate and even to suggest that in the age of globalisation and cosmopolitanism, any quest for African networking amounted to little more than a foolish, parochial and self-defeating closure to the world that unnecessarily reinforced an African sense of “victimhood”. Fortunately, this was not a point of view that garnered wide following but its very articulation also gives a glimpse into the kind of challenges to which organizations such as CODESRIA are called upon to respond through programmes and activities that creatively mobilize the African academy to self-confidently assume its historic responsibilities.(Olukoshi 2002, 3)

Similarly, Zeleza has cautioned African scholars that, “We must try to resist the seductions of post-something sophistries parading in some sections of the western academy and being propagated by the likes of Achille Mbembe, CODESRIA’s discredited executive secretary.” (Zeleza 2002b, 22) Likewise, a sympathetic, albeit brief account of Mbembe’s tenure characterised the conflict within the organisation as stemming from Mbembe’s attack on “the ideological principles at the heart of CODESRIA and hence, for many of its longest standing members, the institute itself.” (Hardy and Sarmiento 2015) Faced by Mbembe, “a man of both incisive thought and daring imagination”, the “old guard fought back. They questioned Mbembe’s integrity. They called him a traitor. They accused him of superficiality, afro-pessimism, euro-nativism, ahistoricism, imperialism, capitalism and, worse ... post-modernity.” Both critical and sympathetic accounts have therefore portrayed the conflicts of this period in strong ideological terms.

Although a number of interviewees indicated that the real crisis of the organisation during this period was not so much intellectual as it was administrative, the fact that some cast it in terms of the language-ideology divide reveals an important way in which African intellectual traditions continue to be tethered to the scholarship of former colonial powers. While the majority of Africa’s universities were established in the post-independence era, French, British and American universities and scholars were often formally involved in their creation and

administration (Olukoshi 2006). As the next chapter discusses, this trend abated somewhat in the 1970s, but was subsequently strengthened under structural adjustment. The consequence of this, as Prah notes, is that “we have in our formation been subjected to successive intellectual fashions born in the west. The intellectual fads have shaped affected successive generations of African intellectuals and shaped their thinking on Africa and the world.” (Prah 1998, 160) As discussed in the conceptual framework, Hountondji characterises this as a form of scientific or scholarly dependence, which is linked to African countries’ continuing economic dependence:

[S]cientific and technological activity, as practiced in Africa today, is just as “extroverted”, as externally orientated, as is economic activity; its shortcomings, therefore, are of the same nature. That is, they are not cognate or consubstantial with our systems of knowledge as such. On the contrary, they derive from the historical integration and subordination of these systems to the world system of knowledge and “know-how”, just as underdevelopment as a whole results, primarily, not from any original backwardness, but from the integration of our subsistence economies into the world capitalist market. We have to think about the analogy between these two kinds of subordinating integration, about these two kinds of underdevelopment. (Hountondji 1990, 7)

As the conceptual framework made clear, there is strong empirical support for this thesis. The findings of a number of bibliometric studies suggest that relations of dependence with former colonial powers act as a mechanism by which differences between French and Anglo-American scholarship translate into differences between Anglophone and Francophone African scholarship. This helps explain how conflicts over the financial administration of the organisation have sometimes been cast in terms of linguistic divides, which are then liable to take on intellectual overtones.

To be clear, this does not mean that intellectual conflicts are not substantial, and are instead a veneer for linguistic and political divides within the organisation. As Bujra stresses, from its inception, the “issue of ideology and direction was ... at the core of CODESRIA’s identity and its activities.” (2003, 20) As Mkandawire, Sawyerr and Sané argue, the ideological direction of CODESRIA has therefore been a function of the nature of the community, and as the

community has changed, so too has its intellectual direction. In more recent years, they observe, “the ‘Left’ has bemoaned the ‘right-wing’ shift of CODESRIA, again reflective perhaps of what is happening in Africa’s intellectual community.” (Mkandawire, Sawyer, and Sané 2015, 10) Commenting on this, an officer in CODESRIA observed:

But CODESRIA has a language of anti-imperialism, or this basic idea of freedom. Sometimes it’s not everyone who uses this language. Manthia Diawarra is part of the Scientific Committee, but he’s not a Marxist or a leftist, I am not sure people know what to do with them. He’s a bit like Achille Mbembe. If you remember at the opening conference, someone said that we should ban neoliberals, and someone responded, ‘how do you tell who is a neoliberal?’ It’s open, but it’s an openness that people have to fight for. So the people who don’t believe in African autonomy are regurgitated out of CODESRIA, but amongst those who do believe in autonomy, there is a great deal of disagreement. (Anonymous CODESRIA officer 2015)

Within the context then, the debates over Mbembe’s tenure are important not so much for the substantive intellectual disagreements that they reveal. Rather, they are important for revealing the ways in which the discourse of linguistic-ideological divisions became a primary tool in mobilising for Mbembe’s administration, and subsequently articulating discontent with his administration and the ways in which this was perceived to threaten the autonomy of the organisation.

To conclude, this section explored two ways in which CODESRIA’s pan-African organisational structure has been complicated and contested. The first complication concerned scholars from the Maghreb and Indian Ocean islands, who have felt marginalised within CODESRIA. It explored two potential reasons for this. One reason was that their creolised identities do not comfortably fit within the diasporic narrative of black solidarity that initially underpinned pan-Africanism. A second reason was that the idea of pan-Africanism centres on solidarity across the continental landmass. This is because the mainland has been the focus of colonial and anti-colonial battles. An unintended consequence of this seems to be that the islands and their strong relationship with Asia have become peripheral in the continental imagination.

These creolised identities therefore challenge the colonial conception of Africa as an entity defined by a unitary black identity and a contiguous landmass. The second complication concerned the ways in which CODESRIA's pan-African structure has closely adhered to the African Union's organisational structure, such that representation is formulated along colonial political lines. The Francophone/Anglophone divide, in particular, therefore became one way in which scholars articulated political and intellectual debates. The debates over these different forms of marginalisation therefore point to the ways in which CODESRIA's pan-African form has been complicated by the enduring influence of colonial frameworks. The next section focuses on the constraints to decentring and depoliticising these colonial frameworks within the organisation.

4.3. Constraints on CODESRIA's attempts to navigate colonial divisions

Thus far, the discussion has focused on the idea of pan-Africanism that CODESRIA embodies, and the ways in which this idea has been contested within its community. However, there are also material factors that have shaped CODESRIA's pan-African form. Put differently, while CODESRIA was founded to counter a context that marginalised African scholars, this context has also shaped and constrained CODESRIA. This section considers two constraints on CODESRIA's attempts to navigate and decentre colonial divisions in the organisation. The first limitation is that of resource scarcity in African universities. The second limitation involves the institutionalisation of European languages in African universities. Paying attention to these constraints, I argue, points to the ways in which CODESRIA's pan-African form is deeply dependent on state-funded public institutions.

To begin with, CODESRIA was founded in the first flush of independence, when African states had the financial wherewithal to invest in setting up and supporting public universities. But by the 1980s this picture changed considerably. The combination of economic crises and structural adjustment led to the pauperisation of African universities. This is something I consider in greater detail in the next chapter, focusing in particular on the impact of this on the democratic functioning of the Council. However, here I am interested in how resource scarcity shaped the ways in which CODESRIA expressed its pan-Africanism. As Mkandawire (2017)

commented in his interview, structural adjustment forced scholars to “rethink the model of CODESRIA.” Previously, CODESRIA was intended to act as a forum for African scholars to debate and collaborate with each other. But when the universities were in financial crisis, CODESRIA had to change this model to one of basic financial support: “So we did a lot of things which should be done by universities, which they just couldn’t. Our aim was just to sustain the academic community. That was our obsession, just sustaining the academic community.” (Mkandawire 2017) In a context where students and scholars could no longer access books to inform their empirical work, let alone conduct empirical work, the financial resources of the Council became critical to ensuring that universities were able to engage in a bare minimum of research activities. Thus, as many interviewees indicated, the erosion of the material basis of African universities during this period meant that the Council, which was seen as being comparatively well-funded, became a site of increasing contestation for scarce resources. Universities are only slowly starting to revive financially, and so these contestations have largely continued to the present day. These contestations have been particularly acute, Mamdani explained, in the case of CODESRIA’s bureaucracy:

It also created a central bureaucracy which is considerably privileged compared with the circumstances of African intellectuals in African universities. This central bureaucracy is in the Dakar office, the staff employed there are all Africans, but they distinguish between local and international pan-African staff. Pan-African staff are paid at the UN rate – Secretary General, Executive Secretary, Deputy Executive Secretary. The local staff are paid at local rates. The local staff rate matches our incomes in the universities but the pan-African staff payment matches the American [rate]. Not the high American rate, but the middle-lower rate, with all the benefits and no tax, because Senegal gives CODESRIA diplomatic status. So there’s no taxation. Medical benefits – everything. These [jobs] are full-time. So the position is coveted and that makes for a certain kind of politics between the secretariat and the executive committee. The executive committee are ordinary staff members, ordinary academics from around the continent. It can open things up to the seduction of petty privileges. (Mamdani 2016)

For this reason, el Baz argued, scholars within CODESRIA have had to actively resist the attempt by some to crowd in resources:

But I was always concerned about CODESRIA's identity and CODESRIA's vision. That is why when I was in the Executive Committee I began to notice some people coming because they want to benefit. They want to have a project in their country; they want to get some money to do this and that. And I used to get angry in the Executive Committee and fight them and say we are not here for that. There are other places you can take money from. (el Baz 2015)

One way of gauging the impact of contestations over resources is to consider the differences between the Executive Committee, which selects the Council's bureaucracy, and the Scientific Committee, which helps guide the intellectual agenda of the organisation and conducts blind peer reviews on conference papers, journal articles and the like:

The Scientific Committee did not have the kind of fights that we had in the Executive Committee. The debates would definitely be in the Executive committee because everything would go there; the Scientific Committee for example would report to them and so the debate would really take place there, that's where the location of power is; and what is at stake was really there. (Diagne 2016b)

The absence of politicised contestation over language and regional affiliation within the Scientific Committee, Diagne suggested, was due to its lack of power to control resources within the organisation. These comments suggest that acute scarcity within universities introduces the strong possibility of political contestations over CODESRIA's resources. Within this context then, the linguistic and regional affiliations bequeathed by colonial rule are not simply a question of path dependency, but also plausibly a mechanism for organising constituencies and disbursing resources. The implication here is that acute scarcity may have helped invest linguistic and regional divisions with new legitimacy. If this is correct, then there are concrete material

limitations on the extent to which CODESRIA can embody a pan-African form that transcends or dismantles colonial divisions.

A second constraint on CODESRIA's attempt to depoliticise the linguistic divisions bequeathed by colonial rule lies in the institutional centrality of English and French in African scholarship. The de facto working languages of CODESRIA are English and French, although its Charter specifies that it may also choose to use Portuguese, Arabic and other African languages. This is despite the fact that several major African languages, such as Swahili, Arabic and Hausa, cut across colonial linguistic boundaries, and are therefore a potential source for new ways of configuring CODESRIA as a pan-African organisation. However, Ibrahim Oanda, who heads CODESRIA's higher education programme, explained that CODESRIA's choice of language is constrained by the broader political landscape:

If you looking at Swahili, it is the one language that could be a pan-African lingua franca. When I listen to my Wolof friends talk here [in Senegal] and the Arabs, there are Arabic components in Swahili. So Swahili is one language that can easily be spoken by seventy percent of Africans. If your political position was to make this language a pan-African language, you could, but the decision has never been made. Instead, African governments have jointly made political decisions to have English, French and Portuguese as official languages. (Oanda 2015)

Interviewees concurred that a consequence of these political choices is that English and French continue to be the dominant scholarly languages of universities on the continent. Thus, for instance, Amin commented:

The problem is that African languages, with the exception of Arabic in Egypt, are not used in academic circles. So this is why CODESRIA has not developed a corpus of writings in these languages. Portuguese, perhaps, is becoming more of an African language, in the sense that if you go to Guinea Bissau or Angola, many people speak the language. This is similar to the South American

experience. But French and English continue to be the language of the elite.
(Amin 2015)

The reasons for this are complex. As Bahi noted, “But at this time when CODESRIA was developing the issue of writing in English or in Swahili or in an African language was quite new. Someone like Ngugi [wa Thiong’o], if you read Ngugi, you notice that he had to fight against the establishment of his own university [for the use of African languages].” (Bahi 2015) This institutional resistance, Oanda commented, stems in part from the low esteem in which African languages are held:

Right now if you go to East African universities, a lot of students are moving away from learning French and German which was very current ten years ago – now they are moving to Chinese. But within Kenya itself, the people [in universities] cannot communicate in Swahili, they think of Swahili as a language for very slow people. You can see the colonial connotations in describing these people as primitive and it’s a sad moment. Even post-independence governments have never tried to connect, so the problem is more political. (Oanda 2015)

Reflecting on the ways in which CODESRIA could exercise its agency within these constraints, Oanda added:

What CODESRIA does is to try and build the institutional capacity of universities in Africa. But universities operate within national frameworks. So unless there are changes in terms of how national language policies in Africa have been crafted, and reflected within the institutions to give CODESRIA an entry point into the door, it will be like CODESRIA is working in a vacuum. Take an example where – I mean I was reading this book by this man from Zanzibar [Haroub Othman] – *Yes In my Lifetime*. It could have been a very good book if it was done in Swahili and the editor of the book said that most of the essays in Swahili were left out. It is obviously because the general trend is

that, even in Tanzania, they are trying to run away from Swahili, because they think it does not bring back the dividends that people think accrue from the education system. I know CODESRIA can try to provide grants to support people who want to do research in African languages. But to the extent that it can really begin to try and change language policies mainly at the national and continental level, I think it's a huge task. (Oanda 2015)

Indeed, interviewees were unanimous in stressing that, since CODESRIA is tethered to African universities, the working languages of these institutions are necessarily the languages of CODESRIA, and any change to those languages therefore requires a much broader political effort than that which CODESRIA is capable of on its own.

In this respect, Mafeje has stressed that the marginalisation of African cultures and languages is fundamentally a consequence of African societies' structural domination by the global North, and it follows from this that "Africans do not have to be defensive about their culture(s). It will come to its own and regain its dynamic, if the requisite structural space is created." (Mafeje 1990c, 175) Yet, as Mkandawire (2017) observed in his interview, this does not give grounds for optimism about the use of African languages, since English is set to become the de facto language of scholarship worldwide, such that even non-Anglophone European scholars are increasingly forced to write in English. Nevertheless, Mafeje's argument is useful, since as he later seeks to demonstrate, scholars' choice of language does not reflect their political choices; rather, it is the *ends* to which the language is deployed that reflect scholars' political agency (Mafeje 1994b). Read against the backdrop of the Francophone/Anglophone debate in CODESRIA, this implies that the problem may take the form of a linguistic divide, but it is at heart a political debate over access to and representation within the organisation. In this respect, the remarks of Ousmane Kane are insightful. Kane has been at the forefront of scholarship on the contributions of non-Europhone intellectuals (those who write in Hausa, Wolof, Arabic and so on).³³ Yet, despite his manifest commitment to Afrophone scholarship, he cautioned in his interview that "CODESRIA can only do so much. No institution can solve the problem of research, and by this I mean at a very general level, no institution can meet all the needs of any

³³ See, for instance, *Non-Europhone Intellectuals* (Kane 2012) and *Beyond Timbuktu: An Intellectual History of Muslim West Africa* (Kane 2016).

one research community.” (Kane 2015) For Kane, the very expansiveness and diversity of CODESRIA’s pan-African community means that questions of representation and marginalisation are a defining feature of the organisation, so that “whatever formula you choose, there will always be the problem of exclusion, people will always feel excluded.” (Kane 2015) As we have seen, the problem of exclusion becomes particularly urgent in contexts of acute scarcity. From this perspective then, there are clear institutional restraints on the extent to which CODESRIA’s pan-Africanism realises its principles of solidarity and inclusion.

To conclude, this section has examined the ways in which CODESRIA’s pan-Africanism has been shaped and constrained by its broader context. First, the erosion of the material basis of African universities in the 1980s seems to have invested colonial linguistic divisions in CODESRIA with new legitimacy. Second, the institutional centrality of these languages in African universities has made it difficult for CODESRIA to transition to African languages. Yet the institutionalisation of colonial languages is itself likely a function of broader political and economic weaknesses in African countries. Taken together, these factors underscore the ways in which CODESRIA is deeply tethered to African universities, such that their material and institutional conditions concretely impact its organisational form.

4.4. Conclusion

In this chapter I asked: *how have different meanings of pan-Africanism shaped CODESRIA as a knowledge commons?* The narrative that emerged suggests that CODESRIA’s pan-Africanism plays a complex and important role in all areas of the commons. It functions as a founding narrative of solidarity; it shapes membership and governance institutions; and it structures the action arena and the scholarship emerging from this arena. The founding narrative of pan-Africanism indicates that CODESRIA's establishment was informed by scholars' experiences of racism and their commitment to anti-colonial struggles. As such, CODESRIA was clearly established to counter the regional inequalities discussed in the conceptual framework. As an organisational form, CODESRIA's pan-Africanism is ambiguous between two forms. As a non-governmental organisation, it represents an alternative way of thinking about pan-Africanism that is centred on people rather than states. Yet, its governance institutions closely adhere to the

African Union's organisational structure, such that representation is formulated along colonial political lines. In the context of material and institutional weaknesses of African universities, this seems to have created a situation in which colonial political categories have sometimes been used as a mechanism for organising constituencies in order to access scarce resources. Thus, while CODESRIA's pan-Africanism is strongly rooted in anti-colonial commitments, it has also reproduced colonial boundaries within its organisational form. Indeed, contestations over the narrative indicate that participation in the intellectual and administrative governance of the organisation is inflected by these colonial boundaries. As a consequence, CODESRIA's pan-Africanism has been a site of both solidarity and conflict.

In the closing remarks, I want to reflect on the expressive dimensions of CODESRIA's pan-Africanism in the context of what it means to be an African intellectual. In formal interviews, scholars seldom discussed the difficulty of their situations. But in informal conversations over the last three years, what has emerged most clearly is the way in which the lives of African intellectuals are often marked by intellectual isolation and financial precarity. Many of the scholars in CODESRIA have at one time or another been forced into exile or persecuted by their governments, and almost all have had to contend with book famines and exceptionally difficult institutional politics in their universities. In this context, CODESRIA has been a home for many African scholars. Indeed, as the following chapter on structural adjustment makes clear, this home has very often been a refuge. That it has been able to take on this role, I believe, is largely due to its pan-African imagination.

As this chapter shows, CODESRIA's pan-Africanism is grounded in the principles of solidarity and intellectual autonomy. In doing so, it offers a narrative of hope over that of despair. For many scholars, the normative dimensions of this counter-narrative have been critical to the establishment and maintenance of CODESRIA. However, CODESRIA's pan-Africanism has also been important in terms of the kind of imagination that it offers. In this respect, there are four particularly salient features. First, its pan-African imagination has allowed scholars to explore an alternative possible world, by supposing an autonomous and united Africa. In doing so, scholars have been able to consider what steps they are able to take to help realise this alternative world. In this sense, the Council's pan-Africanism is a hybrid of fiction and reality, since engaging in a pan-African imagination is a constitutive element in realising pan-Africanism. Second, and related to this, the imagination of pan-Africanism has brought the ideal of intellectual autonomy

alive by locating it within broader historical struggles, and has thereby invited scholars to see themselves as historical actors, rather than simply those who have been acted upon by history. Third, the imagination of pan-Africanism has crafted a framework for exploring new kinds of political and intellectual relations. This is evident in the creation of CODESRIA as a non-governmental, scholarly alternative to state-centric forms of pan-Africanism, where its organisational form reaches beyond the African continent to reference both the global South and the global North. It is also evident in later debates about who counts as African, where scholars from the Indian Ocean islands initiated a debate about the Europe-centred conceptualisation of Africa, and suggested an exploration of its precolonial relations with Asia. This in turn related to a fourth feature of the pan-African imagination: its multiple meanings have been fertile ground for complications and ambiguities. This has created important space for contestations within the organisation. Unchallenged, the imagination can harden over time. But contestations force the imagination to confront new possibilities instead of closing down possibilities. This is because contestations can compel us to take on different perspectives. In doing so, contestations force an interactive enquiry into the nature of pan-Africanism, and therefore, over the shared norms of the organisation.

One can therefore think of CODESRIA's pan-African form as less a statement of fact, and more a mode of collective enquiry into what it means to be an African intellectual and do African intellectual work. As a mode of enquiry, this pan-African imagination appears to have been the glue that has bound together intellectuals into a community. Moreover, contestation within the organisation suggests that its pan-Africanism is not stagnant and continues to be questioned and reworked within specific historical constraints. Perhaps the latest reworking of this imagination has been the recent turn towards the diaspora. Just as the African Union has come to include the African diaspora as a symbolic sixth region of the continent (Otas 2012), CODESRIA is now reaching out to the diaspora in its programmes, inspired particularly by the work of Paul Zeleza. Earlier conceptions of the diaspora have invoked the transatlantic slave trade and colonisation as a common existential thread weaving together a greater African diaspora that stretches across the Atlantic Ocean to encompass many of the peoples from Africa and the Americas (Gordon 1997). In contrast, Zeleza (2005) broadens the category of the diaspora to include peoples of African descent associated with the trading routes between East Africa and South Asia, as well as those who have recently migrated from Africa but initially

formed diasporas from Asia and Europe, such as East African Asians or South African whites. For Zeleza, the exodus of African scholars under structural adjustment is perhaps the most critical diaspora, since they represent a valuable and willing epistemic resource for young people on the continent. This turn towards the diaspora is bound to create new sources of creative tension and conflict within CODESRIA, since, as Kane (2015) commented, there is an “unspoken rule that you have to live on the continent to be elected [to the Executive Committee]”. With the explicit inclusion of the diaspora in its research agenda, this unspoken rule may very well be contested. Even at its most assertive then, CODESRIA’s pan-Africanism retains a fundamental tendency towards the tentative and the experimental. It allows for the expression of doubt and conflict, at the same time as providing a normative anchor of solidarity and autonomy.

Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind the ways in which CODESRIA’s pan-African imagination has been complicated by the enduring influence of colonial frameworks and concretely limited by the the material and institutional weaknesses of African universities. The result is that, instead of functioning as an expansive commons for debate and collaboration amongst African scholars, there is the danger that CODESRIA might function as a closed club of a select few. In this regard, one of the striking features of this chapter is the extent to which it is overwhelmingly a narrative of men, such that CODESRIA closely resembles what some African feminist scholars have called “a boys’ club”. As the later chapter on African feminism demonstrates, their critiques of CODESRIA as an androcentric and patriarchal organisation have led to new and rich ways of thinking about Africanity.

Chapter 5: CODESRIA under structural adjustment

In the previous chapter I considered the ways in which the different meanings of pan-Africanism have shaped CODESRIA as a knowledge commons. This analysis suggested that CODESRIA is closely tethered to African universities, such that their material and institutional character concretely impacts its organisational form. In this chapter, I examine this relationship in greater detail, focusing on how the imposition of structural adjustment programmes in the 1980s profoundly shaped CODESRIA through its effects on universities and research institutes. Indeed, commenting on his tenure as the Executive Secretary during this period, Thandika Mkandawire (2017) stressed that structural adjustment forced scholars to “rethink the model of CODESRIA.”

This chapter asks: *how did CODESRIA respond as a knowledge commons to structural adjustment?* It is divided into three sections. The first section considers CODESRIA intellectuals’ analyses of how adjustment impacted African societies’ capacity for autonomous thought by destabilising their universities. The second section examines CODESRIA’s organisational and intellectual efforts to combat the effects of adjustment on higher education, and how it changed as a consequence. The third section explores the ways in which the impacts of adjustment on higher education shaped CODESRIA’s governance and intellectual character. I argue that CODESRIA’s analysis of structural adjustment led to considerable intellectual and organisational innovation, and it therefore grew in size and influence during this period. However, structural adjustment weakened the academic organisations upon which CODESRIA relied, and thereby eroded the mechanisms to maintain its intellectual vigour and democratic character over the long term.

5.1. CODESRIA’s analyses of the impact of structural adjustment on the academic project

Following the oil crisis and a series of droughts in the mid-1970s, African governments approached the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank for emergency financing, which was provided on condition that they implement a package of wide-ranging economic

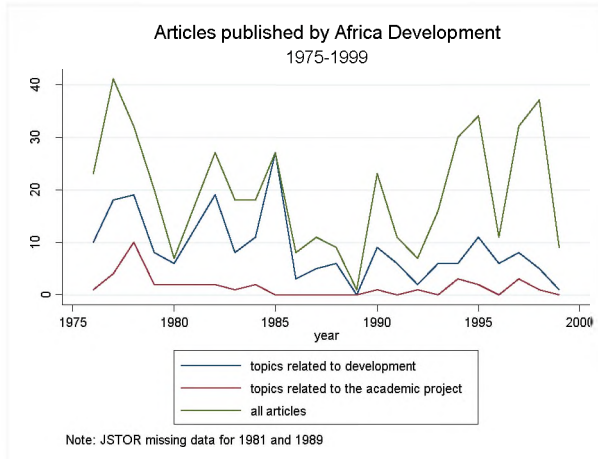
reforms known as “structural adjustment.”³⁴ Between 1981 and 1989, 36 African countries had undergone at least one structural adjustment programme (Bujra 1994, 132). While adjustment was ostensibly designed to correct the weaknesses of African economies, its imposition marked a period of wide-scale economic, political and social turmoil on the continent. In response to these crises, Fatou Sow, a senior scholar in CODESRIA, remarked that the Council became “specialists on structural adjustment policies.” (Sow 2016) It was only comparatively later, however, that they began to pay concerted attention to the impacts of structural adjustment on universities and research institutes. As a consequence, their analysis of the impact of adjustment on higher education is located within a broader analysis of its impact on African societies. In this section I begin with a brief overview of their work on structural adjustment. I then explore how intellectuals have understood the impact of structural adjustment on higher education. Their work emphasises that much of the negative impacts of structural adjustment were due to its suppression of informed public deliberation. One of the key ways in which it did so was by destabilising higher education in three interrelated ways: adjustment eroded the material foundations of universities; it narrowed the scope for academic freedom; and it constrained the intergenerational renewal of academic communities. Locating the assault on higher education within the broader social effects of structural adjustment, I argue, brings to the fore CODESRIA scholars’ conviction in the central role that higher education play in maintaining a society’s sovereign and democratic character. It suggests an important turn in CODESRIA’s community, which comes to view the academic project as a social fact, and not just an intellectual one.

To begin with, it is useful to examine CODESRIA’s flagship journal *Africa Development* to get a sense of its intellectual preoccupations during structural adjustment. A meta-analysis of 452 articles published in *Africa Development* between 1976, the year of its inception, and 1999, indicates that 200 articles, or 44%, have titles that include the terms ‘World Bank’, ‘IMF’, ‘economic’, ‘crisis’, ‘structural adjustment’ or ‘development’. In comparison, 35 articles, or 8%, include the term ‘academic freedom’, ‘university’, or ‘social science’. Many of these articles were published in the early of years of CODESRIA, and provide overviews of existing social

³⁴ The World Bank and the IMF are international financial institutions that are part of the United Nations system. They were designed by John Maynard Keynes and Harry Dexter White as financial safety nets for member states during periods of economic crisis. They were formally established at the 1944 Bretton Woods Conference, which granted the United States a dominant position within the governance of the institutions (Kapur, Lewis, and Webb 2011, 1:58). France was the first country to receive a World Bank loan, on condition that it remove the communist members from its tripartite alliance (Bird 1992, 288). After the Marshall Plan came into effect in 1947, the World Bank shifted its focus to the global South.

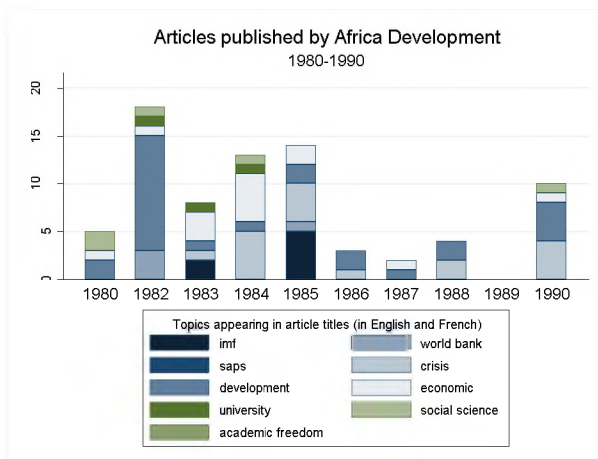
science institutes, associations and departments. During the period of structural adjustment, however, the number of articles on the academic project decreased dramatically, and only began to increase after 1990. Figure 4 below illustrates.

Figure 4: Thematic analysis of article titles from Africa Development (1976-1999)



Moreover, a detailed breakdown of this analysis for the period 1980-1990 indicates that, during this period, only eight articles on the academic project were published, and only one of them made explicit reference to the impact of structural adjustment. Figure 5 below illustrates.

Figure 5: Detailed thematic analysis of article titles from Africa Development (1980-1990)



This suggests that the broader dynamics and impacts of structural adjustment were initially the main intellectual focus of CODESRIA's community. For this reason, it is useful to approach their analysis of the impact of adjustment on higher education within a broader analysis of its impact

on African societies.

One of the main areas of contention between CODESRIA scholars and the World Bank centred on the extent to which internal and external factors were responsible for the economic crises of the late 1970s and early 1980s. The Berg Report, which provided the initial underpinning for structural adjustment programme, held that domestic policy-making was largely responsible for the economic crisis (World Bank 1981). Domestic culprits included protectionist industrial policies and exchange rate controls, a bloated and inefficient public sector and an uncompetitive agricultural sector. On the basis of this diagnosis, the World Bank typically mandated reforms that included the removal of currency exchange controls, a substantial reduction in export and corporate taxes, the privatisation of state-owned enterprises and the withdrawal of the state from the provision of public goods, including higher education (Mkandawire and Soludo 1999).

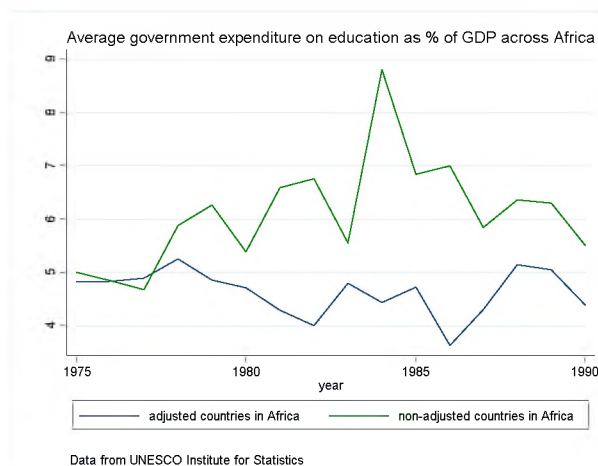
Much of CODESRIA's scholarship in *Africa Development* during this period sought to demonstrate that this view had a shaky empirical basis and elided important external and historical factors. Scholars emphasised African economies' continuing reliance on primary, colonial-era commodities, which had rendered them vulnerable to the decline in commodity prices precipitated by the international oil crisis of the mid-1970s (see, for instance, Amin 1982; Hamid 1982; Toyo 1984; Hutchful 1985).³⁵ The failure to diversify sufficiently, many reasoned, was not only an outcome of the dependence of African states on industrialised countries, which substantially narrowed their sovereignty and room for manoeuvre. It was also the result of a concentration of power within a small middle-class elite, which had disinclined the state to build strong social compacts between the state and society (Ninsin 1982; Bangura, Mustapha, and Adamu 1983; Aderibigbe 1985). In this context, CODESRIA scholars warned, rolling back the state under structural adjustment would only exacerbate the underlying economic and political problems of post-colonial states. But by the same token, the African community's policy alternative, the Lagos Plan of Action, which invoked economic integration as a means of tackling external constraints, did not address domestic realities and therefore had limited practicability

³⁵ The focus on external constraints reflects in part the influence of the dependency school in CODESRIA (Amin et al. 1978), as well as the broader anti-imperialist currents that found political expression in the non-aligned movement, which called for South-South cooperation as a way of limiting economic dependency on former colonial powers and hegemony (Third World Forum 1983).

(CODESRIA 1982; Benachenhou 1982; Ndongko 1982; Savané 1982a).³⁶

These warnings proved prescient. By the end of the 1980s, scholars noted, many countries had a lower GDP per capita than at independence (Fosu, Mlambo, and Oshikoya 2001). The majority of industries that had been established in the post-independence period had collapsed and economies had reverted to their colonial specialisations (Mkandawire 1988c). External debt (often to former colonial powers) had grown to the extent that a number of countries were classified as insolvent, and were forced to allocate the majority of their budget to servicing debt (Elbadawi and Ndulu 1996). This was accompanied by a substantial reduction in spending on public goods, such as education, as Figure 6 below illustrates.³⁷

Figure 6: Changes in government spending on education for adjusted versus non-adjusted African countries



³⁶ Feminist scholars critiqued both the Lagos Plan and the Berg Report for their erasure of women. Steady (1982), for instance, argues that informal regional integration had already been achieved by market women in West Africa; the failure of regional integration planning to take this into account would likely lead to forms of integration that were unsustainable and inequitable. Indeed, male African scholars' critiques of structural adjustment would in turn be vigorously critiqued by African feminists (see, for instance, AAWORD 1985; Savané 1982a; Pereira 2002). The next chapter provides an overview of the development of feminist scholarship in CODESRIA, and feminist scholars' critiques of androcentric research in the organisation.

³⁷ Of the 43 African countries that underwent adjustment between 1980 and 2000, average government spending on education as a percentage of GDP declined by 31% between 1978, the advent of the oil crisis and 1986, the height of adjustment. In contrast, during this period, the eight non-adjusted African countries increased their spending on education by an average of 19%. While a number of scholars in CODESRIA note declining spending on education, they either provide this data using measures that are no longer used today, such as spending as a proportion of Gross National Product (see, for instance, Bujra 1994) or they do not provide precise figures (see, for instance, Mkandawire and Soludo 1999). I therefore calculated these figures using UNESCO Institute for Statistics data on government spending on education in order to give the reader a clear indication of declines in education spending in contemporary terms.

At the same time, living standards fell dramatically. The sharp currency devaluation accompanied by rising inflation substantially eroded the purchasing power of wage earners, who were now also required to pay user fees for public goods. CODESRIA scholars observed that this period was therefore characterised by growing inequalities in access to healthcare and education, and increased mortality and malnutrition (Mkandawire and Soludo 1999, 88). They noted with concern that deepening economic crises were often accompanied by heightened political crises and civil conflict as structural adjustment programmes further eroded the legitimacy of the state (Campbell 1989; Mamdani 1990b; Wamba-dia-Wamba 1992). By 1989, thirty-five of Africa's forty-five independent states were under military rule (Mama 2006).

Faced with international financial institutions that seemed unmoved by empirical evidence, scholars in CODESRIA began paying closer attention to the process of research and policy formation underlying structural adjustment. A number of these scholars documented the ways in which programmes were typically designed and carried out by local and foreign elites who tended to resist the participation of African scholars (Mkandawire 1985; Bukurura 1991; Amuwo 1993). Ali (1994), for instance, chronicles the way in which Sudanese academics were repeatedly side-lined by the International Labour Organisation's Mission to Sudan when they visited the country to help draw up a structural adjustment programme. After repeatedly pointing to empirical evidence that cast doubt on the underlying assumptions of the Mission's project, Ali notes, Sudanese academics walked out in protest at the refusal of the Mission to take their objections into account. Attempts to bring the protest to public knowledge were censored, and the academics in question were subsequently blacklisted by donors. The irony of this situation, as Mkandawire points out, is that:

at the time when most African governments insisted on their national priorities there were few indigenous social scientists and most of the experts were expatriates who were not bound by national priorities. Now that Africa has large numbers of social scientists, African governments have lost a significant degree of autonomy and in one way or another are pursuing objectives imposed by external financial institutions. Thus, two or three IMF experts sitting in a

country's reserve bank have more to say about the direction of national policy than say, the national association of economists. (Mkandawire 1988b, 2)

Scholars in CODESRIA stressed that this marginalisation of African research was part of the broader anti-democratic thrust of structural adjustment programmes, which were often presented as a *fait accompli* to parliament and public alike, with no scope for discussion or dissent (Mkandawire 1985; M. C. Diop 1991; Mphande 1994).

Thus, when CODESRIA commissioned thirty empirical studies on structural adjustment, the synthesis report by Mkandawire and Soludo (1999) found that one of the striking features of this era is the extent to which it was characterised by secrecy and confusion. The data underlying economic reforms, Mkandawire and Soludo observe, was seldom public or subject to peer review, and was often hopelessly out of date and riddled with errors (see also Bennell 1996). To make matters worse, they observe, World Bank and IMF reports often made inconsistent demands on African economies,³⁸ while issuing contradictory statements to the public.³⁹ As a consequence, these organisations would come to be characterised as “badly prepared protagonists of modest ability employing data of dubious quality and entering upon a series of battles over very complex policy questions.” (Helleiner 1994, 10 quoted in Mkandawire and Soludo 1999) Moreover, Mkandawire and Soludo note, despite evidence from the World Bank's own reports that structural adjustment had demonstrably failed to achieve its objectives (Elbadawi, Ghura, and Uwajaren 1992), the World Bank continued to insist that “adjustment is working.” (World Bank 1994, 1)⁴⁰ And yet, as Mafeje (1990a) has remarked, African policy alternatives to structural adjustment were similarly unfettered by empirical rigour or the need to engage with state of the art African scholarship. In the resulting, “discourse of the blind”, as Hutchful characterises it, “the side with the money usually won.” (1995, 392) Indeed, the tension between power and the willingness to be guided by empirical logic was a theme that emerged

³⁸ One such example is the World Bank's demand for rapid “liberalization, without any compensating source of revenue, [which] is likely to be inconsistent with [its] requirements to maintain fiscal discipline.” (Mkandawire and Soludo 1999, 97)

³⁹ For instance, both the Nigerian government and the World Bank made public statements claiming that the Bank's concessionary loan to Nigerian universities “is a gift [with] no strings attached.” In reality, the loan involved a number of stringent conditions. (Imam and Mama 1994, 99)

⁴⁰ While the World Bank has slowly revised this view, the IMF has been more steadfast. It was only in 2016 that the IMF's research department acknowledged evidence that structural adjustment policies may have exacerbated financial crises (Ostry, Loungani, and Furceri 2016). The ensuing furore in academic circles is an indication of the extent to which this signalled a departure from its “ideological self-assuredness.” (Rowden 2016)

strongly in interviews with CODESRIA scholars. As Mahmood Mamdani commented: “only those possessed of disproportionate power can afford to assume that knowing is irrelevant, thereby caring little about the consequences of their actions.” (Mamdani 2016)

Reflecting on this period, Mustapha (2012) argues that these poorly-informed attempts by a small band of elites to re-engineer African societies without their knowledge or consent undermined the political space for public deliberation and informed consensus building. And yet, he contends, such public deliberation is typically taken to be critical to the development of democratic states. Indeed, as Mkandawire and Soludo remark, although the World Bank identified “public debate” and “transparency” as key elements of “good governance”, they viewed African civil servants as “corrupt, rent seeking and inefficient” and therefore kept them out of the restructuring exercise, a practice directly at odds with their emphasis on public debate and transparency (1999, 47–48). Mkandawire and Soludo argue that such practices help explain the poor quality of research and policy during this period, since key actors were inured from the checks and balances of building informed consensus within the broader scholarly and political communities of the continent. From this perspective then, confused policymaking is a function of secrecy, for which public deliberation is a necessary antidote. More broadly, it suggests that informed public deliberation is a critical ingredient in the political and economic flourishing of a society, and that scholars and intellectuals play an important role in informing public deliberation.

CODESRIA scholars’ concerns about the impact of structural adjustment on the academic project were therefore informed by their understanding of the profound role that intellectual communities play in broader societal flourishing. As Zeleza (2003, 155) observes, much of the urgency and poignancy of their writings in this period derive from their intimate acquaintance with the ways in which the disintegration of the fabric of society necessarily involves an assault on a society’s ability to think autonomously.⁴¹

⁴¹ It is worth quoting at length Rasheed’s (1994, 116) analysis of this marginalisation of African scholarship in *Africa Development* as an indication of the anguish that marks CODESRIA’s scholarship at this time: “At this critical juncture of Africa’s history when the continent has lost, to a large degree, both the ability and initiative to think for itself and shape its destiny; when many governments ... have chosen or were constrained to adopt reform programmes and political and economic conditionalities of dubious basis and often disastrous consequences; when the wisdom and expertise of indigenous think-tanks, researchers and experts are being wilfully ignored; when the existing indigenous capacities for policy research and policy analysis are being bypassed, allowed to rot, and on occasion, dismantled; when parallel institutions and research organizations are being created and financially buttressed by outsiders to influence thinking and research and orient them to particular directions; when all of this is happening, Africa’s research community, institutions and organizations have an historic responsibility to think and

Between 1980 and 1990, CODESRIA's flagship journal, *Africa Development*, did not publish any articles dealing with the impact of structural adjustment on higher education, instead choosing to focus on the broader social and economic dimensions of adjustment. However, by the end of the 1980s the profound effects of these reforms on higher education had become too pressing to ignore. The first signs of change appeared in 1987 in CODESRIA's *Bulletin*, the organisation's newsletter and discussion forum, which published a piece by Mkandawire cautioning that the World Bank called for a reduction in spending on higher education in Africa (Mkandawire 1987). By the following year, in the 1988 General Assembly, Mkandawire used his position as Executive Secretary to draw attention to the disintegration of research infrastructure under structural adjustment:

Libraries are, as a result of the 'Book Hunger', collapsing; means for travel to carry out field work hardly exist and where they do exist, they are linked to some short term consultancy work for government or external agencies. Official institutions charged with the collection of national data – e.g. central statistical offices – are no longer able to keep their data up to date, either because of severe financial and personnel constraints or because of the primary given to the collection of data demanded by donors. (Mkandawire 1988b, 1)

Scholars in CODESRIA would come to identify two discrete rounds in the restructuring of African universities. In the first round, universities were subject to the same funding cuts that other public sectors, such as healthcare, faced. While these funding cuts substantially weakened research infrastructure, the concomitant devaluation of currencies and increasing inflation meant that the purchasing power of salaries declined and many academics were forced into survivalist mode. The combination of these factors, CODESRIA scholars argued, eroded the material basis for African intellectual communities (Sawyer 1997; Sall 2003; Zeleza 2003; Olukoshi 2006).

The World Bank then conducted a second, more penetrating round of programmes, which aimed to reform the institutional structure of African universities. This round was ostensibly intended to help rebuild African universities. Officials at the World Bank had initially argued that

act strategically to encourage policy-oriented research and enhance the chances for its utilization by governments, the business community and civil society as a whole as well as to loosen the stranglehold of outsiders on research and minimize their influence on policy making.”

the private rates of return to higher education were low relative to primary schooling; African countries should therefore scrap local universities and outsource experts from richer countries or train graduates overseas (Psacharopoulos 1982, 1988; World Bank 1988). But as Mamdani observes, when the World Bank proposed this at “a meeting with African vice-chancellors in Harare in 1986 ... [it recognised] that its call for a closure of universities was politically unsustainable; the Bank subsequently modified its agenda, calling for universities to be trimmed and restructured to produce only those skills which the market demands.” (Mamdani 1993, 10)⁴²

In return for earmarked funding then, the World Bank demanded that universities become more efficient.⁴³ This conceptualisation of efficiency typically included a reduction in staff and the demand that universities begin to source revenue from extra-state actors, through tuition fees, university businesses and consultancies.⁴⁴ One corollary of this was that universities were compelled to close down unprofitable courses and implement new courses that had greater market value. Furthermore, universities were only to purchase equipment from World Bank approved sources, such as the British Overseas Development Agency, while they would only be allowed to purchase books and journals sanctioned by the Bank. At the same time, upwards of ten percent of the loan would be used to top-up the salaries of expatriate staff (Bako 1990). In some cases, governments also used this as an opportunity to establish set curricula for all universities (Matlosa 1990; Imam and Mama 1994).

Faced not only with an assault on livelihoods, but with the prospect that the World Bank would gain control over what people could read and teach, many universities became hotbeds of resistance to structural adjustment programmes, and wave after wave of staff and student strikes took place across the continent. In the late 1980s, the *Bulletin* began the important work of

⁴² As noted in chapter two, this report should be treated with some caution, as Mamdani provides no explanation as to how he came by this information – was he present at the meeting, did he hear it from someone who had attended the meeting, or did he extract this comment from the minutes of the meeting? Given the writings of key World Bank staff such as Psacharopoulos (see, for instance, Psacharopoulos 1982), it is nevertheless likely that some officials were of the view that universities were a luxury good that African states could ill-afford.

⁴³ The World Bank’s position paper on African higher education identified the following inefficiencies: “First higher education is now producing relatively too many graduates of programmes of dubious quality and relevance and generating too little new knowledge and direct development support. Second, the quality of these outputs show unmistakable signs in many countries of having deteriorated so much that the fundamental effectiveness of the institutions is also in doubt. Third, the costs of higher education are needlessly high. Fourth, the pattern of financing higher education is socially inequitable and economically inefficient.” (World Bank 1988, 5)

⁴⁴ In particular, the World Bank demanded that “radical measures [be implemented] to improve quality, reduce cost for each student and graduate, constrain output in fields that do not support economic development, and relieve the burden on public sources of financing by increasing the participation of beneficiaries and their families.” (World Bank 1989, 82)

documenting university resistance against structural adjustment, and often published correspondence between university and government actors. In a number of these cases, while students and staff framed their political action as a form of resistance to austerity programmes by international financial institutions, states typically responded as though the strikes were an attack on the authority of the state. At Makerere, for instance, while academics called for “freedom of speech and freedom from hunger” (MUASA 1989), the government called staff strikes for a living wage “unpatriotic” and “criminal” (Government Cabinet of Uganda 1989). Similarly, the government of Lesotho claimed that academic strikes and student protests against structural adjustment verged on treason (Matlosa 1990). The *Bulletin's* work of documenting assaults on academic freedom were therefore important both in raising awareness and breaking the culture of silence and fear in African universities. As the Congolese scholar Nkashama (1991) explained in a letter to CODESRIA:

Do bear in mind, my friends, that nowhere is there any security for us. In the country, special airborne brigades are being parachuted on IPN and campuses with the mandate to ransack and kill. These death squadrons do not spare teachers ... In the face of this horrible nightmare, I have only these poor words to offer: break the wall of silence. Let us talk about our fear and then maybe this will give us the strength to act.

This hardened political environment, Mkandawire argues, reflected the crises of legitimacy that structural adjustment had catalysed in post-independence states:

Confronted with dwindling legitimacy in the eyes of their people and persuaded that foreign capital requires the ‘political will’ to impose unpopular adjustment policies, law and order, and a docile civil society, most African governments have resorted to direct repression. The effects on the social sciences are familiar enough – closure of universities, detentions, prohibition of publications, expulsion from countries, loss of jobs. (Mkandawire 1988b, 1)

In order to meet this perceived need for militarised responses to popular protest, CODESRIA

scholars noted, states typically increased their security budgets and further deprioritised social spending on education and health (Campbell 1989; Bako 1990; Quist 1994). This enhanced the state's capacity for militarised responses to popular uprisings, while further narrowing the economic resources for university staff and students to organise. Thus, budgetary cuts did not only issue from the World Bank, but also often reflected government choices in the trade-off between militarisation and higher education. The militarisation of states therefore acted as both a catalyst and a constraint on democratic organising against structural adjustment across African campuses.

Government repression during this period was but one constraint on academic freedom. Interviewees also framed the erosion of the material basis for intellectual communities as an assault on academic freedom. As Alex Bangirana, a publications officer in CODESRIA commented:

Most of the institutions do not have enough money funded for research so really there is nothing to publish about you know, you cannot publish in ignorance. And the lack of funding of research therefore is actually a limitation on academic freedom to write and report exactly on what's happening. (Bangirana 2015)

More precisely, as Mkandawire argues, the consequence of publishing in ignorance was the emergence of “excessively descriptive” work, that was “no longer anchored in a theoretical framework [and therefore] remains poorly collected or marshalled. Under such conditions intellectual reflection is bound to be hampered by a sense of being engaged in what is an embarrassingly denuded intellectual life.” (1995, 80) The flipside of this, as another scholar in CODESRIA observed, was the penchant for excessively rhetorical work:

Any time you come here for the problem of Africa there are huge demands of problems and no real solution. Africa must do that, Africa must take her destiny – I mean when you listen to that – when a very delicate person like me listens to that, it's terrible. We will never overcome our problems, never. When you listen to all of these beautiful conferences, you become pessimistic ...

Objectively we have to see a way out and secondly it is always the same sentences, the same formula, the same stereotype. (Bahi 2015)

However, funding cuts did not only limit the intellectual resources needed to conduct original empirical research informed by broader scholarly debates; they also led to the rationalisation of staff, forcing scholars to take on teaching loads that were too heavy to allow for meaningful research. As Ibrahim Oanda, the officer overseeing CODESRIA's higher education programme remarked:

And at most of the institutions most of what is happening is now teaching, about ninety percent ... the demand for teaching ... without commensurate funding for intellectual production, training of teachers and all that, it's actually become a huge impediment on academic freedom. Insofar as academic freedom would also mean that people engaged in very high teaching loads are not reporting or are writing from ignorance. (Oanda 2015)

These teaching burdens were exacerbated by World Bank demands that individual departments enter into competition with each other for student fees (rather than student fees accruing to the university as a whole). This meant that academics' livelihoods became dependent on the number of students they could teach, and therefore how many students they could attract to their courses. One of the implications of this was the rapid recruitment of part-time lecturers who were relatively cheaper given their lower qualifications, as well as the significant decline in less lucrative doctoral studies, so that the twin pressures of funding cut-backs and marketization lowered the academic competency of lecturers. In this regard, Ebrima Sall, the Executive Secretary at the time of this study, observed:

There is an acute shortage of qualified academics in most universities ... [they] are under-staffed or are inadequately staffed in the sense that you have a number of universities where you have very few people at the level of professor or even just holding PhDs, and that's very worrisome in the sense that it ends up leading to uncertain results to say the least." (Sall 2015)

At the same time, as several interviewees indicated, sheer over-work narrowed the time and resources that scholars had to forge intellectual connections within the university and between universities. This in turn had profound implications for scholarly production, as Mkandawire explained in his address to CODESRIA's General Assembly in 1988:

The general picture is one of debilitatingly high levels of mortality of journals. The absence of journals hinders the creation of a truly African social science community which is aware of work being carried out by colleagues, cross references its own writing etc. In the absence of awareness of what is going on in the continent, there is enormous amount of spurious originality and one does not always get a sense of being engaged in a cumulative process of understanding through intellectual interaction. (Mkandawire 1988b, 2)

From this perspective, structural adjustment not only damaged the research infrastructure of the continent, but also constrained the epistemic agency of scholars and students, by narrowing their ability to investigate their social contexts and build intellectual communities that would enable cumulative, rather than fragmented, scholarship.

A common theme that emerged across interviews was the extent to which the imposition of these reforms introduced a market logic into public universities. As Sall pointed out, the World Bank's institutional reforms have created a "context driven by market considerations primarily, that's sitting heavily on almost everything – the funding, the values attached to certain types of programmes." (Sall 2015) Indeed, these reforms have subsequently been characterised by CODESRIA scholars as the "marketization" of African universities (Mama 2002; Zeleza 2002a). Mamdani's (2007) detailed study of the World Bank's role at Makerere University illustrates the internal transformation of the university into a site of multiple academic markets, which pitted individual scholars, departments and faculty against each other in competition for scarce resources. In this marketised university, the financial imperatives of complying with the World Bank's demands created economic winners and losers. Departments that did not manage to attract sufficient 'clients' to their courses and sustain an adequate supply of cheap casualised academic labour invariably came under severe financial pressure, and were forced to rationalise

staff and courses. Accordingly, scholars who did not comply with the market dictates of the university were largely unable to survive their institutional environment, so that eventually many of those who remained were those who at least outwardly conformed to the new institutional logic. Moreover, as Pereira notes (2009), the resulting atmosphere of jealous competition was scarcely conducive to forging and sustaining university-wide alliances, and more vulnerable members of the academic community, such as women, were subject to particularly vitriolic attacks.

The fragmentation of marketised universities, Mamdani (2007) argues, was further compounded by the increasingly strong role that donors played in the administration of some universities.⁴⁵ They did so in the first instance by individually patronising and/or setting up their preferred programmes and institutes. Cash-strapped universities were in no position to decline this patronage, particularly given the World Bank's demand that universities source revenues from outside of the public purse. In response, universities began to orientate their administration around the project management of externally sponsored ventures, which in turn gave donors an implicit hand in the administration of universities and their intellectual trajectory. The result was the emergence of multiple centres of power with different intellectual orientations, each patronised by different donors with their own interests and constituencies. As universities became more fragmented and difficult to govern, they were less able to articulate their own needs and goals, and therefore less able to resist external demands, whether from the state, the World Bank or donors. Thus, financial precarity and marketization not only circumscribed individual intellectual freedoms; these factors also constrained universities' institutional autonomy.

Moreover, CODESRIA scholars also emphasised that the increasingly powerful role of donors often led to "intentional and unintentional constraints on research into the social sciences." (Oloka-Onyango 1994, 344) Hirji's (1990) account of donor influence at the University of Dar es Salaam provides the first record of these concerns in the *Bulletin*. In it, he chronicles the way in which scholars and students were increasingly drawn into patron-client relations with donors, where donor patronage contributed to the erosion of institutional norms

⁴⁵ The World Bank explicitly argued for increased donor funding to universities to cushion them from government divestment in higher education: "Regrettably, all such savings from adjustment measures will not be sufficient, in most countries, to cover the substantial resources needed to revitalize and build African education to the extent essential for future development. International aid will remain a critical determinant of the pace of progress of education in the region." (World Bank 1988, 6)

focused on intellectual excellence and open debate. Indeed, this was a common theme across interviews. As Oanda explained:

When structural adjustments programs were being launched in Africa ... a lot of colleagues ... wrote that now the saviours had come. I remember CODESRIA ... first produced work warning Africans, this thing you are embracing is going to be bad ... Those African scholars – in fact most of the people who wrote very juicy stories about the promise of structural adjustment programmes were African scholars themselves who wanted to be taken away from their universities to work in consultancies that had been established by various funding agencies to be a moral and an intellectual justification for structural adjustments programs – and you think one of the most embarrassing things is that the works they produced supporting structural adjustment programs still exists. But nobody wants to quote them now because structural adjustments failed. (Oanda 2015)

This became a strong preoccupation in CODESRIA. The first internal evaluation that it commissioned, for instance, included a survey of 55 participants in CODESRIA's activities which sought to elicit their views on the effects of consultancies. The authors found that:

Many of the laureates and other academics view consultancies, which are often rather lucrative, as a dysfunctional development that has lured scholars away from fundamental research and indeed from the University itself. A large part of this concern grows out of the importance CODESRIA's membership and supporters attach to the need for Africans to define their own research priorities and to have complete intellectual freedom with respect to research findings and recommendations. (Challenor and Gana 1996, 38–39)

Reflecting on the effects of donor patronage, Mafeje observes, “It is hard, if not impossible, to combine revolutionary zeal with personal corruption.” (1990b, 176) Moreover, he adds, “donors, who are invariably politically and ideologically motivated, are hostile to or at best suspicious of

independent-minded African scholars and often accuse them of ‘ideological bias’ ... Under these conditions the African is still being denied the right to become a truly universal person. This is made possible by the internal weakness of his/her world, namely, the unresolved national question.” (1990b, 177) From this perspective, the diminution of African states’ autonomy contributed to the formation of donor-led patron-client relations, which in turn impeded the development of rigorous scholarship and intellectual dissent amongst African scholars.

This sociological approach to thinking about the academic project in turn led CODESRIA scholars to consider the question of how African intellectual communities would reproduce themselves in the aftermath of adjustment. The sustained material and intellectual assault on the academic project had contributed not only towards the consultancy syndrome, but also to a full-scale flight of senior academics from the continent. Many of these academics had been part of the “cold-war induced 'airlifts' of African students especially to the United States” (Mkandawire 1995, 75). Unlike the newer generations of academics, they therefore had the networks and institutional access to enable them to leave for the United States and Europe. Reflecting on his experiences as a member of this generation, Mamdani wrote at the time, “Like birds who cross oceans when the weather turns adverse, we had little depth and grounding, but maximum reach and mobility. So that, when the going rough, we got going – across borders.” (Mamdani 1993, 15) During this period, nearly 100,000 African scholars left the continent for the global North, particularly the United States; as a consequence, African immigrants now constitute the most well-educated demographic in America (Zezeza 2009).⁴⁶ In some cases, scholars from Anglophone countries could only find work in the “Bantustan” universities of apartheid South Africa, in what Bako (1990) describes as a “cruel irony”. Meanwhile, World Bank policy advocated the use of experts from North America and Western Europe in place of investment in African higher education. Zezeza notes that this “influx of expatriates lowered the short-term costs of neglecting African universities and the concomitant emigration of skilled labor, including academics. By the late 1990s, there were an estimated 100,000 expatriates working in Africa – at a cost of \$4 billion – almost equal to the number of skilled Africans who had left. (Zezeza 2009, 116) One of the effects of this flight of scholars from their universities, Mkandawire (1995) argues, was a dislocation in institutional memory and the transmission of

⁴⁶ Zezeza cites the 2000 U.S. Census, which finds that 49% of African immigrants in the United States over the age of twenty-five had a bachelor’s degree or more, as compared to 25.6% for the native-born population and 25.8 percent for the foreign-born population as a whole. (Zezeza 2009, 132)

knowledge, with the result that the institutional basis for the reproduction of the next generation of scholars was profoundly damaged. Under the combined pressures of the domestic state, international financial institutions and donors, higher education under structural adjustment was often reduced into a “beleaguered academic community fighting for every ounce of respect and resources coming its way.” (Mkandawire 1995, 77)

Thus, in the assessment of CODESRIA’s community, structural adjustment destabilised African universities in three ways. It eroded the material foundations of universities; it narrowed the scope for academic freedom; and it constrained the intergenerational renewal of academic communities. In the writings of CODESRIA scholars, the assault on higher education was not only viewed as a smaller part of the broader assault on the economic and political underpinnings of African societies. More profoundly, it was seen as dismantling the capacity for informed public deliberation, which was central to the autonomous and democratic functioning of a society. These ideas would underpin CODESRIA’s organisational and intellectual efforts to defend the academic project under structural adjustment.

5.2. CODESRIA’s defence of the academic project

In light of this analysis of structural adjustment, CODESRIA’s community began to conceptualise its defence of the academic project as part of broader social struggles for sovereignty and democracy. This defence took on two interrelated forms: an intellectual defence and an organisational defence. Its intellectual defence assumed the shape of intense introspection on the nature of the academic project. This collective introspection resulted in a distinctive conceptualisation of academic freedom and provided new ways of thinking about the social dimensions of research, which contributed to a significant shift in CODESRIA’s intellectual trajectory. These reflections in turn shaped its organisational defence of the academic project. During this period, the Council initiated an academic freedom project; it set up training and support programmes for young researchers; and it dramatically expanded research funding and publications. The aim of these projects was to provide the institutional and material conditions necessary for free thought, and to contribute to the intergenerational survival of the academic community. As a consequence of these organisational and intellectual measures, the evidence

indicates that CODESRIA attracted a large number of young scholars and grew substantially in both size and influence.

CODESRIA's 1988 General Assembly signalled the beginning of its collective introspection on the nature of the academic project. The papers at the General Assembly focused largely on analysing the collapse of universities within the broader disintegration of the political and economic underpinnings of African societies (Hountondji 1988; Nyong'o 1988; Mkandawire 1988b; Imam 1988). However, the Dakar Declaration emanating from the General Assembly moves beyond critique to suggest a positive conceptualisation of the academic project, in which its defence forms part of broader social struggles for democracy and emancipation:

The task of resolving the African crisis imposes a specific responsibility on the African social science community. To meet this responsibility it must take stock of its own shortcomings and pool its energies for concerted action ... the research process must not only seek to achieve self-reliance within the international social science community ... but should also focus on the issues and relations that are of concern to the vast majority of the toiling peoples of Africa as they engage in their daily struggle for existence. These struggles must be for the basis for scientific conceptualisation, and the focus of scientific analysis. This re-orientation of research will serve to free the social scientific progress from extraversion, elitism, neglect of the environment and gender bias. It will also serve to put social science knowledge at the service of the vast majority of the African population, especially the movements for the democratization of the continent and the full emancipation of its people. ('Dakar Declaration' 1988)

What is of particular interest is the way in which the Dakar Declaration indicates a new kind of consensus within CODESRIA, regarding not only the negative impacts of adjustment programmes, but also the need for African scholars to respond by re-orientating the academic project to one of service, in which popular struggles for emancipation and democracy provide the normative underpinnings of African scholarship. We can see then the ways in which the Dakar Declaration reflects the ideas that emerged in intellectuals' writings on the impacts of structural

adjustment, particularly the emphasis on the potential of the academic project to contribute to social flourishing.

The following year, CODESRIA announced the Kampala Symposium on Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility. This was significant, for it was the first pan-African forum on the nature of the academic project in Africa. The call for papers framed the conference in explicitly sociological terms, describing it as an opportunity “to direct ... attention to the nature of the research environment on the continent, that is, to reflect on the social context of research as an intellectual activity.” (1989, 1) In this regard, the organisers wrote, reflections should “critically examine the roles of the various actors in the social sciences – the state, researchers, donors, the civil society etc.” (1989, 1) Indeed, members from all of these groups were invited to the conference. The conference resulted in the Kampala Declaration on Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility, which moves beyond the notion of professional academics to include intellectuals in general, and locates intellectual communities within a broader social context. The preamble begins:

African people are responding to these intolerable conditions by intensifying their struggles for democracy and human rights. The struggle for intellectual freedom is an integral part of the struggle of our people for human rights. Just as popular forces are waging a struggle for democracy and human rights, so are African academics. Intellectuals, students and other members of the intelligentsia are deeply involved in their own struggles for intellectual and academic freedom.” (‘The Kampala Declaration on Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility’ 1994)

Following on from the Dakar Declaration, the Kampala Declaration explicitly links intellectual freedom and social responsibility in its title, and suggests that intellectual freedom is necessary for intellectuals to fulfil their responsibilities to society. In this regard, Article 22 stipulates: “The intellectual community has the responsibility to struggle for and participate in the struggle of the popular forces for their rights and emancipation.” The Kampala Declaration further specifies the economic and political conditions required for the exercise of social responsibility, including the right to participate in the democratic governance of universities, the right to freedom of

movement and security of tenure, and the state's responsibility to provide sufficient funding to higher education institutions. The Kampala Declaration therefore departs in a number of ways from international declarations of academic freedom from this time, such as the Lima Declaration (World University Service 1990). Unlike the Kampala Declaration, the Lima Declaration focuses narrowly on academics rather than intellectuals more generally. It sets out academic freedom as an element of universal human rights; in doing so, however, it abstracts the realisation of the right to academic freedom from the political and economic struggles of the academic community. Thus, it makes no reference to the need for government funding to sustain the material conditions for academic freedom, nor does it make reference to the need for democratic procedures within the university. Furthermore, while it contains a clause noting the responsibility of academics to address the problems of society, the analytical relation between the concepts of responsibility and academic freedom is not made explicit. Finally, while the Lima Declaration provides a negative definition of freedom in terms of the absence of restraint, the Kampala Declaration provides a positive definition of freedom in terms of the capacity to serve society.⁴⁷

One can see then the emergence of a distinctive and new conceptualisation of academic freedom as a component of a broader class of intellectual freedoms grounded in the social responsibilities of intellectuals. This is significant, for the Kampala Declaration represents the fruits of the first sustained reflections on the academic project by a pan-African community, and it therefore continues to function as the main reference point for conceptualising academic freedom and investigating its breaches on the continent (see, for instance, Tamale 2000; Du Toit 2007; Appiagyei-Atua, Beiter, and Karran 2015). Moreover, as Zeleza (2003, 155) notes, CODESRIA's "preoccupation with the productivity of connections between academic freedom and social responsibility" has also influenced global debates on academic freedom, primarily through UNESCO, which devoted its 1998 World Conference on Higher Education to this topic (UNESCO 1998).

However, the relationship between intellectual freedom and social responsibility is not

⁴⁷ The closest intellectual precursor to the Kampala Declaration I could find was John Dewey's defence of academic freedom: "[Academics] ask for no social immunities or privileges for themselves. They will be content, for their own protection, with any system which protects the relation of the modern university to the public as a whole." (Dewey 1915, 408) However, while Dewey grounds academic freedom in social accountability, he conceptualises academic freedom in negative terms as freedom from interference. In contrast, the Kampala declaration has a positive conceptualisation in terms of freedom to serve.

uncomplicated or uncontested, and its conceptualisation in the *Kampala Declaration* was an outcome of heated debates at the conference, many of which were published in a more polished form in *Academic Freedom in Africa*, edited by Diouf and Mamdani (1994). While the majority of contributors relate the lack of freedom in the academic community to its lack of social relevance, they seek to demonstrate that the internal dynamics of universities played an important role in shaping the limits and possibilities of the social role of academics, and by implication, their freedoms. In doing so, they periodise African universities and craft the concept of the *development university*. This term arose from the fact that most African universities were not set up under colonial rule; instead, as we saw in the conceptual framework, they were largely set up in the post-independence period by nationalist governments with strong developmental agendas.⁴⁸ These development universities, Mamdani argues, were established within the narrow confines of a state logic, with the aim of providing “a training ground for personnel that would manage the process of ‘development.’” (1994a, 2) In this respect, different contributors emphasise different elements in the development university and the ways in which this shaped the academic community’s social role, and by implication, its freedoms. Hagan (1994) stresses that, as an incubator of an elite, the development university posed a political threat to the state, so that university protests against structural adjustment were interpreted as an attack on the state, which then responded with heightened hostility and violence. In contrast, for Ake (1994) and Ki-Zerbo (1994), the state’s narrow emphasis on relevance to an elite project undercut the development university’s broader social relevance, and impeded the formation of broader alliances against structural adjustment. And the contributions of Mafeje (1994a), and Imam and Mama (1994) emphasise a third strand: that the anti-democratic ethos of the university, and society more broadly, limited the space for critical argument and dissent necessary for developing more creative and effective responses to structural adjustment. Nevertheless, all contributions point to the ways in which structural adjustment deepened the tensions and contradictions within the development university. As Mamdani points out, “The Bank’s demand for academic relevance ... was a return to the developmental logic of the independent state, but without its ambition or vision.” (1994a, 3) In effect then, these analyses excavate the way in which the crisis of higher education was not only an outcome of external interventions from the

⁴⁸ For instance, as Mamdani observes, in colonial Nigeria there was one university with a thousand students; by 1990, Nigeria had 31 universities with 141,000 students (1994a, 2).

World Bank, donor agencies, and increasingly authoritarian states. Rather, it reflected the interplay between these actors and the internal dynamics of the development university.

This conceptualisation of the development university marked significant changes in CODESRIA's intellectual trajectory. In the first place, it brought to the fore the historical transformation of African universities under structural adjustment. By doing so, it created conceptual space for investigating the ways in which Africans might themselves transform universities into more democratic and socially accountable institutions, and thereby helped precipitate a new body of literature on the university as a potential public sphere and the ways in which inequalities diminish its publicness (see, for instance, Mamdani 1994b; Zeleza 2002b; Mama 2008). Second, the conceptualisation of the development university brought into sharp relief the limitations and problems of research that was overly statist and vanguardist in orientation. This had become a central preoccupation in CODESRIA's community, and by the early 1990s a decision was made to broaden its mandate beyond policy-relevant research to encompass social actors outside of the state. Thus, Bujra stresses, "today CODESRIA no longer claims that its research output is aimed at influencing government policies ... but rather that its target is to influence the wider society (civil society), through the social science community; and in an ideal democratic society, civil society would in turn affect the policies of the government." (Bujra 1994, 150) Since CODESRIA no longer focused solely on producing policy-relevant research, it became free to explore research themes that were relevant to other social actors, and it therefore initiated a series of major projects on social movements and democracy on the continent.

This shift was accompanied by an important change in language. Prior to this, all of CODESRIA's research projects were tied to the concept of 'development', such as 'education and development' or 'gender and development'. But by the 1988 General Assembly, a decision was made to drop the language of development from its research projects as "such a formulation cast research themes within a rigid developmentalist mould" (CODESRIA 1997a, 25). Doing so signalled that the Council would no longer be focused exclusively on critiquing development paradigms or elaborating alternatives. There would be space for other modes of research and other foci. This is evident in the publishing patterns of *Africa Development*; while topics related to development occupied the lion's share of journal articles, after 1990 the proportion of articles covering developmental topics decreased dramatically (see Figure 4 in the preceding section). In

this period, CODESRIA began a process of expanding its disciplinary focus beyond the political economy approach discussed in the previous chapter to include other topics such as intellectual history (see, for instance, Mkandawire 2005b; Jeppie and Diagne 2008; Sharawy 2014; Kane 2016; Diagne 2016a). This was arguably an important expansion of intellectual imagination. As Zeleza notes, the preoccupation with development in African scholarship largely reflected the concerns of “nationalists who prayed at the altar of development” as well as the interests of former colonial powers, for whom “development served as a handy substitute for the tattered rhetoric of civilization discredited by the horrendous barbarism of World War II, and as a plea against nationalist charges of colonial exploitation.” (Zeleza 2009, 126) As a consequence, the language of development was at least in part an outcome of the ways in which the academy was influenced by external political actors. This locked critical African scholars into what Zeleza (2009, 124) calls a deconstructionist tradition, which compelled them to respond to the empirical distortions of an externally-set intellectual agenda. Moving away from a central focus on development did not preclude such critique; however, as the projects on social movements and democracy illustrate, it created space for scholars to respond to the internal dynamics of African societies and subject these responses to critique and debate within CODESRIA’s community.

This intellectual work also underwrote important organisational changes that CODESRIA undertook during this period. In the first place, the Kampala Symposium was characterised by consensus on the need for organisational responses to the state’s attack on African universities, which had intensified under structural adjustment. Prior to this, Bujra remarks, “For many years, CODESRIA could do very little about [the] breach of academic freedom ... CODESRIA's reaction was often to organize a letter of appeal or protest to the authorities on behalf of the researchers.” (Bujra 1994, 147) The Kampala Symposium therefore helped galvanise a more strategic and coherent response by catalysing the institutionalisation of a programme on academic freedom. Participants in the Symposium made several concrete organisational commitments to organise in defence of academic freedom. The first was a commitment to set up a pan-African organisation, whose terms of reference would be “to monitor, document and disseminate information on abuses of academic freedom, repression, harassment, intimidation and detention of intellectuals.” (‘Recommendations and Resolutions’ 1991, 8) The second was a commitment for universities and research institutes to provide “sanctuary to exiled scholars” and “develop solidarity and supportive networks to defend the

collective interests of the intellectual community.” (1991, 8) The third was a commitment to lesson dependence on donors and develop a code of conduct that would be mutually binding between donors and researchers. While it seems that this pan-African organisation was initially intended to operate as an independent entity, it eventually became a sub-programme within CODESRIA. It launched in 1993 and by 1996 the programme had set up a small fund to provide temporary financial relief to scholars dismissed from their posts and those who had fled their countries and were living as refugees (CODESRIA 1997b, 46). It established a legal defence fund to assist scholars in legal challenges to violations of academic freedom. It began to systematically monitor cases of violations of academic freedom and publish this in its *Annual Report on the State of Academic Freedom in Africa*. And it attempted to develop relationships with civil society organisations in order to “contribute to the wider human rights movement ... sweeping the continent.” (Bujra 1994, 147) CODESRIA was perhaps uniquely positioned to fulfil these organisational commitments from the Kampala Symposium because it was the only pan-African research institution to enjoy diplomatic status, which the government of Senegal had accorded it in 1973. As Mkandawire observes in his address to the 1992 General Assembly:

Diplomatic immunity gave CODESRIA an intellectual immunity that is rare in an Africa in which dictatorships, political repression and censorship were the norms ... It meant that CODESRIA could interact with the considerable intellectual community of Senegal without fear that this might somehow offend the host country. It meant that CODESRIA could publish all its scholarly publications without fear of censorship. It meant that CODESRIA could hold conferences in Senegal on any theme. It meant that delegates to CODESRIA’s conferences could enter Senegal without any fear of interference by Senegalese authorities. It also meant greater credibility ... since CODESRIA was not seen to be beholden to the host country’s political authorities. (Mkandawire 1993, 14)

Many interviewees emphasised the extent to which CODESRIA’s academic freedom programme supported intellectuals across the continent to defend scholars against states that had become increasingly authoritarian under structural adjustment. Drawing on his own experiences, Raufu

Mustapha explained how the programme supported local initiatives to defend academic freedom:

I was the chairman of ... the committee on human rights and academic freedom of the trade union of academics at [Ahmadu Bello] university. That union had a human rights and academic freedom committee. And the agenda we pursued was essentially two. One to insist on professional conduct within the academia – you know, senior colleagues plagiarising the work of junior colleagues or people relating in particular to the female colleagues and females students. All of these things we put it squarely on the agenda. That's one. The second one was to defend ourselves against the state, and we went to CODESRIA, we got the resources and organised our committee ... You know, the regime wanted to sack them, isolate them and then break their spirits. And we basically refused. Through CODESRIA we were able to get some resources to give to them to keep body and soul together. We made sure we mobilised colleagues in their institutions, and at every point when we had some complaint against the state, like salary or whatever, we made sure we smuggled them into the agenda. And in the end the state had to reabsorb them back into the university system. So in that sense CODESRIA was quite instrumental in helping us ride some of the worst excesses of structural adjustment and the authoritarianism that went with it. (Mustapha 2015)

It is important to note here that there is little evidence that CODESRIA implemented the commitment to lesson dependency on donor funding and formulate a code of conduct between donors and researchers.⁴⁹ I return to this theme in the next section.

However, as discussed, CODESRIA's community did not only locate the assault on academic freedom in relation to state aggression. Scholars also saw the erosion of the material foundations of universities as an attack on academic freedom. While this affected all members of the academic community, CODESRIA argued that young scholars were the most severely impacted, and this compromised the ability of African universities to ensure intergenerational

⁴⁹ With regard to the code of conduct between donors and researchers, I could find no subsequent reference to this idea in the *Bulletin* or in CODESRIA's organisational documents, including its four-year research agendas, strategic plans, or internal evaluations.

renewal and thereby sustain the epistemic communities that are critical to building cumulative scholarship. When it launched the Programme of Grants for Thesis Writing in 1988 it therefore conceptualised postgraduate students and emerging scholars not only as those in need of support, but also as the authors of original research with the potential to make significant contributions to African scholarship and contribute to the lifeblood of CODESRIA's intellectual community:

In 1988, CODESRIA broadened its scope of activities in support of researchers by initiating training ... and mobilisation of *the much underutilised research inputs of graduate students*. In the past, CODESRIA's efforts were limited to providing services to social scientists who are already in the profession. The ... Programme of Grants for Thesis Writing is principally aimed at tapping a very important source of original research – research by graduate students ... Even more severely starved of grants [than established scholars] are graduate students who are about to embark on thesis writing. For them there are hardly any grants which would permit them to carry out original field research, acquire reading material or utilise such research technology as computers. As a result, graduate research is confined to compilation of papers from secondary materials ... *The outcome of all this has been the scarcity of original empirical work and consequently weak efforts at synthesis*. (Editorial 1988, 1, emphasis added)

The Programme of Grants for Thesis Writing has been a substantial one. Between 1987 and 2009, CODESRIA sponsored the successful completion of just over one thousand doctoral and masters theses.

This conceptualisation of young scholars as an epistemic resource was carried over into CODESRIA's training programmes. In the context of the mass exodus of established scholars to western countries and to consultancies, the Council began to supplement its financial support for young scholars with a programme of intellectual support through general methodological workshops and specialised intensive training institutes. These institutes were intended "to produce a critical mass of researchers competent in theory, fieldwork and comparative analysis" in a given thematic area (CODESRIA 1997b, 14). In 1992, the Council launched its Summer

Institute on Democratic Governance, and in 1994 it launched the Gender Institute. These two institutes have remained the bedrock of CODESRIA's subject-specific training programme, but have been complemented by less regular institutes, such as the Institute on Arts and Humanities and the South-South Institute. These institutes have been used to develop state of the art thinking on social phenomena. In this respect, Aminata Diaw, the officer in charge of CODESRIA's training programme, explained the genesis of the Governance Institute:

Because this was the beginning of democratization in Africa and CODESRIA has set up this institute to try to better understand what is going on in the continent. And so it was not just a matter of crisis or not, it was CODESRIA trying to play its own role and trying to understand what is going on through all these national conferences and democracy and talking about election and that process etcetera. So this is how this institute was born. (Diaw 2015)

The institutes have therefore not only provided training to emerging scholars, but have also been a critical source of original scholarship in the organisation and resulted in book series and journal articles. At the same time, the institutes have catalysed the institutionalisation of systematic bibliographical support. For each institute, CODICE, the Council's Documentation and Information Centre, provides thematic bibliographies and reproductions of key articles to participants; these annotated bibliographies are subsequently made publicly available in order to alert other African scholars about critical research in a given field, and thereby facilitate the creation of cumulative scholarship. As Bujra explains, "CODICE played an active role during the 'book hunger' of the 1980s, in responding to researcher's requests for documents, especially for journal articles, and documents/reports published by international and inter-governmental organizations, which were inaccessible to African researchers and their institutes." (Bujra 1994, 147) Thus, one can see how the combination of research funding and intellectual support for young scholars was designed to help in the intergenerational reproduction of the academic community.

In this respect, one of the features that stood out most clearly in interviews was the way in which the tone of interviewees often changed when discussing these programmes. Many scholars spoke of the period of structural adjustment in terms that oscillated between the

combative and the distressed, but when they turned to CODESRIA's support for young scholars, the emotional range shifted to that of warmth and pride. Consider, for instance, Mkandawire's recollections of these programmes, which he helped craft in his capacity as Executive Secretary:

And I'm amazed when I travel around, I run into people who tell me, oh you made me stay in academia. I even ran into the owner of the Mail and Guardian [Trevor Ncube], and he came to me and said, thank you very much, you saved my life. We found out he received a small grant, we have this programme, the Small Grants Programme, it's a \$3000 grant for an MA student to write a thesis. They could order books, they'd send us a list of books and we'd get Blackwell's to ship the books. A \$1000 books, a \$1000 for research costs and the rest you get after publication. Over the years, some 3000 people received that grant. It was such an amazing programme. (Mkandawire 2017)

Similarly, Mustapha, who was just embarking on his career during adjustment, remarked:

It's really done well for us in the structural adjustment period. Quite frankly, if it wasn't for CODESRIA, people like me wouldn't have an academic career as such. It was a platform where I [as a young scholar] could engage with my contemporaries, where I could engage with my seniors. I could get some resources to do fieldwork, I could try and publish. (Mustapha 2015)

Commenting on the emotional resonance of CODESRIA for this generation, Jimi Adesina, explained that for many young scholars, CODESRIA became a "home" and a "refuge" (Adesina 2015).

During this period, CODESRIA therefore became a younger and larger organisation. Young scholars were not only drawn by the financial and intellectual support that the organisation offered, they were also attracted by the new intellectual trajectory of the organisation. As Mama put it, for many young scholars, the Kampala Symposium was an "exhilarating" introduction to CODESRIA:

For many of us (myself included) at a much early stage in our scholarly careers, it was an exhilarating discovery of the region's most significant social research network – CODESRIA. It was inspiring enough for me to promptly resign my lectureship at the Institute of Social Studies in the Hague, and return home to Nigeria, intent on joining colleagues in the work of building independent intellectual spaces. (Mama 2011, 3)

It is doubtful that many scholars in the diaspora were similarly inspired to return home, although the Kampala Declaration did help motivate scholars in the United States to form the Committee for Academic Freedom in Africa as a diasporic complement to CODESRIA's programme on academic freedom (Committee for Academic Freedom in Africa: 1991). Nevertheless, Mama's comments indicate the extent to which the organisation's new intellectual trajectory helped draw in a younger, third generation of African scholars. As CODESRIA had anticipated, these scholars became a critical source of intellectual change, and in the next chapter I discuss how young feminists vigorously challenged CODESRIA's community. Young scholars were also the source of important organisational change in CODESRIA, and this is something I return to in the next section.

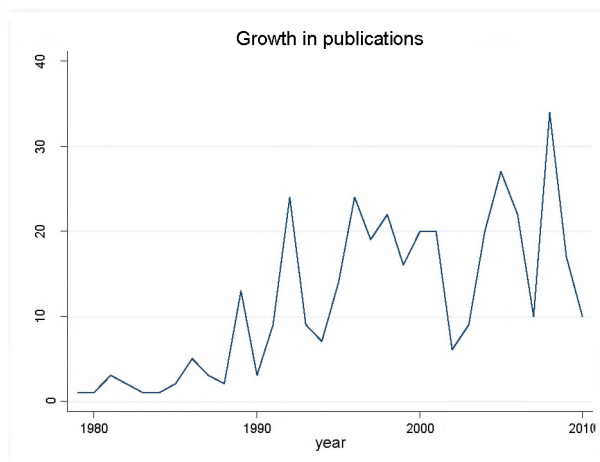
CODESRIA's programmes for young scholars in turn provided an important pipeline to its programmes for established scholars. During this period, the Council dramatically expanded its Multinational and National Working Groups, which constitute the main infrastructure in which established scholars conduct research into the thematic concerns established by the General Assembly. This not only provided much-needed financial support for scholars to conduct new empirical research, but also enabled a cross-disciplinary and regional approach to research in Africa. This was specifically intended to counteract the fragmentation of research and isolation of scholars during this period. As the programme officer in charge of publications, Bangirana explained:

CODESRIA was established to break down the barriers, the linguistic barriers, national boundaries and so you find somebody who operates, for example in Uganda, knows very little about the Congo which is their next door neighbour separated by mountains. Yet because it's English speaking, you find many

scholars in Uganda quoting studies in Nigeria, studies from Ghana, [rather] than scholars across the border in the Congo. So there is no regional understanding of an issue which is solved by the kind of programs run in research ... [The] cooperative researching networks [bring together] scholars in different countries studying different aspects of the same thing across the region. The value in that – you end up with a bilingual book and in the beginning – when resources allowed – all the chapters, all the articles collected from the different countries would be translated so you would get the informed understanding, what is the comparative understanding of what is happening in the region, which you don't get when you deal with scholars who operate in their universities. You get a study on Malawi, and that is what it is yet things that are true in Malawi might be true in Zambia or the lessons you draw from one could be applied to another. But you find that there is no understanding of that. (Bangirana 2015)

As Figure 7 below illustrates, the rapid growth in book publications began towards the end of the 1980s, where the output of multinational and national networks, together with the institutes, contributed substantially to this growth.

Figure 7: Number of books published by CODESRIA over time



The growth in book publications was matched by a corresponding growth in journal publications.

In 1976, CODESRIA published only one journal, *Africa Development*, as well as its newsletter, the *CODESRIA Bulletin*. This state of affairs persisted until the early 1990s, when it began to expand its stable of journals. In 1992 it assumed responsibility for the publication of *Afrika Zamani*, a journal of African history, which had previously been published under the auspices of the Association of African Historians. In 1997, it then started publishing the *African Sociological Review*. Fred Hendricks, the founder of *African Sociological Review*, explains how CODESRIA came to publish the journal:

The *African Sociological Review* had an accidental birth. It was purely by chance that I was discussing social science journals in Africa ... in Dakar with Thandika Mkandawire, the then Executive Secretary of CODESRIA in 1996. In his usual inimitable and eloquent manner, Thandika regaled me about the syndrome afflicting African journals – the introduction of Volume 1 Number 1 with great fanfare, only for it to be the last issue of the journal. It was a major problem of sustainability ... In the euphoria of national reconciliation in South Africa, the two [racially segregated sociology] associations merged and the proposal on the table was that both journals would cease publication to make way for an entirely new journal for the new association. It seemed incongruous to me that in a situation of problematic sustainability of journals on the continent, a decision had actually been taken to end a going scholarly concern. I asked Thandika how he would react to the suggestion of us dropping the South from the *South African Sociological Review* and turning it into a truly continental vehicle for social science thought, discussion and debate. (Hendricks 2008, 1)

In this way then, CODESRIA began to assume responsibility for an increasing number of journals in the context of rapidly deteriorating conditions for research and publication. By 2016, it was responsible for publishing fifteen peer-reviewed journals, covering a wide range of disciplines and topics, from higher education to anthropology, research methods, culture and international affairs.

In considering this period then, one of the remarkable features of CODESRIA's defence

of the academic project is the extent to which it was marked by intense intellectual ferment. CODESRIA's community responded to structural adjustment not only with critique, but by building a positive account of the academic project which sought to understand it on its own terms. This opened up new ways of thinking about the social role of research and helped attract a new generation of young scholars into the organisation. This narrative therefore suggests that structural adjustment signalled a new period of autonomous thought in CODESRIA. Writing at the height of structural adjustment, Mkandawire had argued that young African scholars were backed into a corner and fighting for survival, and were therefore forced to profoundly rethink the academic project in Africa. As a consequence, it is this generation of scholars that "is likely to initiate an autonomous discourse and reflection on Africa – autonomous not in the sense that it is isolated but in the sense that it takes the specificities of the African experience seriously and has a proactive rather than reactive relationship with non-African scholarship." (Mkandawire 1995, 80) In many ways, he added, "much of the early African scholarship operated within the parameters defined by Africanist discourse so that in its critical form it was essentially reactive – 'debunking' colonialist or neo-colonialist interpretations of the African experience, while, in its non-critical form, it tended to assume a mimetic mode that stifled originality. Getting out of both of these stances may be the greatest challenge to the current generation of African social scientists." (1995, 80) But looking back on this period, it seems that CODESRIA as a community, and not just a subset of young scholars, had embarked on a period of autonomous thought.

This intellectual ferment coupled with the rapid expansion in CODESRIA's activities to include extensive training, funding and publication meant that the organisation became increasingly influential on the continent. Such intellectual and organisational growth seems paradoxical when one reflects on how African universities were simultaneously contracting. But as Mustapha explained, CODESRIA's growth was largely driven by an attempt to "put its finger in all the leaking holes of the ship" and thereby to provide succour to "African academics [who] were on their last leg." (Mustapha 2015) He added:

So I think there's a sense in which, but for CODESRIA, many African academics would have gone down with the whole structural adjustment programme – had very little money for research, very little money for travel,

very little avenue to get to know what other people are doing, access to books. All of those became possible in that period because of CODESRIA. (Mustapha 2015)

In this way then, the decline in African universities indirectly contributed to the rapid expansion of CODESRIA. Put differently, he added, it became a refuge for a community that was “threatened [by] structural adjustment ...and CODESRIA realised it could do something to address some of those threats, and then it did exactly that, it mobilised people, it mobilised resources, it rose up to the challenge, and by so doing was able to attract attention, resources, prestige to itself.” This view is echoed in CODESRIA’s recent internal evaluation of its membership and governance: “Much of the functioning of CODESRIA in the 1980s and 1990s was, in effect, making up for the failures of the African university and trying to maintain a scientific community buffeted by dwindling research facilities and an often repressive environment. This explains, in part, the wide range of activities embarked on by the Council.” (Mkandawire, Sawyer, and Sané 2015, 10) In this respect, Bujra regards CODESRIA’s growth as part of a broader trend on the continent, in which the centre of debate moved from state-owned institutions to “NGO institutions at the regional and sub-regional level ... which are 'owned' by the academics themselves.” (Bujra 1994, 136) CODESRIA’s growth therefore can be located in a larger intellectual transition from the public to the commons. However, as the next section demonstrates, this transition engendered a new set of problems for the organisation.

5.3. The impact of structural adjustment on CODESRIA

While CODESRIA responded to the attack on the academic project with considerable intellectual and organisational innovation, it was not immune to the debilitating impacts of structural adjustment. In this section, I show that the organisation remained deeply tethered to African universities and research institutes. Their deterioration therefore undercut the organisation’s capacity to function as a space for informed scholarly debate and shifted control over the organisation away from its constituency towards donors. This constrained both its institutional and intellectual autonomy.

As discussed in the previous section, CODESRIA became a younger and bigger organisation under adjustment. At the same time, however, the institutional profile of its members, and the nature of their involvement in the organisation, also changed. CODESRIA's membership was initially confined to institutes, faculties and professional associations. But by the 1992 General Assembly, this institutional model of membership was put under severe pressure. Sall characterised the changing nature of the Council's relationships with research institutions in this way:

Look it's hard. For the first nineteen years of CODESRIA's history the membership was exclusively institutional, representing research centres, universities, faculties of social sciences, institutes for nineteen years from 1973 to 1992. And so, CODESRIA was to a certain extent, an initiative of the institutions, or representatives of institutions; they owned it and it was their home. And then institutes began going into some difficulties because by the 1992 Assembly a number of them were not able to pay their fees for one reason or the other and so they kept coming and their engagement in terms of paying fees and in terms of participating in the governance of CODESRIA lessened, and that process was accelerated by the arrival of individuals in large numbers and much more dynamic. So in a sense the individual sort of took over the control of CODESRIA and the governance of CODESRIA. (Sall 2015)

The decline in institutional membership was related to the economic crises of the 1980s and governments' divestment from higher education under structural adjustment, which meant that research institutes seldom had sufficient funds to pay their membership fees. As Mkandawire explained: "When we started off the membership fee was important, because CODESRIA was set up as a – the acronym itself is telling – the acronym stood for Council of Directors of Research Institutes – and they paid their own way to the General Assemblies. It wasn't much, but they paid something. But with financial crisis, and the collapse of their currencies, even those who were willing, who had the money, couldn't send it to Dakar. It started happening from the 80s, and in the mid-80s in the assault on the university from the World Bank, that becomes more dramatic." (Mkandawire 2017)

However, the reasons for the decline in institutional membership were not only financial. The decline in institutional membership was also related to the political and intellectual volatility that structural adjustment catalysed within the higher education system. One manifestation of this was the high turnover in the leadership of African research institutes, which contributed to a fracturing of institutional memory, and meant that institutional representatives seldom had in-depth knowledge of CODESRIA's ongoing affairs (Mkandawire, Sawyer, and Sané 2015, 14). Their level of intellectual involvement in the organisation also dropped substantially, perhaps in part because they may have been preoccupied with managing the crises that their own institutions were undergoing. Thus, for instance, in his report as the Executive Secretary, Olukoshi notes that when CODESRIA announced a call on the Conference of Deans of Faculties of Social Sciences and Humanities, they received only twenty abstracts from a pool of over one thousand faculties: "the problem that arose was not so much that deans of faculty were not aware of the initiative – many reported that they saw or received the announcement – as that they did not have the time or the will to propose an abstract. And of those who sent abstracts, only a handful really addressed themselves to the call for applications that was issued; the others went on a trajectory of their own as if the intellectual content of the announcement did not matter." (Olukoshi cited in Mkandawire, Sawyer, and Sané 2015, 15) The decline of universities was accompanied by an acute deterioration of professional associations during this period. As a senior officer in CODESRIA noted:

It's absolutely you know mind-boggling to see that we have very few real social science professional associations in the social sciences on the continent that are working. The African Political Science Association has problems; history associations are not doing well, anthropology associations are not working. (Sall 2015)

In the case of the Association for African Women in Research and Development (AAWORD), the reasons for this decline under structural adjustment were complex. As I discuss in the next chapter, its decline was related to financial crises within universities, political crises within the state and the role of donor organisations. The outcome of these multiple pressures was that organisations not only folded or entered extended periods of stasis, but their members sometimes

also migrated towards CODESRIA, as was the case with AAWORD. The upshot of this was that the institutes, faculties and professional associations which had hitherto constituted its membership typically ceased to contribute financially to the organisation and ceased to participate effectively in matters of governance and defining the Council's intellectual agenda.

While institutional members played an increasingly marginal role in the organisation, young researchers were becoming more involved in the governance of CODESRIA. This was in part because they felt invested in the Council due to the financial and intellectual support that they received. But it may also have been because CODESRIA offered an environment that was characterised by greater intellectual freedom. In this respect, the internal governance evaluation notes that the "hierarchal structures of African universities and the repressive political and academic environment in which they operated tended to push young researchers towards CODESRIA, which, free from those constraints, allowed more space for intellectual initiative. This new constituency of younger scholars did not feel represented by directors of research institutions and the Deans and Heads of university faculties and departments." (Mkandawire, Sawyer, and Sané 2015, 7) Moreover, this third generation of scholars seems to have been characterised by a strong bent towards activism. One scholar from this generation explains:

At the very beginning it was a much more kind of directors and people who were close to the establishment and all of that. But at this particular time we are talking about it begins to attract much more kind of pan-Africanist, activist, feminists – people who had an axe or two to grind with their home governments, partly over education policy, over structural adjustment, over democracy. (Mustapha 2015)

By the time of the 1992 General Assembly, it appears that participants could be roughly divided into two camps: institutional members who were largely uninvolved in the organisation and had little knowledge of its workings, and younger, activist researchers who were increasingly invested in the organisation. The consequence of this was that younger researchers were able to push successfully for amendments to the Charter to enable individual membership in the organisation, such that individual members began to dominate the organisation (Mkandawire, Sawyer, and Sané 2015, 13). This hybrid model of membership has complicated the governance

structure of the Council, since the votes of individual members have the same weight as those of institutional members. Although internal reviews have periodically addressed this issue over the last two decades, the Council has as of yet been unable to resolve the issue (Challenor and Gana 1996; Mkandawire, Sawyer, and Sané 2015).

Moreover, the changing nature of members' financial contributions affected the Council's financial model. Prior to structural adjustment, interviewees indicated that institutional members contributed a small, but significant portion of the Council's income. As Moyo explained:

So in that period, 1975 or 1976, it was a small office. By 1978 or 1979 they started to convince the Scandinavians – Sweden and Norway – to give money. Obviously the British or the Americans were not involved or interested. [Funding] was internal, and there was not a lot of money. (Moyo 2016)

However, under structural adjustment, income from membership decreased to almost negligible levels, since neither institutional nor individual members typically had the financial resources to pay their dues. Commenting on the ongoing non-payment of fees by institutional members, Mambinta Sarr, a financial officer in the organisation noted:

In regard to finance, cash contribution, I don't think we've ever had anything. I think the perspective of people from outside as well is that CODESRIA has a lot of money, and therefore doesn't need. So it's always them coming to ask what CODESRIA can contribute rather than the reverse. So I think that's one of the problems that we have. (Sarr 2015)

Indeed, when the internal evaluators of CODESRIA conducted a survey of scholars in 1996, the authors were dismayed to find the following:

[S]everal respondents to the survey stated they do not recall ever having been asked to pay dues. Many did not even know the amount of the membership fee. The annual dues are \$30 for individual members and \$500 for institutional members. It seems that the one time dues payment becomes an important issue

occurs at the triennial General Assembly when only paid members have the right to vote. In June 1995, one month prior to the 8th General Assembly, only two institutional members had paid their membership dues. Currently income from dues accounts for only 1% of CODESRIA's budget. It is particularly noteworthy that there is no reference to membership dues in that section of the 1993-1998 Plan of Activities. (Challenor and Gana 1996, 87)

This was corroborated by my informal conversations with delegates to the 2015 General Assembly. They indicated that they were provided with donor funding to attend the event and also to pay their membership fees.

This discussion provides an indication of the extent to which CODESRIA's reliance on donor funding has grown, such that a number of interviewees characterised this form of funding as "donor dependency." As the Council's annual reports indicate, over the last twenty years, the core funders have been the Scandinavian agencies – the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the Norwegian Development Agency (DORAD), and the Danish Agency for International Development (DANIDA) – which provide upwards of 50% of the Council's income for its core activities – administration, research, training and publications (see, for instance, CODESRIA 2006, 2011, 2014). The Government of Senegal has also offered core support, which it has provided in kind, rather than in cash. As Mambinta Sarr, a financial officer indicated, "The Senegalese government does fund the building – they pay half they rent, that's how it's been for the last forty years, and then we get tax exemptions." (Sarr 2015) In addition to this, CODESRIA has approached a variety of development agencies and philanthropic organisations based in North America and Western Europe for programme funding, such as the Carnegie Foundation, the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, and the Rockefeller Foundation. Unlike core funding, this is tied to specific research projects, which have a defined start and end date.

Interviewees tended to emphasise that CODESRIA's decision to rely on Scandinavian funding for core operations was a strategic one, which aimed at securing the intellectual autonomy of the organisation. As an officer in the Council explained:

Part of it is related to the nature of the donor countries. Some countries are very domineering, whereas the Scandinavian countries are more flexible. Their

funding was intended to help us escape political persecution, and donors were very sensitive to that, to the need to maintain autonomy. So donors have never really been a problem. They understand that for us autonomy is an existential question. If we didn't take it from our political leaders so that people were willing to die or go into exile, why should we take it from donors? (Anonymous CODESRIA officer 2015)

CODESRIA, this officer argued, held intellectual autonomy to be a core value of the organisation, and had therefore rejected and avoided funding from donors that would attempt to sway its intellectual trajectory. Thus, he added, "when it came to voting, we kicked out the donors because they don't get a say in our intellectual agenda. Many of us would rather die than have the World Bank tell us what to do research on." (Anonymous CODESRIA officer 2015) Another senior scholar in the organisation differentiated SIDA from other donors in terms of its unwillingness to cultivate patron-client relationships with Africans. It is worth quoting his comments at length, since they provide an indication of how donor patronage often works, and show how CODESRIA's relationship with SIDA was a deliberate attempt to prevent this from occurring:

[M]y understanding of SIDA is actually that you're talking of international solidarity in the best spirit of the word. I think the Scandinavians felt that Africa's problems will not be solved unless you have African voices. And they went out of their way to make that possible ... And my personal experience is that it's done at the highest level of solidarity and responsibility ... which is different sometimes you know when you deal with the British. There was one project [in Nigeria], we'd just had a return to civil rule, and the government was trying to formulate a new policy in agriculture, and the DFID guy responsible for agriculture said, 'come and work with us to develop a programme to sell to the government.' I said, 'I don't have the time, but I'll be able to create maybe a two-week window and work with them and then some of my colleagues can take over.' He said, 'oh that's fine.' So I went with them to the Ministry of Agriculture. We had all these Nigerian directors in the

Ministry sitting across the table and I was on the DFID side with him. I knew this guy quite well, and I had a sense where the Nigerians were at. And every time he wanted something ... and they showed reluctance, he'd say, 'oh, there's this FAO meeting coming up in Rome. Are any of you going? My office can make it possible.' You know, bribing! I mean, there's a lot of that. I'm not saying all of DFID's work is like that, but there's clearly a lot of that in the work that I see them doing. Now the Scandinavians are far from that. Either my experience of them in Sweden, or watching them in CODESRIA meetings, or even here in what happened between them and CODESRIA officials. So ... it's not the best arrangement to run an organisation like that on donor funds. But quite frankly, if we had to take donor funds, better the Nordic ones. (Mustapha 2015)

Nevertheless, some interviewees argued that, despite the relative intellectual autonomy provided by core funding from Scandinavian donors, this still left scope for subtle forms of attacks on the organisation's intellectual autonomy, particularly with regard to programme funding. As Francine Adade, the programme assistant in the office of the Executive Secretary explained:

You know, each funder for me comes with his own requirements ... We have always tried to respect what they would like us to do in terms of kind of research we are doing. But at the same time, we feel that we should try to address the problems we have in Africa, rather than listening to what the donors would like us to do ... Some donors, you can send in an application for funding research. And they will reply saying that no, we don't have funds for this but we have funds for that. So this is a way to say that if you want to have our funds, please do this research and not this other kind of research you want to do. (Adade 2015)

In this regard, Mamdani reflects, "over the last decade or so [CODESRIA] has been shaped in a more conservative direction, methodologically, by donor pressure. By having things such as methods conferences, and by methods they really mean quantitative methods." (Mamdani 2016)

Moreover, Sall observes, from an administrative standpoint, the uncertainty of donor funding introduces uncertainties in the organisation's intellectual programme:

You never know how long it will be, you never know whether you get it or you don't get it, and you never know how long you'll have it or continue having it. The priorities of donors may change and you never know how those changes can affect you. I'm not talking about anything that can restrict academic freedom or the possibility to do this or that. We keep away from that as CODESRIA. But within those limits we are saying that there a lot of uncertainties. (Sall 2015)

While Sall was reluctant to characterise this form of uncertainty as a constraint on intellectual autonomy, other interviewees interpreted this uncertainty as an impediment to autonomy. For instance, Oanda, who oversees CODESRIA's programme on higher education, noted that the "programme on academic freedom in higher education ... went silent because of funding." (Oanda 2015) He pointed to this example as an indication of the extent to which a substantial investment of resources and time, as well as institution building and institutional memory, can be lost if donor funding for a programme can no longer be secured. Indeed it is unclear from an examination of the organisation's annual reports exactly when the programme closed down or the circumstances of its closure; however, what is clear is that academic freedom is no longer a programmatic focus of the Council, and much of the earlier work that went into building the foundations of the programme seem to have been abandoned – for instance, the Council no longer seems to track violations of academic freedom or publish this regularly in an annual report. In this sense, uncertainty in donor funding can undermine the organisation's intellectual autonomy by eroding its institutional investments in particular intellectual programmes. These are not new observations. Ake's presidential address to the organisation in 1988 provides one of the earliest records of these concerns:

We have been feeling quite good about CODESRIA's survival and robustness amidst the general institutional decay around us. But is it not the case that the whole thing rests on shaky foundations or no foundations at all? Any time the

programme officers at Ford Foundation, SAREC or IDRC say no to our funding request, catastrophe looms. What does this mean for our research agenda? What does this mean for our commitment against imperialism or even our struggle for a fairer share of the world's resources? Can we reduce our dependence? Has it already made nonsense of our mission and the values we claim to be maximising? Is the whole thing an illusion or even a delusion? Or is there some space for manoeuvre? (Ake 1988, 6)

In the main, interviewees suggested that CODESRIA had attempted to create this space for manoeuvre by carefully choosing which donor organisations to work with. In doing so, the Council seems to have successfully avoided those donors that engage in more crass forms of bribery and intellectual interference. Nevertheless, several interviewees indicated that the fact of donor dependency has placed a limit on how much space there has been for manoeuvre, and in some cases this seems to have unavoidably, albeit subtly, circumscribed the organisation's intellectual autonomy.

Donor dependency appears to have had a more marked impact on the organisation's internal accountability structures. In theory, the General Assembly elects the Executive Committee, which then selects the Executive Secretariat to run the organisation. The Executive Committee and Executive Secretariat are therefore in principle accountable to the General Assembly. However, as the recent governance review explains, since the crises of structural adjustment, the Secretariat has become "relatively stronger and increasingly less dependent on the resources of its member institutions." (Mkandawire, Sawyer, and Sané 2015, 7) This is because one of the core functions of the Secretariat is to apply for and manage donor funds. Since the General Assembly contributes negligible funds to the organisation in the form of membership fees, this puts the Secretariat in a powerful financial position. Moreover, the collapse in higher education funding has meant that individual scholars often need money from CODESRIA to attend the General Assembly and to conduct research. The result is that accountability is somewhat inverted: while the Secretariat is theoretically accountable to the General Assembly, in practice the General Assembly is, to some extent, accountable to the Secretariat. As one officer in CODESRIA explained:

The challenge is that the people who come to the General Assembly are decided between the Secretariat and the Scientific Committee. The Scientific Committee reviews the abstract. But the Secretariat receives the abstracts, so if there's someone I think is a troublesome scholar, I can throw out the abstract so it never gets to the Scientific Committee. The problem goes back to the universities, since CODESRIA has to pay for most of the people that you saw there [at the General Assembly]. So that limits the number of people who can come, and it also gives the Secretariat a huge amount of influence. The Scientific Committee does double-blind reviews, but the Secretariat invites people without submitting abstracts as well, and that's not a blind review. (CODESRIA officer 2015)

In essence then, since the Secretariat controls the purse strings: it can decide which individuals are funded to attend the General Assembly, and therefore, who can vote in the Executive Committee and who is eligible to hold office. The CODESRIA officer further pointed to the de facto power that the Secretariat wields over the Executive Committee:

Most of the resource mobilisation is done by the Secretariat. The relationship between the Secretariat and the Executive Committee also depends on the personalities and the personal relationships. They are our bosses, it's very clear that they should tell us what to do in the Charter. We cannot have a work proposal without their blessings. But the fact that you are less powerful in law doesn't mean you don't have a lot of other weapons. If someone is very troublesome you can make sure they don't attend meetings, by not providing tickets and so on. There are possibilities. (CODESRIA officer 2015)

Observing this relationship from the outside, as an ordinary member of CODESRIA, one scholar remarks: "You know the essence of power is hidden. You have what power shows. It's not a decision. I mean I don't believe in democratic participation [in CODESRIA]; that's profoundly untrue." He goes on to explain:

It's a very strange thing. CODESRIA is a very strange thing ... Because you can also see that CODESRIA has a field [in a Bourdieusian sense] ... You have those who are the periphery of the field and those who regulate the field and they try to be influential ... The Executive Committee will be in charge of the recruitment of the new Secretary General ... if he knows above the functioning of CODESRIA, he will try to patrimonialise from the start, to control the Executive Committee. It's very simple. Missions, per diems, luxury hotels like this and you just can talk. That's the logic of power. Science is not inside. (Bahi 2015)

Ake had already raised concerns about the financial constraints on internal accountability in 1988:

CODESRIA has a problem of accountability ... I have serious doubts as to whether the Executive Secretariat and the Executive Committee are really accountable to the African Social Science Community. You may wish to say that the problem does not arise because the Executive Committee answers to the General Assembly. But I don't think so, because the General Assembly is determined by whoever the Executive Committee decides to invite and to send tickets. Unless there are constituents who make up the General Assembly as of right, independently of the Executive Committee, there is in my mind no accountability. The Executive Committee was working on this direction of making the Social Science organizations such as AAPS [the African Association of Political Science], AAWORD [the Association of African Women for Research and Development], the permanent constituency of CODESRIA, but this move has been inconclusive and the problem remains. (Ake 1988, 5)

However, he also locates the problem within the general membership of CODESRIA, arguing that, "There is a sense in which the Social Science Community is itself a problem to accountability. As far as I can see, it does not think and act as though it owns CODESRIA. It still

regards CODESRIA as some body out there with which it can identify, but in something akin to a client-patron relationship. This must change. You own CODESRIA, any money, facility or support given to CODESRIA is given to you. Get yourselves together and exercise your rights.” (Ake 1988, 5)

In this respect, the broader community of CODESRIA has in fact organised on several occasions to hold the Secretariat to account. As discussed in the previous chapter, a clear example of this was the community’s concern over financial mismanagement under Mbembe’s tenure. Commenting on this period, Mustapha explained this dynamic in terms of an “informal sense of whether [the Secretariat] is connected or not connected to the community.” (Mustapha 2015) The ties of trust and loyalty, he argued, are important to maintaining the cohesiveness of the organisation. If members from the community feel “detached” from the Executive Secretariat, then they become amenable to suggestions to take decisions against the Secretariat, despite its clout. “In that sense,” he added, “heuristically it’s accountable to the community, and if somebody steps too far out of kilter with the basic instinct of that community, or substantial sections of it, I think you will hear a grumble, possibly even some mobilisation. But then in the kind of everyday, you have a powerful Secretariat, which can act or not act depending on what their interests are.” (Mustapha 2015)

This narrative suggests that there is a marked difference between the formal and the informal rules of governance in CODESRIA. The formal rules of the organisation enshrine democracy and internal accountability. Informally, however, the economic situation of African universities and scholars has impeded the full realisation of these principles, by reorienting the Secretariat’s accountability to donors over the broader community in the day to day running of the organisation. It is important to note that the community is still capable of mobilising to engage in collective action to hold the Secretariat to account in those situations where it steps “too far out of kilter with the basic instinct” of the community. Nevertheless, it seems that donor dependency and the decline in higher education funding have weakened formal governance mechanisms for internal accountability.

This diminished internal accountability is reflected in who has access to the Council’s financial data. When asked, not a single interviewee from the general membership could confirm that they had seen the organisation’s annual financial report. This exchange is a typical example:

Me: Have you ever seen the budget of CODESRIA?

Interviewee: No, never.

Me: The budget for this conference?

Interviewee: No. Never.

Me: Do you have any idea how much it cost?

Interviewee: No. I can imagine.

Me: We can all imagine how much it cost, but have you ever seen the budget?

Interviewee: No, never.

Me: Okay.

Interviewee: I can imagine and I don't want to imagine. (Bahi 2015)

While the annual reports do provide an overview of the sources of funding and the amounts, they do not provide a financial overview of how monies are spent, or on what grounds monies are allocated and prioritised.⁵⁰ This does not, however, imply an absence of oversight. After the accusations of financial mismanagement under Mbembe, donors began requiring a yearly audit of the organisation by external auditors (Beckman et al. 2007) and the latest publicly available Annual Report indicates that CODESRIA received an unqualified opinion on its audit (CODESRIA 2014). The clear information asymmetry between what donors have access to and what African scholars have access to suggests that CODESRIA may be more accountable to its donors than its constituency when it comes to financial governance.

This diminished internal accountability also seems to be evident in CODESRIA's primary mechanism for self-reflection and correction: its organisational reviews. During the 1980s, the two major evaluations of CODESRIA were undertaken by teams appointed by the Council's major donors – the first by the Canadian International Development Research Centre and the Ford Foundation 1983-1984, and the second by the Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation in Developing Countries (a division of SIDA) in 1990. In 1996, this changed when CODESRIA initiated its own internal evaluation. However, as the authors note, "CODESRIA'S initiative in institutional self-evaluation cannot be said to be entirely self-propelled. Given its funding regime, it cannot but take into consideration the various and at times conflicting interests of its

⁵⁰ Indeed, the lack of specificity in this discussion regarding the financial dynamics of CODESRIA is due to the fact that I was unable to get access to any financial data from the organisation, no matter how general or innocuous, such as a breakdown of budget allocations by proportion rather than quantum.

diverse stakeholders, i.e. African constituency, donors, and end users of its products. Thus it can be rightly assumed that the latter, if not the former, would be keenly interested in the outcome of a self-evaluation. This is clearly evident in the great interest displayed by such donors as IDRC and the Ford Foundation, in the various activities, meetings, and workshops that preceded the fieldwork for this exercise.” (Challenor and Gana 1996, 3) This suggests that donors have played a critical role in defining the shape and purpose of the Council’s institutional mechanisms for self-reflection and correction.

The issue of donor dependency and its effects on the Council’s intellectual autonomy and internal accountability have been recurring themes over almost thirty years. However, African economies have not remained stagnant over this period. Over the last decade, the economic prospects of the continent have improved and higher education funding has increased (Sall and Oanda 2014), so that it seems that CODESRIA’s “space for manoeuvre” has expanded relative to the period of structural adjustment. Indeed, this was a theme that emerged strongly across interviews. In his capacity as Executive Secretary at the time, Sall explained the change in the broader higher education landscape this way:

The importance of research was downplayed ... I think there’s a much better understanding of it now than thirty to forty years ago. Partly because people are seeing the BRICS and the emerging powers all over, and it is now established and has been said and repeated that higher education and research have been important factors in determining their success, and people also want to change their own situations in their countries. So knowledge is now recognised and I think even if they have to pay lip service or if everybody pays lip service. It wasn’t the case you know, when people were saying that higher education is not a priority and therefore research is even less a priority, particularly social science research That has changed and is changing very rapidly, although the change has not been followed by a change in terms of prioritising resource allocation and I think that is a next step and it has begun. Some African governments have even given *some* money to CODESRIA; we’ve managed to get a few things. And the government of Senegal is supporting, the African Capacity Building Initiative is supporting, Trust Africa is supporting

CODESRIA [these are African philanthropic organisations]. There are new foundations coming up. (Sall 2015)

However, he added, the pace of change has been very slow within CODESRIA. One of the reasons for this, Sall argued, was that many older researchers have been wary of engaging with African governments, given their experience of authoritarianism and the clamp down on academic freedom:

Researchers themselves have been very shy or rather reserved in terms of looking for money from African governments. Again going back to the 1970s, 1980's – single party regimes in many countries, military rule in many countries, life presidents in a number of countries, authoritarianism to put it simply in so many countries that it was unthinkable for anybody to say that I want to do independent, critical research and then go to these regions and expect them to support you. It wouldn't happen, and that's one of the reasons why CODESRIA has been based in Senegal from the beginning, it has been based here because the government of Senegal understood the value of knowledge and opened the space for debate and provided the space for CODESRIA to exist. (Sall 2015)

In this regard, even younger officers within CODESRIA were wary of getting too close to some African states. Recently, CODESRIA accepted a commission from the government of Senegal to write a history of the country, something which it has never done before. While the Senegalese state is a democratic one, at the time, the Gambia was ruled by an autocrat. Younger officers were worried that this would open the door to pressure from the Gambia and thereby endanger CODESRIA scholars and the autonomy of the organisation:

What happens tomorrow if Jammeh [the then president of the Gambia] says, I also want the history of Gambia written? You have members from the Gambia who are as much Gambians as Senegalese. How would you turn down Jammeh? And he might have even donated a million dollars to you. So how

will you separate this fundraising from your independence and are you putting your scholars at risk, those who are there, [because Jammeh will then] accuse them of not cooperating. (Bangirana 2015)

Nevertheless, the leadership of the organisation recognised that the political landscape has shifted considerably since the era of structural adjustment: “There are a lot more possibilities now, you know democratic dispensations in so many countries and I think we will get there, I think more governments will be giving money. And as researchers, what we’re saying is, in the coming years we should be making greater effort to raise money from within the continent, because we have not exhausted the possibilities of getting money from here.” (Sall 2015) Moreover, in order to avoid the danger of being captured by a particular state or administration, he indicated that CODESRIA is in the process of establishing an endowment fund:

But we are now saying, when we establish the endowment on the continent we will go to African governments to start with and ask them to, even if it’s one of the grants, because you are putting in the pot and you are not going to have a say on, okay my money in this pot you’ll use it this way, so they have less control over it. And at any rate, the status has changed. As I said, in many governments you find people now who speak the same language to a certain extent, because they have been part of CODESRIA. You find them at the African Union, you find them in many governments holding ministerial positions or just being senior officials here and there. I think the big challenge definitely is to have the funding coming from within Africa herself, or from the global South, and coming on conditions or on terms that allow you to continue do the work that we think you ought to be doing, rather than being constrained to do narrowly what is thought to be a priority here and that priority is determined in the way that is too restrictive of the freedom of research. (Sall 2015)

In this sense, CODESRIA has the potential to leverage the informal connections it has forged with governmental organisations through the network of CODESRIA scholars who have taken

up key positions with these organisations. As another officer in CODESRIA put it:

You go to the AU, the ECA, many of them have published with us. Even people in governments, you saw how many people who served in government or do serve at government attended [the General Assembly]. These are people who really love CODESRIA. (Anonymous CODESRIA officer 2015)

These networks, he suggests, are not simply ones of acquaintance or collegiality; they are formed around a deep commitment to and investment in pan-African intellectual endeavour and could therefore play an important role in shifting CODESRIA away from donor dependency.

The idea of an endowment fund was first floated in the General Assembly in 1988 (Ake 1988). However, almost thirty years later it has yet to be firmly established with the organisation. Some interviewees argued that there are simply no resources on the continent and that donor dependency was ineluctable:

That's the African situation my friend, there are no resources, there are no local resources to sustain it. Although now there's been talk of endowment, otherwise it's a membership fee which is really nominal it cannot take it that far. So it's not unique to CODESRIA, it's something that you find in all such organisations, almost all in Africa are dependent on northern funding, precisely because Africa does not have the resources to sustain. (Zewde 2015)

However, the majority of interviewees indicated that African governments and philanthropic organisations constitute an important untapped source of funding for an endowment. Part of the reason for the lack of a functioning endowment, a young CODESRIA officer noted, is that to “do resource mobilisation, we need a specific unit ... But we have no one who is dedicated to that. We have probably approached various African states and philanthropic organisations, but we don't have a professionalised resource mobilisation unit that has a strategic vision.” (Anonymous CODESRIA officer 2015)

In this sense then, the issue is less one of African governments' unwillingness to support CODESRIA, and more one of the Council's institutional will to mobilise resources outside of

donor funding. The officer put it this way:

Part of the reason that these questions are not addressed is path dependence. The donor funding means that we are free and comfortable. These people come here through solidarity, so we don't have to do much for them. If you have that, why would you do these extra things? Especially when they take away from the things you really want to do. Most of the Secretaries are scholars. It's Thandika who says "administrative work is donkey's work". Many of these people are like that. Thandika, Samir. This administrative work is the last thing they want to do, especially when there's nice funding. Donor funding does make us comfortable in many respects. (Anonymous CODESRIA officer 2015)

Expanding on the idea of path dependence, he argued:

We need to move beyond this donor dependency. Why haven't we approached African governments? One because we are crappy as a Secretariat, we are bad with resource mobilisation. If we don't have to do it, why should we do it? If you have a lot of money from nice donors why should you go asking others? But there is also a historical legacy, because African governments were our problem. It was something we couldn't do before, and we haven't learnt to do it now. We have full diplomatic status in Senegal, like a consulate, because scholars were running away from their governments. It was given diplomatic status in the late 1970s. This problem already existed in the 1960s. (Anonymous CODESRIA officer 2015)

In this respect, Abou Moussa Ndong, who had been a librarian at CODESRIA for just over thirty years, explained: "Of course the history of CODESRIA maybe attests to that. That from the beginning CODESRIA wanted to do research and not get involved in money matters. So the focus was on research and of course the independence which has been guarded has been mainly because of the position of the Senegalese government which from the beginning gave CODESRIA diplomatic status ... So that immunity and diplomatic protection given to

CODESRIA by the Senegalese government was very helpful from the beginning.” (Ndongo 2015)

Aghi Bahi argued more forcefully that the organisation was unable to interrogate explicitly the impacts of donor funding, since it was dependent on this funding:

CODESRIA, like a certain number of African governments and African institutions, is like the respectful prostitute of Jean-Paul Sartre [referring to bad faith]. How can you develop a discourse against me if I am your donor? (Bahi 2015)

The metaphor of bad faith is an interesting one. It was originally deployed by de Beauvoir and Sartre to explain the ways in which individuals may come to consciously deceive themselves, often to negotiate situations in which they are at the receiving end of power asymmetries. However, Bahi deployed the concept to explain the institutional character of CODESRIA, to suggest that the organisation was not willing to recognise and pursue the possibility of moving away from donor dependency. Indeed, senior officers within the organisation tended to emphasise the need to continue seeking donor funding in the same breath as pointing to the need to move away from donor funding:

So there are resources on this continent that we can mobilise. I am not saying this to say we will stop seeking donor funding from outside of the continent tomorrow no, no, particularly when we are getting the funding on terms that are favourable to African research. I think we appreciate the support that SIDA, DANIDA, the Nordics in particular, but also some of the private foundations like Ford, Rockefeller, Carnegie Corporation, their support has helped CODESRIA growing and I'm hoping that – we still need them, we still need them. (Sall 2015)

The interviews therefore suggest that the factors which enabled CODESRIA to guard its intellectual autonomy and expand dramatically under structural adjustment – collegial donor funding, diplomatic status, and a mistrust of the state and its idea of the developmental university

– are now the factors that constrain the organisation from moving away from donor dependency by developing stronger ties with African higher education institutions, governments and philanthropic organisations.

African universities' decline has also been a critical factor in the organisation's intellectual health. CODESRIA sought to ensure that African intellectual communities were able to reproduce themselves during structural adjustment by providing financial and intellectual support to young scholars. However, some scholars argued that CODESRIA had not provided sufficient mentorship to young scholars. Mamdani, for instance, explained his thinking as follows:

Our disadvantage in CODESRIA, what we never did was to consciously understand the importance of young PhDs, of grooming them, shaping them, directing them. We had a small grants program which was a PhD fellowship but we never made a connection between those scholars and the scholars who rose in CODESRIA. So it really remained just a program that provided these young scholars with funding, but not mentorship of any sort. Nor did we invest resources in building doctoral programs in African universities ... I think in retrospect that was one of our major failings: we failed to reproduce ourselves as an intellectual community, and that's part of the crisis of CODESRIA. There is the next generation, but it's the next generation of political activists, not scholars. And the activists are institutionally located in NGOs or in the AU bureaucracy. Because of this deficiency we created a rift between the scholar and the public intellectual. That's our crisis. (Mamdani 2016)

However, many interviewees stressed that CODESRIA was but one organisation and could not replace the central role of African universities in training new generations of African scholars. Regardless of these disagreements, the consensus view was that young scholars educated on the continent in the last two decades have often been poorly trained. They have therefore struggled to wield intellectual influence in the organisation. One young officer in the organisation explained:

A lot of the time African social scientists only collect data, and don't pay attention to the idea of moulding it to a larger theoretical context to cast light on the social context. It's partly the training that people have – there isn't a lot of investment in training graduate students. And it also has to do with mentorship: if your advisor has no time to sit and talk with you, and there's no institutional review board, then you can't go very far. These are the basic things. They [young researchers] have no understanding of the ethical implications of this. You don't want to be pessimistic but it's very, very bad. At CODESRIA you can see this because people send a lot of abstracts and applications, so you routinely see this. (Anonymous CODESRIA officer 2015)

Thus, he argued, although CODESRIA was founded by young scholars, young scholars no longer constitute the leadership of the organisation:

But we have a problem. We have a group of advanced scholars who have been exceptional. And we have a group of young scholars, and it's not clear that they will become exceptional. It's partly about the problems with African universities, but we need to do a lot to find the best young African scholars and bring them to CODESRIA. There are many great young African scholars in Europe and Africa. Back in the day, if you were a young scholar who wanted to advance yourself, you had to be part of CODESRIA. But now it's not like that. And the older scholars are dying ... If you look at our old *Bulletins*, you saw Ayi Kwei Armah, Mafeje. If you look at our *Bulletin* now, there's no Chimamanda Adichie. I sometimes wonder, why are we even publishing this? (Anonymous CODESRIA officer 2015)

So the problem is not only directly related to the quality of teaching and research at African universities. As Bahi put it, the problem is in part that CODESRIA reproduces the institutional cultures of African universities, which have become less vibrant and more hierarchical over the course of structural adjustment:

CODESRIA produces the local scientific fields where subalternity of the young researcher is a fact ... [To invite] masters students [to the General Assembly], never, they will never do that. PhD candidates, maybe if all these important full professors are full of themselves. If they can exploit them, yes, that wouldn't be good. What I call exploiting is that we are working together and I say "Oh Nimi I'm the big professor and just you take this note and you write something," and then I publish the paper without your name ... To me, we are simply reproducing what we are in our universities. (Bahi 2015)

As a consequence, he argued, the scope for new ways of thinking has been substantially narrowed:

You can say that when people are talking during their seminar, it's almost the same rhetoric ... so there is a process of reproduction ... The same stereotyped sentences, the same stereotyped ideas. And you have new ones – the newcomers usually are quite original but you know, structures are structuring... so if you want to be part of the field you have two options. Try to be like the others or to be a heretic and this is another option. I don't know who is courageous enough to be heretic and to be ejected from this. No I don't think so. Have you heard heresy? No no no. As we think like this as Samir Amin would say and then – oh where is Mamdani? What does Mamdani say? I mean they would guarantee the way of thinking and those who are able to think differently are in minority. They remain quiet. They simply remain quiet, or for instance myself, we just laugh. We have our refuge in humour and yes. I mean it's a way to evacuate frustration. (Bahi 2015)

These comments imply that earlier generations of scholars in CODESRIA may have been sources of intellectual "heresy", but without the full and equal participation of young scholars in the life of the community, and their ability to disrupt older ways of thinking, these interventions have become increasingly hegemonic. The narrative therefore suggests that the decline of African universities under structural adjustment has been accompanied by a lack of

intergenerational renewal within CODESRIA, which may have contributed to intellectual ossification in its community.

Moreover, the decline of African universities has not only influenced the nature of CODESRIA's intellectual community, but has arguably also affected its scholarly production. Formally, the CODESRIA office is supposed to manage only one of its journals – *Africa Development*. The rest of the journals are intended to be managed and edited by senior scholars across the continent. However, in practice, scholars edit a journal, but the management of the journal is undertaken by the CODESRIA office due to constraints from within the university. The only exception to this seems to be the *African Sociological Review*, which is managed and supported by the University of the Western Cape in South Africa. Volunteer editors and CODESRIA staff involved in the journal publications process all emphasised the institutional constraints emanating from universities, particularly in terms of resource constraints on academics' ability to conduct research and edit journals, the poor training of young scholars, and the lack of collegiality within universities, which makes it difficult to get peer reviews. As a consequence, editing journals is often a laborious and time-consuming affair. One of the implications of this is that journals seldom appear regularly. One editor explained:

CODESRIA has twelve journals – only three are regular. The nine have exactly the same problem. First of all you have difficulties in collecting papers. Difficulties in reviewing those papers. After a peer review process, for the submission first, the African scholar, young scholar in a general manner would submit – how can I say this? – garbage ... they will not respect the editorial charts. In fact they submit bad papers to African journals. When they have a good paper they send it in the United States or Britain. And our reviews and our journals, it's for bad papers. So you can understand the process can be very long. Personally I spend a lot of time reading papers, rejecting them first. Please, please – we don't have time. Respect this, please you have too much mistakes. Please correct these first and then you submit again. All this before we go through the peer review process. Then there are corrections – once you have the three reports, the colleague that's submitting the paper would hardly correct this paper. Okay so you waste time. And after you have the type-setting

aspect and another checkout of the paper. The colleague will not check so I will check, and after you have publishing constraints – if you don't have money – you cannot publish the paper. (Zewde 2015)

The irregular nature of journal publications has important consequences, since indexing services and digital libraries typically only house journals if they are published regularly. This substantially narrows the digital visibility and distribution of these journals, and excludes CODESRIA publications from bibliometric analyses of African scholarship. Moreover, editors argued that the lack of support from universities meant that editors were required to subsidise journal production, but the high labour intensity of this work threatens the sustainability of these journals:

So I don't get support from my university to edit the journal for CODESRIA. When I work with them I use my own money ... it will be just for free, we do not have support in all of this. I do all of this myself ... I can give one or two good students – please do you have time, can you do this for me [for free]? Yes – okay God Bless you. No – okay. So I'm doing a lot of jobs. It is exhausting. Who can go on like this? (Bahi 2015)

Bahi went on to contrast this situation with that of the *African Sociological Review*, arguing that it “is regular because of the South African government. Because there is a kind of nationalism – a very positive one in South Africa – they want ... to boost South African [scholarly] production. I think they have understood that controlling the business, controlling the world and enhancing development starts first by scientific knowledge. So the journal *African Sociological Review* is supported by the faculties by the university.” (Bahi 2015) Given these constraints, the management of journals by the CODESRIA office involves a strong developmental component:

CODESRIA's policy is that rejection of weak papers is not enough. So you are required to submit a report that can help this young scholar develop this paper a little bit more ... So there is some form of mentorship in the kind of reports that we do, hoping that through this the scholar will write a better paper. If this

paper is weak, what is weak in it? Is it theory? Is it the way data is analysed?
What is the problem? (Bangirana 2015)

Nevertheless, CODESRIA staff argued, such developmental assistance in the process of managing and editing journals could not take the place of thorough university training. As a consequence, journals tend to have a very high rejection rate, and even then, “you end up with most of the papers [being] very descriptive studies, which tells you that there is little research going on. People want to do some kind of literature review or what and submit an article to a journal. [But] in an ideal situation, journals should be vehicles for empirical studies.” (Oanda 2015) In this regard, interviews suggest that CODESRIA’s journal publications are deeply reliant on the character of African universities, such that the deterioration of higher education has contributed to the deterioration in the visibility, sustainability and quality of the organisation’s journals.

In sum, this section has focused on the ways in which the decline in African universities under structural adjustment shaped CODESRIA’s organisational and intellectual character. In the first place, divestment from higher education coupled with the general constraints of economic crisis changed CODESRIA’s funding structure. As membership fees decreased to negligible levels, the organisation became almost completely donor dependent. This has reshaped its organisational character, inverting its accountability structure and giving donors greater control over its governance despite CODESRIA’s emphasis on institutional autonomy and democratic practice. In this regard, it is telling that, while donors have access to the organisation’s annual financial reports and audits, the General Assembly does not. Donor dependency may also have given donors greater control over CODESRIA’s intellectual trajectory, despite its strong commitment to intellectual autonomy. There are a number of indications of this, not least the closure of the academic freedom programme as a consequence of shifting donor priorities. The inverted accountability structure in turn provides one explanation for the lack of organisational will to move away from donor dependency. The General Assembly has become distanced from matters of financial governance and has left issues of financial strategy to the Executive Secretariat, which is well-funded and therefore has no immediate, pressing reason to pursue an alternative policy. In this way, donor dependency has helped create the conditions that make it difficult for CODESRIA to extract itself from donor dependency.

Moreover, the collapse of research infrastructure and the deterioration of teaching and scholarship in African universities seem to have contributed to a diminution in the quality of intellectual debates within the organisation in two regards. One, the poor training of young scholars in the post-adjustment period seems to have made it difficult for them to contribute as intellectual equals in the organisation, thereby endangering the community's capacity for intergenerational renewal and intellectual ferment. Two, there has been a deterioration in the visibility, sustainability and quality of the organisation's journals. In this regard, the erosion of the political and economic underpinnings of the academic project may have impeded CODESRIA's ability to act as a space for critical argument in which the right to intellectual "heresy" is guaranteed. This helps explain the disappointment of interviewees with the current quality of intellectual work in their community. It also helps explain the apparent lack of institutional will to move away from donor dependency, for institutional change to be driven from within arguably requires sustained collective self-reflection and criticism.

5.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I asked: *how did CODESRIA respond as a knowledge commons to structural adjustment?* The narrative that emerged suggests that structural adjustment marked an important turning point in the underlying context of African scholarship – it signalled the beginning of scholars' recognition that their love for the state was an "unrequited" one, as Mkandawire (2005a, 42) puts it. It also marked the end of the development university and the start of the marketised university. During this period then, the centre of intellectual debate moved away from African universities, which increasingly fell under the control of the World Bank and African governments, and towards academic non-governmental organisations, like CODESRIA, which are controlled by African academics. As such, structural adjustment fundamentally reshaped the intellectual and material underpinnings of CODESRIA with complex and ambiguous results.

In the short term, CODESRIA's analysis of structural adjustment led to considerable intellectual and organisational innovation so that it grew in size and influence. In the assessment of CODESRIA's community, structural adjustment represented an attempt to dismantle the capacity for informed public deliberation, which is central to the autonomous and democratic

functioning of a society. In light of this, CODESRIA's community conceptualised its defence of the academic project as part of broader social struggles for sovereignty and democracy. This defence took on two interrelated forms: an intellectual defence and an organisational defence. Its intellectual defence assumed the shape of intense introspection on the nature of the academic project, which initiated a more autonomous intellectual phase in CODESRIA. This phase was characterised by the need to respond not only to the demands of an externally-set agenda, but also to respond to the internal dynamics of African societies and subject these responses to critique within CODESRIA's community. On the basis of this, its organisational defence focused on providing the institutional and material conditions necessary for scholars to engage freely with each in a community, and aimed to contribute to the intergenerational survival of the academic community. Critically, it was able to do so through political and economic support from the governments of Senegal and Scandinavia. The Council initiated an academic freedom project; it set up training and support programmes for young researchers; and it dramatically expanded research funding and publications. As such, CODESRIA's defence of the academic project sought to build intellectual institutions that offer the possibility of developing a more cohesive and cumulative commons, and as a consequence, it grew substantially in both size and influence. This explains the apparent paradox of CODESRIA's remarkable organisational growth at the height of the crackdown on African universities.

Yet, this growth came with costs. As CODESRIA's intellectual work on structural adjustment suggests, adjustment profoundly undercut the material basis of the academic project and destabilised its institutions and practices. State divestment from higher education in turn significantly increased CODESRIA's financial dependence on donors. This seems to have inverted its accountability structure, giving donors greater control over its governance and intellectual agenda despite CODESRIA's commitment to autonomy and democratic practice. The concomitant intellectual decline of African universities appears to have inhibited intergenerational renewal within CODESRIA, and thereby impeded its capacity to engage in self-reflection and critique. In the long-term then, the evidence suggests that structural adjustment has constrained CODESRIA's organisational and intellectual autonomy. Thus, while the Council became a refuge for scholars across the continent and therefore grew rapidly during this period, adjustment eroded the public institutions necessary for maintaining CODESRIA's intellectual flourishing in the long term, and weakened its institutional autonomy and governance

structures.

Nevertheless, faced with the existential precarity of the academic project in Africa, and its deep institutional contradictions, the choice of scholars to respond by engaging in intense collective reflection is a remarkable one. For many, it must have been tempting to react by critiquing the external agents driving this assault to the exclusion of all else, or, when faced with the sheer scale and depth of the assault, to resign themselves to the situation and opt out by leaving the continent. CODESRIA's community chose to respond differently by engaging in collective reflection. This could not have been an easy path to take, but it contributed to a flowering of new ideas and ways of thinking, not least a distinctive articulation of academic freedom as being deeply bound up in social responsibilities, an articulation that continues to resonate with scholars today, informing and guiding their work on academic freedom on the continent and beyond. CODESRIA's intellectual choices during this period very clearly illustrate the value and strength of collective action in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles. The next chapter closely examines how struggles over inequality within CODESRIA gave rise to one of the most significant intellectual traditions to emerge from young scholars during structural adjustment: African feminism.

Chapter 6: The unfolding of African feminism in CODESRIA

In the last chapter, I considered the ways in which CODESRIA responded to the assault on African universities during structural adjustment. While this was a period of severe crisis and distress, it also gave rise to extraordinary intellectual ferment. This chapter closely examines one of the most significant intellectual traditions to emerge from young scholars during this time: African feminism.

At the same time as the African intellectual community was forced into an increasingly unequal relationship with global actors, feminist scholars in CODESRIA were beginning to urge that attention also be paid to gender inequalities within African scholarship. CODESRIA has frequently been described as a “boys’ club” (Challenor and Gana 1996; Beckman et al. 2007) and has been critiqued for producing studies of men that masquerade as studies of society, which provide impoverished understandings of the ways in which power operates and manifests (Imam, Mama, and Sow 1997; Pereira 2002). These critiques point to two kinds of unequal rules: the first inhibits the participation of women in the intellectual community, while the second inhibits theorisation of and empirical investigation into the lives of women and their relationships with men. Feminist scholars have not left this state of affairs uncontested, and have advocated fundamental changes to the institutional form and intellectual direction of the organisation.

This chapter focuses on African feminist intellectuals (women and men) and their struggles to change these unequal gender norms within CODESRIA. It aims to excavate the ways in which feminist scholars have grappled with inequality by developing and honing new intellectual tools and organisational forms. It proceeds from the view that the meaning of feminist thought arises out of the different ways in which intellectuals respond to the predicaments of their historical contexts, giving rise to multiple feminisms with multiple traditions and preoccupations. Thus, it is true – but not very helpful – to say that African feminist scholarship recognises and grapples with gender relations as one of the important ways in which power is articulated.⁵¹ In striving for a characterisation that is richer in meaning, this chapter

⁵¹ A number of intellectuals have argued that the term ‘feminism’ should not be used to describe the emancipatory politics of women in Africa and the diaspora because of its proximity to whiteness. Perhaps the most famous example of this is Alice Walker’s conceptualisation of womanism as a form of black feminism that is a truer, deeper form of white feminism: “Womanist is to feminist is purple is to lavender” (Walker 1983) However, this paper uses

aims to trace the unfolding dialectic between feminist thought and struggle within CODESRIA.

In this chapter I ask: *how have feminist struggles shaped CODESRIA as a knowledge commons?* As a way of answering this question, I focus on CODESRIA's relationship with the Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD) in the period leading up to the publication of CODESRIA's first book on gender analysis in 1997, *Engendering African Social Sciences*, edited by Imam, Mama and Sow (1997). I concentrate on AAWORD, the continent's first pan-African women's research organisation, as its contribution to feminist work in CODESRIA has received limited scholarly attention. But this is only a part of a story: feminist struggles in CODESRIA have been based in multiple sites and drawn from multiple intellectual traditions.⁵²

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section explores the emergence of pan-African feminism in the organisational form of AAWORD and the factors that resulted in CODESRIA largely absorbing AAWORD into its membership. The second section considers how the ensuing contestation over gender inequality in CODESRIA shaped its organisational character – its membership, institutions and discourses. The third section then considers the nature of the intellectual work produced by feminist scholars in CODESRIA at this time, by reading the work against these multiple contestations, acts of resistance and critique. Examining the intellectual and institutional character of these struggles, I contend, provides a way of rethinking what it means to produce African scholarship rooted in the particularities of African experiences.

African scholars' own self-identification as feminists (see Imam 1997, 24; Mama 2001) out of recognition of the ways in which their contributions have profoundly shaped global and western discourses on feminism.

⁵² For instance, feminist struggles in CODESRIA also drew creative energy and organisational strength from university-based women's research collectives that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, each with their own distinctive traditions and methodologies. These include Emang Basadi at the University of Botswana (Molokomme 1991), the Women's Research and Documentation Centre at Ibadan University (Awe and Mba 1991), Women in Nigeria at Ahmadu Bello University (Yusuf 2006), the Women Studies Programme at Makerere University (Ankrah and Bizimana 1991), the Women's Research and Documentation Project at the University of Dar es Salaam (Meena and Mbilinyi 1991), the Departamento de Estudo da Mulher e Género at Eduardo Mondlane University (Casimiro and Andrade 2009) and the Women and Law in Southern Africa project, which originated in the Law Faculty at the University of Zimbabwe but became a regional network (Bennett 2002).

6.1. The emergence of pan-African feminism in CODESRIA

Outside of what the historian Zeleza calls the “malestream” of African scholarship, female intellectuals began to create their own intellectual organisations devoted to recovering “women's experiences and voices from androcentric assumptions and biases.” (Zeleza 1997, 98) AAWORD, like many other women’s research organisations, emerged during the United Nations Decade for Women (1975-1985), and was deeply affected by the subsequent implementation of structural adjustment programmes across the continent. This section explores the way in which this period brought African scholars into conflict with northern/western⁵³ feminism and developmental discourses on women. These conflicts, I argue, informed the ambiguity of AAWORD’s intellectual position on feminism, an ambiguity that would ultimately lead to a nascent pan-African form of feminism. The strong institutional ties between AAWORD and CODESRIA meant that, as women’s autonomous research organisations began to collapse under the pressures of structural adjustment, members of AAWORD migrated to CODESRIA, taking with them the ambiguities and complexities of this emerging intellectual tradition.

Although northern scholarship on African societies has been an enduring point of contestation (see, for instance, Blyden 1872), the nature of northern scholarship on African women was subject to particular criticism in the years following independence. During this period, northern feminist scholarship converged with developmental agencies to usher in a new period of scrutiny into the lives of women in former colonies, which initially coalesced around discourses of “women in development” (Lewis 2007). One of the outcomes of these new developmental discourses was a number of international conferences on women organised under the banner of the United Nations Decade for Women (1975-1985).⁵⁴ This initiated a series of encounters between female scholars from former colonies that were newly independent, and those located in former colonial powers and hegemons. But, as one of the founders of AAWORD, Zenebework Tadesse, argues, rather than finding points of agreement and solidarity, these encounters often turned into “confrontations between First World women and Third World Women”, in which “particularly African women felt they were completely excluded from any

⁵³ I use these terms interchangeably. The use of the term ‘western’ was more current in the 1980s, while the term ‘northern’ has become more current now.

⁵⁴ During this period, the UN hosted three world conferences on women, which took place in Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980) and Nairobi (1985).

kind of impact on ... debates about African women.” (Tadesse 1978, 27) The exclusion of African women from debates about their own realities brought to light fundamental disagreements about the nature and direction of feminist scholarship.

These disagreements led a number of African female scholars to establish the Association of African Women in Research and Development (AAWORD), the continent’s first pan-African women’s research organisation. In an organisational review reflecting on the events leading up to the establishment of AAWORD, the authors describe their participation in the first World Conference on Women in Mexico in 1975 as one in which:

Third World women registered their discontent at the analysis and strategies of Western women who insisted on prioritizing problems of inequality between the sexes as the fundamental issue facing all women and argued that the interests of men and women were opposed and mutually exclusive. On their part, Third World women argued that the primary problem for them was the widening inequality between their countries and the West, which has resulted in the widespread poverty of their peoples. Secondly, they pointed out that they were fully capable of waging their struggles in the ways and means that they considered to be fruitful and timely. (AAWORD 1982a, 108)

The following year, in 1976, several African female scholars attended the Women and Development Conference at Wellesley College in Boston, Massachusetts. Fatou Sow, a long-standing feminist scholar in AAWORD and CODESRIA, describes the confrontation that ensued between African and American scholars:

[I]n 1976, Fatima Mernissi, [Marie]-Angélique Savané, Achola Pala and some of the women who were doing their PhDs in the U.S. went to a conference at Wellesley College in Massachusetts ... on Women in National Development ... when they arrived, in fact American women who were anthropologists and whose fieldwork was Africa, they really set the stage, spoke by themselves about Africa. When all those [African] women who were as competent ... were sitting there and listening to them. So there was a clash, a big clash and they

decided: this we cannot accept that again. You are white, Western, middle-class, bourgeois women sitting here and discussing about women and development ... We can't stand them; in fact they left the conference ... and they decided in 1977 to come to Dakar and organise ... the founding meeting of AAWORD (Sow 2016).

African women and those of African descent responded with a detailed written criticism of the form of the conference, arguing that the silencing of female scholars from the global South on matters relating to their lived realities was neither ethical nor empirically sound:

We wish to register here our deep objections to the language used in dialogue with us by some of the Conference convenors, which ranged from the patronizing to the insulting ... the successful search for funds for, or the planning of a conference, [does not grant] them the moral right to dictate the terms by which their foreign colleagues should participate in that conference. Nor does [it] confer the right to exploit the presence of these colleagues without granting them integral roles in the decision-making processes surrounding the conference. We would like to remind the Convenors ... that much of the wealth which allows for the funding of conferences such as this is derived from the exploitation of the regions from which we come. Therefore the question of gratitude for having been invited, or charity on the part of the hosts, does not arise ...

We, as researchers, know that creativity and the development of scientific inquiry depend upon the constant appraisal of both theory and method if research is to be of any relevance for social development. It is important, therefore, that in any future conference dealing with research on the deprived world, the creative efforts of scholars from these areas should be recognized and represented. (Quoted in AAWORD 1982a, 108)

Marie-Angélique Savané, one of the founders of AAWORD, argues that this difference in power means that the content of women's struggles in the global South is profoundly different from

those of women in the North:

In Europe, women have mainly concentrated their efforts on such problems as the equality between the sexes, the organization of household work and child care and the right to have or not to have children. In the Third World, women's demands have been more explicitly political, with work, education and health as major issues per se, and not necessarily so linked to their specific impact on women. In addition, women of the Third World perceive imperialism as the main enemy of their continents and especially of women – something which is rarely fully understood in the North. (Savané 1982b, 9)

As a consequence, when AAWORD held its first consultative meeting in Lusaka in 1976, followed by its first pan-African conference in Dakar, they conceptualised their main aim as “the decolonization of research in Africa”, where such decolonisation entailed a critique of white feminist intellectual traditions from Europe and North America (AAWORD 1982a, 110).

How might one interpret this critique of northern feminism alongside a commitment to decolonisation? One kind of interpretation is located within the literature on “insider scholarship”, which focuses on the political dimensions of scholars’ social locations.⁵⁵ An example of this is Mofokeng’s (1991) presentation at CODESRIA’s Gender Workshop in 1991, where she characterises AAWORD as a challenge to the dominance of white and Euro-American feminists in African scholarship. Following writers such as Qunta (1987) and Amadiume (1987) she insists on the need for African women to provide scholarship on the social situation of African women. This is not only because they are rooted within that social situation and are likely to provide more reliable and accurate scholarship than outsiders. More fundamentally, it is because the post-colonial situation is one characterised by deeply skewed power dynamics between insiders and outsiders. Quoting Nkululeko in Qunta (1987, 88), Mofokeng asks:

⁵⁵ The term “insider scholarship” is perhaps a misleading one, since it suggests that the entire problem is one of distance from a given society. As Mofokeng makes clear, it is social distance *as a consequence of* northern feminists’ position as part of an oppressive class that generates the problem. Thus, one can imagine social distance without oppression generating potentially fruitful perspectives and tensions in the context of, say, African scholars researching Asian societies. Nevertheless, I use the term “insider scholarship” given its currency in the literature.

Can an oppressed nation or a segment of it engaged in a liberation struggle rely on the information produced by members of the oppressing group, however progressive?

There is something untrustworthy, she thinks, in scholarship about an oppressed group of people if it is produced by members of the oppressing class. Part of this untrustworthiness lies in the inability of oppressors to see the oppressed fully as subjects – they will struggle to see them as anything else but the objects of study. Thus, for instance, the American scholar, Kinsman (1983) described Batswana women in the precolonial era as “beasts of burden”, for whom the coming of Christianity and colonisation represented a promise of liberation.

But the untrustworthiness of such research, Mofokeng argues, also lies in its political effects. She points out that by the early 1990s, books on gender analysis in Africa were scarce, and where they were produced, they were often the product of white academics in the United States, Britain or South Africa. These skewed power dynamics, Mofokeng contends, have acted to delegitimise feminist scholarship on the continent and stall important debates. The debates around female circumcision provide a painfully vivid example of this. AAWORD argued that northern feminists’ portrayals of African women are “insensitive to the dignity of the very women they want to save” and the invocation of global sisterhood to justify projects that dehumanise African women is therefore profoundly contradictory (1983). One of the focal points of this contention centred on the “factual’ novel, *Possessing the Secrets of Joy* by the American writer, Alice Walker (1992), which has been critiqued by some African scholars as an exemplar of northern feminist attitudes towards African women (see, for instance, Ahmadu 2000; Nako 2001; Osagbemi 2015). The novel centres on the life of Tashi, an African woman who elects to be circumcised, an act that horrifically disfigures her and destroys her life, until she travels to the United States for psychotherapy and returns to murder the person who circumcised her. Perhaps the most well-known critique of this novel is that by Obiora (1997), who draws on textual evidence to argue that the novel dehumanises and objectifies the protagonist, while demonising an entire culture. She contends that the novel is able to do so in part because it is based on a body of northern scholarship that is not grounded in careful empirical analyses of female circumcision, such that “Speculations are propagated as credible findings, and other findings fall short of vigorous analyses of the nuances and complexities.” (1997, 325) For Obiora, the words of Odiso

Ntianu capture the fundamental problem with the novel: “Remember Saartje, the so-called “Hottentot Venus”? Now Tashi! Whether well-endowed or excised, it appears that the African woman is discursively predetermined as damned.” (Ntianu cited in Obiora 1997, 323) While other scholars have argued for a more nuanced reading of the novel (Gourdine 1996; Mohammad and Dehghani 2014), the outrage with which it was met by some indicates the ways in which skewed power dynamics can lead to distorted and hurtful portrayals of African women. As a consequence of such portrayals, female African scholars repeatedly walked out of conferences on female circumcision, and the debate was effectively stalled for a decade (Nnaemeka 2001). Read from this perspective, AAWARD’s initial critique of northern feminism was not an outright rejection of feminism. Instead it laid the foundation for new forms of feminist scholarship, premised on what Anyidoho (2008) has called “shared struggle.” In turn, northern feminists would begin to acknowledge that this was a necessary pre-requisite for what Gunning (1997) calls “solid sisterhood” between women from the South and the North (see also Herbert 1993; Geiger 1999; Arnfred 2004).⁵⁶

Another way of interpreting the rejection of northern feminism in terms of the pursuit of decolonisation lies in a very different intellectual tradition: the study of contemporary society through the lens of classical civilisations, or what one might call the thesis of *classical matriarchy*. This tradition falls within a broader family of Africanist or nationalist historiography, which aims to correct imperialist myths that Africa had no history prior to European conquest (Zeleza 1997).⁵⁷ The thesis of classical matriarchy is perhaps best represented by the work of

⁵⁶ Gunning notes that, as an African American, Alice Walker has been critical to developing a form of feminism that is deeply rooted in struggles against the intersecting oppressions of race and gender. However, she argues, Obiora’s critique of *Possessing the Secrets of Joy* is a well-founded one. This “stumbling”, she observes, “presents a warning. Good intentions are not enough. Constant vigilance and self-criticism are required for the feminist or progressive who truly intends to bridge the multicultural divides to create sisterhood.” (1997, 447) As such, she takes Obiora’s critique to be focused less on Walker’s novel, and more on the political and intellectual limitations of northern feminism as a whole, of which she is a part.

⁵⁷ Zeleza (2009, 125–26) offers the following useful historical gloss of this tradition as rooted in the “vindicationist tradition of African diaspora scholars from the eighteenth century – who tried to vigorously defend the historicity of Africa and the humanity of Africans against the scientific racism emerging out of the hideous entrails of plantation slavery. [It] rested on culturalist premises: that African cultures and societies were normal, not primitive aberrations; that they were civilizations, complex societies. The vindicationist tradition mutated into the nationalist tradition, most fully developed in nationalist historiography, which bloomed following decolonization and found its most auspicious home in Africa’s new or old, decolonized universities. African history ceased to be taught as a story of lack and becoming – lacking and becoming Europe – and scholars painstakingly sought to unravel African activities, adaptations, choices, and initiatives. While nationalist historiography was more enamored of political than of cultural history as such, its civilizational argument against Europe – against colonialism – was fundamentally a cultural one.”

Cheikh Anta Diop, and later on, Ifi Amadiume, who argue that, beneath the apparent diversity of African societies, they are unified by a common history of matriarchy. This is “not an absolute and cynical triumph of woman over man; it is a harmonious dualism, an association accepted by both sexes, the better to build a sedentary society, where each and every one could fully develop ... A matriarchal regime, far from being imposed on man by circumstances independent of his will, is accepted and defended by him.” (C. A. Diop 1963, 108) On this account, the matriarchies of African antiquity were disturbed by the arrival of the Arabs, and later, the Europeans, whose cultures and religions were fundamentally patriarchal (C. A. Diop 1963). Consequently, from this perspective, the rejection of colonisation is itself an assertion of matriarchy (Amadiume 1989). Since the intellectual tools and preoccupations of northern feminism are grounded in societies that are fundamentally patriarchal, it follows that northern feminist scholarship is not applicable to African contexts (Oyewumi 1997). This intellectual tradition draws a close relationship between the pursuit of pan-Africanism and matriarchy on the one hand, and the concomitant rejection of colonisation and patriarchy on the other hand. When Savané claims that “women of the Third World perceive imperialism as the main enemy of their continents and especially of women” (1982b, 9) we can see, perhaps, a weaker version of this thesis: the notion that patriarchy, if not created by colonisation, was the handmaiden of colonisation. Echoing Diop’s talk of precolonial complementarity, the AAWORD scholars Pala and Ly (1979, 247) argue that colonisation disrupted the “balance between the masculine and the feminine [and thereby disrupted] a necessary condition for society to flourish.”

While feminist scholars in CODESRIA have critiqued the thesis of classical matriarchy on both empirical and theoretical grounds (something which I discuss in the third section), here I am interested in how these two different interpretations rendered AAWORD profoundly ambiguous, an ambiguity that both expanded and narrowed the organisation’s scope for autonomous scholarship. On the surface, these two different interpretations – insider scholarship and classical matriarchy – are not mutually exclusive insofar as the belief that African societies share a unifying matriarchal history is consistent with the belief that African societies are presently patriarchal so that feminists currently share a unifying political struggle. However, the thesis of classical matriarchal pasts has sometimes been used to foreclose feminist interventions by claiming that the evidence of patriarchy in contemporary societies is a mirage, and that beneath the surface African societies are still matriarchal. As Sow explains:

we need to deconstruct patriarchy in our society. But many African scholars, including female and male scholars say, we don't have patriarchy ... telling African women who are feminists, we don't understand matriarchy ... telling us, don't be western feminists. (Sow 2016)

She adds:

To be a feminist was not what we did at AAWORD ... in fact it was, let's say, a leftist anti-colonial approach. The feminist approach was something a bit different, because we were not anti-men yet, we were not even anti-patriarchy. For instance, with female genital mutilation, we discussed this in AAWORD at the very beginning in the 1980's, they said no no, that is a cultural practice. It took us about a decade to decide well, it's not in fact, it's a mutilation.

Much of the appeal of classical matriarchy derives from its strong affirmation of the dignity and richness of African civilisations, something which has often been directly attacked by northern feminists in the context of female circumcision. But, as Sow suggests, this interpretation of AAWORD's anti-colonial approach in terms of classical matriarchy can be used for opposing political ends. It can be used to open up discussions to consider the historicity of gender relations and the ways in which they are bound up in other relations of power such as colonisation and racism. Or it can be used to shut down conversations about oppressive gender relations (see the examples critiqued by Sow 1997; Nzegwu 1998; Yusuf 2002). Given this, AAWORD's rejection of northern feminism is a fundamentally ambiguous one: does it reject all forms of feminism, or does it attempt to develop a new form of feminism that is cognisant of the ways in which colonisation and racism have shaped gender relations?

While this ambiguity may have sometimes been used to foreclose explicitly feminist discussions, it arguably had strategic value when it came to the institutional relationship that AAWORD developed with CODESRIA, which at the time had an overwhelmingly male membership. In the 1980s, AAWORD was physically hosted in CODESRIA's offices, and members of AAWORD increasingly began to participate in CODESRIA events. This relationship

arose in part because of a shared geographic location and intellectual outlook. Both were pan-African research networks located in Dakar, and both “reaffirmed, and later came to sustain, earlier intellectual traditions that challenged imperial legacies and committed African scholarship to new and trans-disciplinary methodologies, to multilingualism, to egalitarian and radical research and scholarship grounded in African social realities and concerns, and to the defence of academic freedom.”(Mama 2005, 101) But, Aminata Diaw, who was a long-standing member of CODESRIA and AAWORD explained, this organisational relationship was also founded on individual, collegial relationships:

Of course they were also by CODESRIA, because [the founder] Samir Amin knew all of those women, and when he was asked to host [their founding] conference, he agreed ... And in fact it was Thandika [Mkandawire], who was already the Executive Secretary of the conference, so he agreed and the conference took place at IDEP and then later on when CODESRIA had an office, they had a real office, they hosted AAWORD. (Diaw 2015)

This close relationship benefited AAWORD, insofar as CODESRIA had relatively larger financial support from donor organisations and stronger political clout in virtue of the diplomatic standing it had received from the Senegalese government.

At first blush, this close relationship between AAWORD and CODESRIA is surprising given the sceptical and sometimes hostile attitude that senior male scholars harboured towards feminist scholarship. Sow’s characterisation of the views of one of CODESRIA’s founders, Samir Amin, provides an illustration of this:

At the time of the celebration of CODESRIA’S twentieth anniversary in late 1993, Professor Samir Amin, reflecting on the role of the intelligentsia and ideology in the development crisis was haphazardly denouncing the struggle for women’s liberation, cultural challenges, environmental concerns, and so on as *fashionable* strategies. His *ironic* tone stripped away the legitimacy from academic political reflection, not only on women, but on the perspective of

gender, and the social sciences' taking into consideration gender relations.
(Sow 1997, 31)

However, Sow adds, irony is the moderate end of the spectrum. Male scholars often responded to African feminist scholarship by denouncing it as “rampant imperialism ... African women intellectuals, who try to re-appropriate the discourse for themselves, lucidly critique it and reinvent it in their own context ... are the targets of sharpest criticism. At the same time, few of them dare to claim inspiration from feminism for fear of being treated as non-African, uprooted, bourgeois, or worse – lesbian.” (Sow 1997, 33) As Pereira (2000) points out, “the selective nature of this interpretation is clearly manifest in the sense that some ‘northern’ phenomena, such as ‘modernisation’, are viewed as acceptable, whereas other ‘northern’ phenomena, such as ‘feminism’, are not.” The reasons for male scholars’ rejection of feminism are therefore complex and require careful investigation; however as Sow’s comments make clear, sexual politics are an important part of this contestation of ideas. Writing from the perspective of a man, Hutchful argues that male scholars have in part vilified feminism because sexual rights have been at the forefront of much feminist scholarship, eliciting in them “a fundamental sense of challenge (even terror).” For this reason, he adds:

The circumstances of introduction of Western-type feminism provoked strong reactions and united men against it across the ideological spectrum, allowing gender issues to be discredited or refuted on spurious grounds. On this issue male traditionalists, Islamic fundamentalists, nationalist and radicals of all shades could make common cause. (Hutchful 1997, 193)

Imam reflects that, in general, the charge of being Western-dominated “is most often levelled at women, because of the association with women as bearers of culture,” but in the case of feminism this is particularly ironic, since “contemporary feminist theories are considerably less White and Western dominated than many other social science paradigms, precisely because of the force and effectiveness of the critiques of African, Asian, Caribbean, Latin American and Pacific women” (Imam 1997, 16).

Within this context then, we can read AAWORD’s ambiguous position on feminism as a

way of enabling them to navigate a complex and difficult discursive space. Indeed, a number of scholars in CODESRIA interpreted AAWORD's emphasis on decolonisation as a discourse that was antagonistic to feminist scholarship. As Diaw put it, the founding members of AAWORD were "women who [saw] themselves as women engaged in decolonising social sciences and decolonising women's studies ... in order to be involved in discourses and practices that would benefit to Africa. In fact they were challenging feminism." (Diaw 2015) Several interviewees reflected that AAWORD's emphasis on decolonisation and reticence about identifying themselves with feminism enabled AAWORD to get the buy-in of more powerful male academics within CODESRIA. Consequently, regardless of whether this was an intentional strategy or not, the fact that AAWORD's position on feminism was open to multiple interpretations had the tactical advantage of enabling them to encroach on male-dominated spaces.

While AAWORD may have emphasised its anti-feminist credentials in its dealings with male-dominated organisations like CODESRIA, in its interactions with female scholars across the continent, the focus on insider scholarship and shared struggle came to the fore. By building regional networks of solidarity, AAWORD arguably laid the foundations for the emergence of a pan-Africanist form of feminist scholarship. This is in part due to the pan-African scope of the organisation, which enabled female scholars from across the continent to engage each other on questions of power and gender. As Sow put it:

those women [in AAWORD] were women of the avant-garde, and when the avant-garde wanted to be very avant-gardist and revolutionary ... they wanted to get rid of the white scholars in America, in Europe who were doing research in Africa, setting the trends of how to think, how to implement, how to design, how to tell that African women are. And they wanted to say ... we are mature enough now and independent enough to organise ourselves on our own terms and we have our own priorities. Because if you read AAWORD papers, you don't find very often feminism, except to condemn it, or to say there are feminists but these are our own priorities ... But you know the first time I went to AAWORD, hosted by CODESRIA, it was the first time I was sitting with actual women and discussing. It was the first time I sat with ... Moroccan

women, women from Sierra Leone, from Nigeria, from other countries, because I used to be only with Francophones in meetings [and now] I was really sitting with Anglophones ... And that achievement ... was something that made all Africans interested. (Sow 2016)

Moreover, Sow added, AAWORD did not just provide a pan-African forum for female scholars, but it also connected them with women's political organisations. As a consequence, "[while] it was supposed to be theoretical, because it was called Decolonising Social Sciences in Africa, well that means theory was going to be involved ... at the same time it was, we will really build this so that we can work with NGO's working with women at the grassroots." (Sow 2016)

Commenting on the emergence of transnational feminist networks in the South, Mukhopadhyay argues that this distinctive combination – between scholars from across the continent, and between scholars and local activists – contributed to a form of politically committed scholarship that refused to “to separate the struggle against women's subordination from the struggles against poverty, apartheid, and neocolonialism ... [alongside] unwillingness to compromise the struggle against women's subordination or to postpone it” (Mukhopadhyay 2015a, 610). By centring the experience of colonisation and racism at the heart of women's struggles, and by insisting that women from postcolonial contexts be at the forefront of articulating their experiences, AAWORD provided the intellectual argument for a form of political solidarity between women of the global South.

This was given expression in The Dakar Declaration on Another Development with Women, in which AAWORD brought together French, Portuguese, English and Arabic-speaking women to debate the nature of development and the role of feminist scholarship on the continent:

Feminism provides the basis for this new consciousness and for cultural resistance to all forms of domination. Such resistance by women to domination has been present in many countries throughout the centuries, and has provided the women's movement with continuity in its active struggle for equality. Feminism is international in defining as its aim the liberation of women from all types of oppression and in providing solidarity among women of all

countries; it is national in stating its priorities and strategies in accordance with particular cultural and socio-economic conditions. (AAWORD 1982b, 15)

These intellectual arguments took institutional form when two of the founding members of AAWORD, Achola Pala and Marie-Angélique Savané, worked together with women from Latin America, the Caribbean and Asia to set up a network of feminist scholars and activists in 1985: Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN). As such, AAWORD is considered to be one of the “earliest feminist associations based in the South to articulate a definably Southern position.” (Antrobus 2015, 176)

AAWORD’s ambiguous position on feminism is seldom mentioned in the scholarly literature on the organisation (Ampofo et al. 2004; Arnfred et al. 2004; Ahikire 2014; Antrobus 2015; Mukhopadhyay 2015b). For instance, Pereira (2004, 4) states that “one of AAWORD’s central aims was to set the agenda for feminism in Africa by facilitating research and activism by African women scholars.” However, this discussion suggests that ambiguity was an important characteristic of AAWORD’s intellectual work. Such ambiguity can be understood not just as the vacillations of a nascent intellectual tradition as it found its feet, but also as a tool of those who occupy the political margins, who present one face to the powerful, and another to the weak. The artful deployment of such ambiguity enabled AAWORD to develop beneficial institutional ties with CODESRIA, while laying the foundation for a distinctively pan-African form of feminism. This emerging tradition was predicated on the notion that colonialism has profoundly shaped gender relations, so that gender is not a stable or unitary concept, but varies at least in part according to different experiences of colonisation, racism and economic oppression. This commitment to diversity suggests that common political and intellectual identities are not so much found, but are instead forged out of shared struggle. This in turn opened up new ways of thinking about feminism in the global South.

However, the ambiguity of AAWORD was not only intellectual. Women’s autonomous organising on the continent occupied an increasingly tenuous and complicated space as the autonomy of African states came under sustained attack during the period of structural adjustment. The UN Decade for Women provides an early example of these dynamics. While the UN Decade catalysed the creative conflicts between women in the South and the North that led to the establishment of AAWORD and DAWN, it also helped ferment domestic confrontations.

In the case of Nigeria, for instance, Pereira (2004) argues that women's organisations enthusiastically pursued the international frameworks created by the UN Decade for Women, since the domestic political space for addressing violations against women were often exceptionally restrictive as a consequence of prolonged authoritarian rule. This arguably ushered in a new era for women's organisations: while they had previously been part of the anti-colonial struggle and were therefore seen as potential allies of post-independence states (Mofokeng 1991; Sow 1997; Tsikata 2001), many organisations now entered into closer relationships with international organisations so that the possibility of a more confrontational relationship with the state arose, and with it a new risk that the state would need to mitigate and neutralise.

The establishment of women-focused research programmes and collectives under the aegis of the United Nations would therefore come to be imbued with imperialist and instrumentalist connotations during the period of structural adjustment. As discussed in the preceding chapter, following the oil crisis in the mid-1970s, African governments approached the International Monetary Fund and World Bank for emergency financing, which was provided on condition that they implement a package of wide-ranging economic reforms known as "structural adjustment." These reforms included the withdrawal of the state from the provision of public goods, currency devaluation, reductions in corporate taxation, and the privatisation of state-owned enterprises (Mkandawire and Soludo 1999). The economic crisis and the negative economic impact of these reforms eroded the autonomy of many governments and rendered them increasingly beholden to the whims of donors. This pressed African states into patron-client relationships with donor countries and international NGOs. So when donor countries and international NGOs shifted perspective to espouse "women in development" and later "gender and development" approaches, African governments were typically compelled to undergo mandatory gender training and show that policies and programs were gender sensitive as a condition of receiving funding (Mukhopadhyay 2015b, 614). African states therefore attempted to appease their patrons and access scarce funds by operationalising these discourses. This instrumentalised approach to women's organising and women's rights typically took the form of co-opting women's organisations to access funds from donor organisations and mobilise support for structural adjustment policies (Tsikata 2001; Ampofo et al. 2004). These multiple levels of patron-client relationships, between donor countries and African states on the one hand, and African states and women's organisations on the other, fostered what some scholars have called a

femocracy, a “feminine autocracy running in parallel to the patriarchal oligarchy upon which it relies for its authority, and which it supports completely” (Mama 1995, 41). In other instances, rather than co-opting autonomous women’s organisations, the state actively persecuted them, blaming them for the economic and social upheavals of the period, as was the case with women’s market associations in Ghana (Tsikata 1997). Commenting on this in an interview, Mama provides a cogent explanation of the ways in which African feminists have had to resist the deligitimisation and capture of feminism by more powerful actors:

We have had to fight for our own meaning to be kept alive, as the Western European and North American women have taken it up and filled it with their realities. Sometimes the term has been appropriated by anti-democratic interests. The debate about imperial feminism was our response to that. At other moments, African regimes have tried to do funny things with gender politics and misrepresent feminism, and our societies have not always been clear about the meaning of 'feminism' and its perennial presence in all our societies ... Recent history has demonstrated clearly that in Africa even the most undemocratic regimes do not hesitate to involve women. Indeed many of them make particular efforts to mobilise women on their behalf. Women danced on the streets when Mobutu Seseko celebrated women within their traditional roles as wives and mothers in Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo). Nigerian military wives have sponsored massive women's protests to mobilise support for the corrupt dictatorships run by their husbands. These are examples of women being mobilised or taking to the streets themselves to support an agenda no one would describe as feminist. So there can be movements of women, which are not autonomous and not about redressing gender injustice or transforming oppressive gender relations ... (Mama 2001)

Such co-option and persecution worked to delegitimise women’s organisations and substantially curtail their autonomy, thereby rendering feminist discourse profoundly suspicious on two fronts: as a tool of authoritarianism on the domestic front, and neo-colonialism on the international

front.

Women's organising therefore became a key battleground on which structural adjustment was waged. This acutely affected feminist scholarship. As we saw in the previous chapter, structural adjustment programmes required governments to divest from higher education as one of the conditions of emergency financing (Federici, Caffentzis, and Alidou 2000). So, like many African governments, African universities began "allowing gender studies units to be set up, because in the time of severe resource scarcity they think it will bring development money or it will make them look good." (Mama 2015) This is often evident in the funding patterns – the Women's Research and Documentation Centre (WORDOC) at the University of Ibadan, for instance, functioned as a semi-autonomous institute within the university, and received most of its funds from European donors and the World Bank. The same is true of Emang Badasi at the University of Botswana (Molokomme 1991), the Departamento de Estudo da Mulher e Género at Eduardo Mondlane University (Casimiro and Andrade 2009), and the African Gender Institute at the University of Cape Town (Mama 2015). So for Mama (2015), the development of gender institutes has been partially an outcome of "this sort of instrumental, strategic tolerance, which is not linked to levels of collegiality, and indeed, the outright viciousness that a lot of women working in this field in African universities experience." For this reason, she contends, gender studies institutes around the continent have been "tolerated rather than actively embraced and supported, and probably not understood, up till now."⁵⁸

However, the impact of structural adjustment on female students and scholars was far more systemic than this. Adjusted countries not only decreased their spending on higher education, they also cut spending on basic education as a proportion of Gross National Product. This fundamentally reshaped the gender and class profile of the education system as a whole.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ For instance, Mamdani notes that university administrators had "reduced the 'commercialising' reforms [of the World Bank] to two sound bites: multi-disciplinarity and market orientation, with a third (gender sensitivity) added in response to donor pressure." (2007, 98) The result of such donor pressure was the rapid development of curricula that were haphazard and shallow by staff who seldom seemed to have any interest in gender studies. In addition, NORAD patronage ensured that a Gender Mainstreaming Unit was set up, which ran parallel to the university in terms of administration and finance, and led to a situation in which other academics felt that the Unit was no longer accountable to the broader university community (2007, 233).

⁵⁹ Disentangling the causal impact of adjustment policies from the collapse in commodity prices and the rise in authoritarianism during this period is a difficult task. This is especially difficult since these factors are likely endogenous. However, as Stromquist (1999) notes, panel analyses of adjustment in Latin America find that adjustment was correlated with a similarly large decline in education enrolment and completion rates, even though the region was not affected to the same extent by political and economic instability. This provides grounds for ascribing the negative education trends in Africa to adjustment policies.

As poor families were unable to afford newly-introduced tuition fees at public schools and universities, they began pulling their children out of the education system, particularly girls. Stromquist (1999) demonstrates that, between 1988 and 1988, primary school enrolment in adjusted countries declined by between 3.2 percent and 39 percent. During this period, growth in primary school enrolment also declined from 10 percent to 3.2 percent, with knock-on effects on secondary school enrolment, which declined from 14 % to 4 percent. However, the decrease in enrolment was acutely gendered. Over this period, Stromquist shows that the gender gap in primary enrolment widened by 13 percentage points, while the primary school completion rates of girls also decreased relative to boys. Poor girls disproportionately bore the brunt of adjustment, so that by the time they got to university, they constituted an increasingly small minority. The result was that the student body came to be composed more and more by male elites, which then had a knock-on effect on the composition of the next generation of academics (Mphande 1994; Sall 2000; Mama 2008). One example should suffice to make this point. By 1996, the gender composition of academic faculty at Makerere University, one of the flagship institutions of the continent, was such that only 5 of its 760 faculty members were women (Tunbridge 1996). Moreover, female academics were typically employed in the most junior positions (Zezeza 2003, 179), so that they were not only numerically minoritised, but also politically marginalised within the university.

In the fierce competition for increasingly limited resources within the university, the most vulnerable scholars in the academy were likely to come out losing. For instance, Pereira (2009, 86) recounts how, during this period, “women activists [in Nigerian universities] who travelled outside the country were the focus of considerable envy by the majority of their colleagues, who assumed that they were making vast sums of money (in US dollars).” The politics of envy, and the concomitant lack of collegiality, she argues, became a significant burden for committed female scholars. Consequently, female scholars often had to shoulder the heaviest burdens of teaching, with little support and limited opportunities for promotion (Yahya-Othman 2000; Tamale 2000). At the same time, the assault on university autonomy and deterioration in internal accountability mechanisms often meant that male scholars and students were able to abuse and harass women with relative impunity (Yahya-Othman 2000; Tamale 2000). The combination of these factors not only constrained female scholars’ participation in universities, but also often restricted the time, resources and energy they needed to run women’s intellectual organisations

and forge connections with popular struggles.⁶⁰

Thus, while AAWORD cast its agenda in the language of anti-colonialism, the material and discursive foundation for such work was acutely weakened by the dynamics of structural adjustment. Although the discursive space for women-focused research seemed to expand, it did so in narrow and instrumentalised ways that undercut autonomous feminist research, and associated such research with neo-colonial agendas. At the same time, the World Bank's mandate to divest from education eroded the institutional basis for scholarship; while this negatively affected all scholars, it often disproportionately impacted female scholars as different forms of gender discrimination converged and reinforced each other. The result was that autonomous women's research collectives, like AAWORD, suffered an especially hard decline relative to other kinds of research collectives (Pereira 2002; Manuh 2007). Writing in the aftermath of structural adjustment, Pereira (2004, 4) notes that:

AAWORD remains an important institutional site even though its influence and reach has declined over the years. This, in itself, is an indication of the fraught economic and political conditions under which women's organizations on the continent struggle to sustain themselves, particularly if their scope is intended to be Africa-wide.

While the political contradictions of this period weakened women's autonomous organising, CODESRIA continued to thrive and grow. Scholars have suggested that this was in part due to its standing as an International NGO with diplomatic immunity, which meant that it was uniquely placed to act as a refuge for persecuted scholars (Mafeje 1994a; Mkandawire 2005a). However, as discussed in the last chapter, the ability to secure core donor funding has also been critical to maintaining CODESRIA's autonomy. This is an important point of difference between

⁶⁰ There is an additional layer of explanation, which concerns the ideological pressures of structural adjustment. In the case of Senegal, for instance, Diouf argues that while feminists had uniquely attempted to forge intellectual and political connections with people outside of elite spheres, during the crisis of structural adjustment, they gradually became "alienated from their grassroots commitments; their voices have grown increasingly dissimilar to the voices of women long reduced to silence by the obsessions with modernism ... [and] the nation-state." (Diouf 1994b, 241) Diouf's account pays little attention to the political and economic constraints on feminist intellectuals, but nevertheless highlights the ways in which some feminists were either co-opted by the state and began to produce "technocratic commodities" in the service of Women-in-Development paradigms, or responded to the attack on the state by invoking nationalist paradigms, which then alienated them from the predominantly sub-national character of women's organisations.

CODESRIA and AAWORD. Like many women's autonomous organisations during this period, AAWORD struggled to get core donor funding (Mukhopadhyay et al. 2011), and therefore faced an especially stark choice between intellectual autonomy and financial security (Pereira 2002; Bennett 2002). If this is correct, then CODESRIA's institutional autonomy and resilience was itself gendered.

It was at this point that female scholars in AAWORD began to move towards CODESRIA. While the organisation was becoming a refuge for independent-minded scholars in general, in the case of AAWORD, the move to CODESRIA was an especially intuitive one, given that the two organisations shared the same office space as well as an intellectual commitment to critical scholarship. As female scholars began to migrate towards CODESRIA, they took with them some of the ideas that had been incubated in AAWORD: the view that colonisation has profoundly affected gender relations; the belief that gender relations are shaped and complicated by different experiences of colonisation, racism and economic oppression; and a pan-African commitment to the possibility of forging shared political and intellectual identities out of common struggles. As I have argued in this section, these ideas were rooted in the ambiguities of AAWORD's position on northern feminism. Such ambiguity would play a critical role in feminist contestations in CODESRIA, and the ideas associated with this ambiguity would go on to be critiqued and reworked in CODESRIA's intellectual work in this period.

6.2. Feminist contestations within CODESRIA

In this section, I examine the ways in which feminist scholars contested unequal gender norms within CODESRIA, and how this shaped its organisational form – its discourses, institutions and processes – in the period leading up to the publication *Engendering African Social Sciences*. I start by examining intellectuals' narratives about the establishment of CODESRIA, since disagreements in narrative provide a key to the normative underpinnings of the organisation and the ways in which these may be gendered (Madison, Frischmann, and Strandburg 2010). I then discuss the tactics that feminist scholars used in contesting unequal gender norms in the organisation, and how these tactics were related to AAWORD. I end by considering the ways in which CODESRIA changed as a consequence.

As discussed in the chapter on pan-Africanism, narratives about CODESRIA tend to stress that it was established with the “pan-Africanist ideal of bringing African social scientists together to conduct research appropriate to the continent.” (Mkandawire, Sawyer, and Sané 2015, 6) Thus, Amin argues that the pan-African format of CODESRIA was designed to counter the epistemic dependence that colonial rule had engendered: “The first aim was to give critical third world thinkers the means to begin correcting the fundamental imbalance within all international bodies, where the world is always seen from the North.” (Amin 2006, 224) This characterisation of CODESRIA as a response to regional and racial inequalities in scholarship is a common one. As one young scholar put it, “[colonial] violence wasn’t only physical it was also intellectual, disparaging everything black. It was coming out of the perspective that maybe having some control over our story, our narrative, is important for our liberation. So the idea was to promote the voices of African social scientists. I think that was the goal and still it’s the goal.” (Anonymous CODESRIA officer 2015)

These narratives suggest that little attention was paid to the role of women on the continent in the founding mandate of the organisation. As Sow explains, when the organisation was established in 1973:

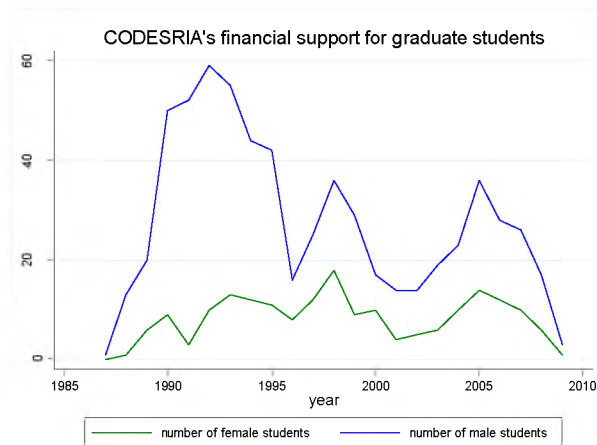
women were mostly struggling for the liberation of Africa, the liberation of their country ... but to be a feminist was not really the framework of thinking ... But in fact CODESRIA was a third world institute, a pan-African institute ... [Even when] CODESRIA became specialists on structural adjustment policies ... it never came to their mind that women would be affected by structural adjustment policies. (Sow 2016)

However, it was relatively rare for interviewees to explicitly state that the category of “women”, and by extension, gendered relations of power, were irrelevant to the organisation’s founding mission. Most interviewees simply omitted any reference to gender in their narrative of CODESRIA’s establishment, which suggests that they did not consider gender inequality to be important enough to merit mentioning. These narratives also revealed gendered memories. While several female interviewees stated that two female scholars had been present at the founding of CODESRIA – Agnes Fatoumata Diara and Fatou Sow (who was also a member of AAWORD) –

no male interviewees recalled the presence of female scholars. Written narratives about the history of the organisation likewise make no mention of female scholars' presence at the founding (Veit 1978; Bujra 2003; Beckman et al. 2007; Mkandawire, Sawyer, and Sané 2015).

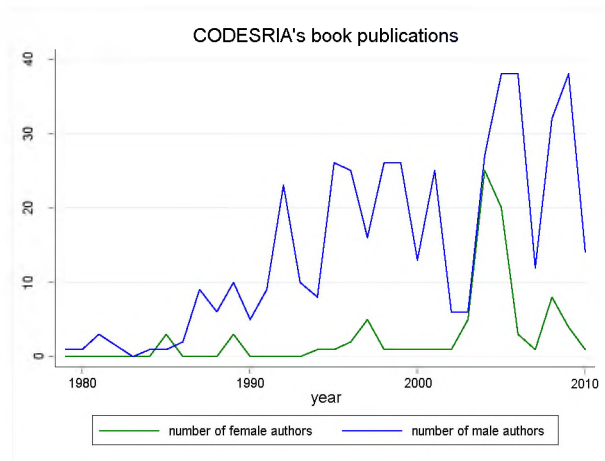
Taken at face value, these narratives often appeared to be gender-neutral. However, differences in who was remembered and what was emphasised suggest that many of these narratives erased women and were therefore gender-biased. These narratives nevertheless converged on two central claims: that gender inequality was not a motivating reason for establishing CODESRIA, and that gender relations were initially neither the object of study nor a tool or analysis. As such, they suggest that the normative underpinnings of the organisation included a strong dimension of gender inequality. These unwritten rules reflected in the organisation's support for female students and scholars. Between 1979 and 1991, the organisation sponsored 183 doctoral and masters students; just 10% or 19 of these students were female. Figure 8 below illustrates.

Figure 8: Number of female and male students supported by CODESRIA



In the same period, the organisation published 44 books; less than 5% or only two of these books included any female authors. Figure 9 below illustrates.

Figure 9: Number of female and male authors published by CODESRIA



However, unequal gender norms did not only manifest in substantially less support for female scholars and students; it also manifested as resistance to intellectual work on gender inequality. This resistance took different forms: from explicit scepticism about the usefulness of gender as a category of analysis, to more tacit forms of resistance that sought to erase or censor intellectual work on gender.

Such resistance came to the fore when feminist scholars openly contested unequal gender norms in CODESRIA. One of the first public contestations occurred at the General Assembly in 1988. Several interviewees noted that, during the plenary session, a young feminist scholar at the time, Ayesha Imam, argued strongly for the analytical importance of gender in African scholarship. The ensuing debates were particularly fiery; nevertheless, the organisation agreed to commit to the principle that all “research themes must also integrate gender analysis.” (‘Research Priorities’ 1988, 8) In keeping with international developmental discourse at this time, the organisation also adopted “women in development” as a research theme, this despite feminist opposition to the approach. However, CODESRIA *Bulletins* between 1988 and 1990 provide no indication of these debates on gender analysis. For instance, there is no reference to this contestation of ideas in the Executive Secretary’s report on the General Assembly or in the President’s address. Furthermore, the pages of the *Bulletin* do not contain any contributions by scholars debating the concept of gender or the methodologies and epistemic commitments of

feminist scholarship.⁶¹ It is difficult to know what the intentions of the *Bulletin's* editors were during this time, but the effect of these silences is to erase debates on gender and in doing so create an archive in which these debates have no intellectual significance.

The second intervention by feminist scholars was in a different space – CODESRIA's symposium on Academic Freedom, Research and the Social Responsibility of the Intellectual in Africa, held in Kampala in 1990. As Mama tells it, "For many of us (myself included) at a much early stage in our scholarly careers, it was an exhilarating discovery of the region's most significant social research network – CODESRIA. It was inspiring enough for me to promptly resign my lectureship at the Institute of Social Studies in the Hague, and return home to Nigeria, intent on joining colleagues in the work of building independent intellectual spaces." (Mama 2011, 3) But, she adds, young feminists immediately encountered opposition to their work:

Ayesha Imam and I wished to present a paper on the manner in which gender inequalities curb academic freedom, particularly of women. This was a controversial idea apparently, because it 'did not fit' as a topic of its own, so we negotiated to present a paper that would address gender through the rather awkward but workable trope of 'self-censorship'. To make this work for our subject matter, we therefore focused on the self-censorship exhibited by a male-dominated scholarly community that was reluctant to take gender seriously, regarding this as 'private matter' that had nothing to do with serious academic work ... We addressed gender injustice in the academy through the trope of self-censorship, in order for it to be included in the conference at all. (Mama 2011, 5)

The presentation on self-censorship was therefore itself an act of self-censorship. This time, however, the CODESRIA *Bulletin* included mention of some of these critiques in their special edition on the academic freedom symposium, noting: "Male intellectuals were specifically called

⁶¹ There is, however, one reference to women's participation in CODESRIA during this period. In Mkandawire's report on the Latin American Social Science Research Council, or what he refers to as "Latin America's CODESRIA", he notes that the "participation of women at the CLACSO conference put any efforts by CODESRIA in that direction to shame ... One explanation is that CLACSO has a network on the gender question and there is no separate women organisation for social science research as is the case in Africa." (Mkandawire 1988a, 5) In effect, this suggests that AAWORD was responsible for gender inequality in CODESRIA.

to task for their ignorance of, disdain for and outright rejection of the struggles of women in general and of women intellectuals in particular” (‘Synthetic Report on the Plenaries and Evening Sessions’ 1991, 4).

As a consequence of the censorship these scholars had experienced at the Academic Freedom Symposium, and out of recognition of the growing importance of CODESRIA for critical scholarship, Mama and Imam, together with Tadesse from AAWORD, pushed hard for CODESRIA to host a conference on gender analysis the following year. This partly signified a generational shift, as one scholar explains:

At one point then I think CODESRIA used to support ... AAWORD ... And many felt, well we've supported them, the job was done. But then the young women started – and these are the women of my own generation, the generation above us is very male-dominated, but in my own generation there are a number of very strong feminist academics who started raising the issue. So the good thing about it is then the organisation decided let's have a conference on this, which was exactly what was done.” (Mustapha 2015)

However, this was not so simple a process as “exactly what was done.” Perhaps the most important obstacle women had to overcome was one of intellectual scepticism. As Sow put it, “Thandika [Mkandawire] was Executive Secretary at that time and ... said – you know I'm not sure that gender exists. I'm not sure it can be an intellectual tool. I'm not sure that gender analysis will work – I'm not sure. He was sure of nothing.” (Sow 2016)

But scepticism about the very existence of gender, let alone its analytical importance to African scholarship, was difficult to sustain at this time. As Diaw explained, the close organisational relationship with AAWORD meant that “CODESRIA became a little bit feminist, because they had all those feminists around.” (Diaw 2015) Moreover, she added:

And there was also a time between 1991 and 1995 ... you would go to Kampala, you would go to Nigeria, you would go even to South Africa, you would have something feminist playing on the field. And those women ... would say, ‘hey! this is not in CODESRIA.’ As CODESRIA was supposed to

be not only pan-African, it was to be a leftist institution, it was supposed to be an avant-garde institution, and so there was struggle at that level. (Diaw 2015)

In this respect, the remarks of the CODESRIA scholar, Isabel Casimiro, who has studied the emergence of African feminist discourses across the continent in the 1990s are useful (see Tripp et al. 2009). In her interview, she characterised this period as follows:

[The first Gender Workshop] was in the 1990's ... after all those international conferences, the UN decade started in started in 1985. We had ten years of women's discourses around the world. Even African governments actually realised that women were sitting there and had their agenda. Even if they mis-applied the agenda, they took the wording, but they didn't do the politics. Even the time was *a propis* ... it was the time, it was in the air." (Casimiro 2016)

Reflecting on the ways in which shifting global consensus helped feminists in their struggles, Mama explains:

A number of colleagues and I had engaged in a pretty arduous struggle to push gender studies onto the continental intellectual agenda that CODESRIA developed. Which was largely progressive, largely interdisciplinary, but very resistant, like many spaces, to the introduction of feminist thinking. But from 1991 onwards they could no longer resist that as a result of the shifting global consensus around the necessity of treating gender as a key tool of critical analysis, because of the way almost all of our societies are structured by gender. So you can't really do meaningful, I guess it's scientific social analysis, without looking at social divisions, of which many of us suggest gender is the primary articulation. (Mama 2015)

Thus, while the instrumentalisation of women-focused research worked to co-opt and deradicalise feminist scholarship, it also helped to place issues of gender and power on the intellectual agenda in CODESRIA and African social scholarship more generally.

In organising the 1991 Gender Workshop feminist intellectuals drew on the broad and deep networks they had developed in AAWORD and university-based women's research collectives. As a consequence, the Gender Workshop was pan-continental, and was attended by "over 45 scholars from 17 countries, mostly English-speaking and French-speaking Africa ... (the majority of whom) had been involved in either research or teaching in women's studies for the past decade or more" ('Gendering Social Science: Opening Session' 1991). The multidisciplinary ethos of women's studies was also clearly evident, with participants from many disciplines, including economics, history, psychology, political science, education, cultural studies and anthropology. A number of these participants had political links to women's organisations across the continent, and their theoretical perspectives often emerged from, and complicated, their political commitments. Imam and Mama (1994, 98) explain: "Feminist research explicitly states its relationship to the women's movement, arguing that research is a social, political and economic act which should be directed towards empowerment and liberation of women outside the academy. Feminist social science is, therefore, not just accountable to the social science community, but to the women's movement — hence many feminist academics find it incumbent to work with organizations such as WIN [Women in Nigeria] or Yeewu-Yeewi in Senegal." In a significant departure from AAWORD's organisational model, however, the workshop included both women and men who conducted feminist research. As such, this signalled a potential shift in thinking: rather than gender being considered as the domain of women alone, it suggested that gender was a legitimate and urgent concern for both women and men.

The Gender Workshop was organised around the themes which the 1988 General Assembly had set as the main research topics for CODESRIA. This enabled feminist scholars to engage with, and critique, each research programme in CODESRIA, including that of "women in development." In doing so, they followed AAWORD's (1985) Nairobi Manifesto, which critiqued this framework for minoritising women and being driven by external agendas and finance. This was important because the Gender Workshop was attended by not only feminist scholars, but also by scholars who were sceptical of the salience and usefulness of gender analysis. So feminist critiques of existing work on CODESRIA's research agenda provided them with an opportunity to concretely demonstrate the ways in which African feminist scholarship could be operationalised to create new theoretical avenues and gather new kinds of data.

In this regard, Mkandawire, who was at that time the Executive Secretary of CODESRIA,

provides a thoughtful elaboration of the way in which the Gender Workshop shifted his intellectual perspective:

When I opened this conference a few days ago I confidently, or rather foolhardily, stated:

'I am not convinced there is a corpus of methodologies, approaches or empirical studies based on gender analysis awaiting to be appropriated by a newly converted social science community. Much work needs to be done.'

After listening to the discussions in the last four days and after reading some of the papers presented here I am convinced that my remarks were as good a case of the total triumph of ignorance over intellectual humility and open-mindedness as there ever was. I would therefore like to rephrase my remarks as follows:

I am now convinced there is a corpus of methodologies, approaches or empirical studies based on gender analysis awaiting to be appropriated by a newly converted social science community. I do, however, maintain much work needs to be done. (Mkandawire 1991, 1)

Imam glosses Mkandawire's reference to open-mindedness as an oblique reference to the way in which this intellectual shift is not a "simple development of knowledge, but is also necessarily and simultaneously profoundly a political struggle over power and resources. This is not unique to gender analysis. It has also been the case with anti-imperialist and class analyses, among others. Every theoretical and methodological framework of knowledge production has implicit values and assumptions about the nature of society, and will be resisted by those who do not have the same position." (Imam 1997, 2) Fundamental intellectual shifts therefore involve not only changes in what kind of knowledge is produced, but in how this knowledge is produced – this requires both an intellectual and an institutional transformation. For this reason, the change in Mkandawire's perspective was a significant one, because as the Executive Secretary he had

considerable influence in the organisation, which meant that feminist scholars were better positioned to influence the institutional character and intellectual agenda of CODESRIA.

Participants at the Gender Workshop proposed a number of institutional changes to CODESRIA in order to integrate and develop gender analysis in the organisation. The first recommendation was that the proceedings from the Gender Workshop should be widely disseminated. In light of this, CODESRIA devoted a special edition of the *Bulletin* to a full report on the Gender Workshop. This was the first time that issues of gender received sustained intellectual engagement in the journal. In fact, by doing so, it also provided the very first printed archival evidence of the debates at the 1988 General Assembly:

At the Sixth General Assembly 1988, CODESRIA's abdication of responsibility was challenged as unacceptable in view of the lacunae that result from gender blindness in African social science. Nevertheless, the simplistic 'adding on of women' paradigm was forcefully rejected as inadequate. Instead, the need both for gender analysis to be included and integrated into on-going and future social science work, as well as to involve more women social scientists in CODESRIA's networks, was recognised. ('Gendering Social Science: Opening Session' 1991)

In this sense, the Gender Workshop not only created space within CODESRIA's flagship publication for discussions about gender, but changed the institutional memory of CODESRIA, by getting earlier gender debates included in the *Bulletin* and thereby reshaping the archive. This in turn influenced the organisation's intellectual preoccupations – male scholars' hostility towards talk of gender in 1988 would subsequently act as a springboard for a critique of neo-Marxist currents in CODESRIA and African scholarship more generally (Hutchful 1997).

The second recommendation of the workshop was that CODESRIA produce annotated bibliographies on gender in relation to different themes. They suggested this as a way of correcting the relative obscurity of existing African feminist literature. CODESRIA committed to this at an organisational level, and to date has published thirteen detailed bibliographies on themes ranging from African masculinities to gender dynamics in slavery.

Third, participants recommended that feminist scholars should participate in all of

CODESRIA's administrative bodies. Interviewees indicated that the initial strategy of young feminist scholars was not to press for entry into the governing body of the organisation – the Executive Committee – as they did not have enough power to gain access. Instead, it was easier for them to gain access to the Scientific Committee, which provided guidance regarding the intellectual agenda of the organisation. As Sow put it, once they were in the Scientific Committee “they challenged CODESRIA for not being feminist enough,” and they were able to do so because “CODESRIA was a sort of democratic institution, once you are sitting on the Scientific Committee you say whatever you want. You could say whatever you want by sitting there ... They couldn't pressure people that you don't do this, you don't do that.” (Sow 2016) She went on to characterise her experience in the Scientific Committee as follows:

You know in fact it wasn't women as staff; it was in the Scientific Committee. Because CODESRIA is a research institution, it's an advocacy institution ... at the level of the Scientific Committee they will say there's no issue of women in CODESRIA, we do structural adjustment policy and good governance ... and we were saying, this cannot continue, we have to stop this. It's how we started, and by our questioning why in the programmes it was so [gender] neutral. (Sow 2016)

Women in the Scientific Committee subsequently worked together to ensure that the fourth recommendation of the Gender Workshop was implemented: a summer school for training a new generation of scholars on gender analysis, the first of which was hosted in 1994.

The concept of a Gender Institute had initially been incubated in AAWORD, but as the organisation declined under structural adjustment, and personal conflicts became correspondingly more acute, scholars took the idea to CODESRIA:

Patricia McFadden wanted to have a sort of Gender Institute where she would be training and Marie-Angélique, she refused, because as I said there was conflict between Patricia and [Marie]-Angélique Savané. Both of them were very smart people, very strong but at the same time they were too strong to work together, which is a pity. And so there was a clash and Patricia McFadden

left AAWORD ... And then for those women who couldn't be involved in AAWORD because of Marie-Angélique Savané's temper and all those fights that we had between, they decided to have it in CODESRIA. (Sow 2016)

The Gender Institutes were in turn used to generate and publish new research, including the aforementioned annotated bibliographies. Reflecting the more holistic approach of the Gender Workshop, both female and male scholars have participated in the Gender Institutes. In her capacity as the head of Training, Grants and Fellowships, under which the Gender Institutes fall, Diaw indicated that the Gender Institutes in the 1990s were composed mostly of females, but that this has gradually shifted. By the time of the 2015 Gender Institute, which I observed, there was an equal distribution of female and male participants. This more holistic approach is also evident in the publications emanating from the Gender Institutes, which have typically avoided treating gender as a synonym for women, and have expanded the conventional focus to include critical analyses of masculinities on the continent (see, for instance, Uchendu 2008).

As Sow puts it, the Gender Institute and the publications emanating from it created a framework in which female scholars could push for intellectual shifts in the organisation:

I think to have the Institute was one strategy, and publication was another strategy ... the first book CODESRIA ever published ... was a gender analysis; it was *Engendering African Social Sciences*. And then in fact there was a whole series of publications, what we call the *Gender Series*. And at the very beginning in those *Gender Series* it was said, we are not western feminism. And everyone who wrote in those papers wrote they were not ... western feminists. This was another route. And I think actually also because there was more and more women, and in fact CODESRIA went from an all-boys club to a club where there are the majority all boys but more and more women. That was our strategy. Women got into CODESRIA institutions and obliged the boys club to become a more mixed club. (Sow 2016)

When asked why the Gender Institutes were not called “Feminist Institutes”, several interviewees indicated that the terminology was chosen to circumvent hostility towards explicit

feminism. Diaw, for instance, explained it this way:

Because the Gender Institute were really a feminist institute, but I think it would have been difficult for them I think it was easy for them to say let's do a Gender Institute, not a feminist institute. Because I think a feminist institute would have worked but what they were saying – Gender Institute brought a new concept and a very strong concept of power relations oppressing women. Now where you can discuss about women's right without being against men as they say. We are not against men. (Diaw 2015)

But, as Sow emphasised, this did not mean that the work itself was not feminist: “So although in AAWORD and in CODESRIA, [they] say we are not Western feminists, they use the tool and the tool was oppression, they used it. Masculinity, they use it. Domination by men, they used it. Patriarchy they used it. But they say, we have our own priorities, we have our own issues, we do everything ourselves. But so gender analysis was very feminist in those days.” (Sow 2016) In this case, feminist scholars can be understood as appropriating AAWORD's older techniques of ambiguity, of presenting one face to those with power and another to those without, or what Mama (2015) called a “feminist strategy [of] quiet encroachments, multiple strategies, multiple locations”.

This combination of intellectual strategies helped pave the way for shifts in the politics of representation within the organisation. By 1996, the constitution of CODESRIA had been changed to specify that election of members to the Executive Committee at the General Assembly should take into account gender distribution, alongside regional and linguistic considerations. Despite this, women continued to constitute a very small minority in the Committee (Challenor and Gana 1996, 41). However, by 2003, the organisation had elected their first female president: Zenebework Tadesse, who had also been a founding member of AAWORD; she was then followed by Teresa Cruz e Silva and most recently, Dzodzi Tsikata. Reflecting on the change in gender norms, Cruz e Silva notes that at first, “CODESRIA was mostly male and women were assistants and secretaries ... they were not at a high level in terms of making decisions,” but now, “we have had three female Executive Presidents of CODESRIA. And this was not given to women, they took it. And they almost fought it, really, I think they put

enough pressure on the institution to have it, and they put pressure on the staffing.” (Cruz e Silva 2016)

However, not all of the recommendations of the Gender Workshop were implemented. One of the most important recommendations was for an “institutional watchdog on CODESRIA’s activities to ensure that gender analysis is being integrated and that women scholars are being encouraged to work in CODESRIA.”(‘What Is to Be Done Next?’ 1991, 14) Without this kind of monitoring and evaluation mechanism, it would be difficult to ensure that the stated objectives of the organisation would find expression in practice. Four years later, therefore, feminists brought the topic of institutional checks and balances back onto the agenda at the 1995 General Assembly. Imam recollects the meeting as follows:

At this meeting, a gender policy was proposed by some 40 members of an open gender caucus, which included almost all of the women among the 200 participants, as well as some men. This proposed policy, which suggested concrete measures for improving gender diversity within CODESRIA and ensuring attention to gender in analysis, was defeated resoundingly in favour of a motion containing no specific steps at all.” (Imam 1997, 14–15)

She goes on to argue that “Men [used] their numerical majority and control of gate-keeping positions to discriminate against women and gender-aware researchers and to protect and continue to privilege those whose work ignores and thus sustains gender domination.”

This is remembered differently by those ambivalent about or opposed to these institutional changes. The internal evaluation of CODESRIA conducted in the year following the 1996 General Assembly simply notes that it was “acrimonious” without explaining the reasons for such acrimony, other than to cite the presence of young scholars from the Gender Institute, which was running concurrently (Challenor and Gana 1996, 40) A clearer picture of male scholars’ opposition to these institutional checks and balances emerged in interviews. One interviewee explains:

And I remember in the General Assembly [in 1996] after that some women were suggesting that there has to be a gender – almost like a gender thought

police. That everything written should be sent to a committee to clear it for gender. Said no, we're doing nothing of the sort! [Laughs] This is taking the gender argument into bad territories. People should be educated, they should be given access to resources to be gender sensitive. If they write something that is less than, you take your pen and educate them! The sense that we won't – so there's always been that tension that this one is not gender sensitive enough, or that one is too right-wing, or this one is using post-structuralism, there's all sorts of parochialisms that creep up once in a while. (Mustapha 2015)

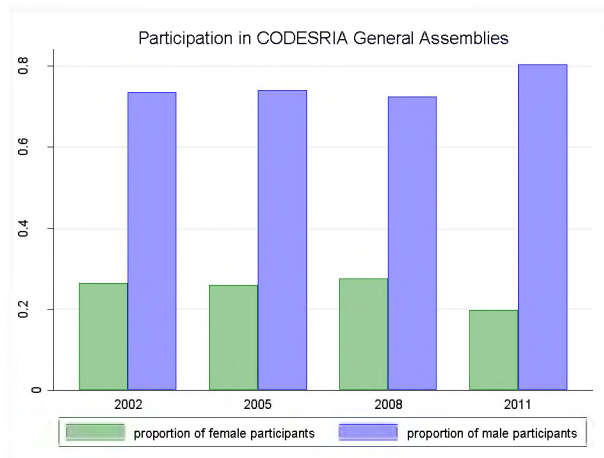
These different viewpoints indicate a conflict over what counts as reasonable, in much the same way that Mkandawire (1991) alluded to in the first Gender Workshop, where the very existence of gendered scholarship was considered unreasonable. However, these differing viewpoints also suggest that there has been a shift in the terms of what counts as reasonable with regard to gendered scholarship: from a rejection of gender as an unreasonable category of analysis to an acceptance of its intellectual value, coupled with resistance to taking action on the basis of gendered analyses. In this sense then, these changes in the reasonableness of gender within CODESRIA track scholarly patterns at a more general level, in which “the situation ... moved through several distinct phases: from the total neglect of women, or, (at most) treating women in brief asides or footnotes; to a sustained critique of this gap; to the ‘adding on’ of women, and just occasionally to the recognition of gender relations as a category that requires not simply the tacking on of women at the end of analyses but the reconceptualization of other categories in order to be able to make adequate analyses of the whole.” (Imam 1990, 241)

However, the reconceptualization that Imam proposes has worked in both directions. While feminists have sought to get mainstream African scholarship to reconsider its categories of analysis, mainstream African scholarship has often adopted and appropriated the concept of gender in ways that denude it of meaning. In this regard, Sow reflected that gender is a “violent concept because it is about power”; but the way in which it has been used has robbed it of its meaning so that “it is no longer feminist; it just means ‘women.’” (Sow 2016) Reflecting on this, Lyn Ossome, a young feminist who directed the 2015 Gender Institute, contended that attempts to mainstream gender analysis may have contributed to hollowing out its meaning, because “scholarship follows money, and those who fund you come with their own interests and

sometimes it has diluted analysis, it has diluted critique, it has ... inserted into a very mainstream women's rights kind of framework that is not very engaged historically with the dynamics of the continent." (Ossome 2015) From this perspective, an important and incomplete task is that of ensuring that feminist scholarship is not ghettoised but is instead incorporated into the majority of CODESRIA's publications and research projects in ways that retain its meaning and urgency.

In addition, the lack of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms on gender equity is manifest in an analysis of CODESRIA's support for female students and scholars. The number of female authors published has remained fairly constant over time, with the exception of a spike in publications in 2005 and 2006 as a consequence of backlogs in publishing books in the Gender Series. (see Figure 9 above). This may in part be due to the continuing minoritisation of female scholars in African universities. For this reason, it is encouraging to see that financial support for female graduate students began to increase after the 1991 Gender Workshop. By 2009, 25% of students who received support were female, which is a considerable improvement on the pre-1991 average of just over 10% (see Figure 8 above). Nevertheless, after substantial post-1991 gains, support for female students flat-lined, and CODESRIA is still far from achieving gender parity in developing the next generation of African scholars. As an indication of this, we can see that female participants in CODESRIA's General Assembly continue to constitute a minority. Between 2002 and 2011, female participation actually declined from 26% to 20%. Figure 10 below illustrates.

Figure 10: Proportion of female and male participations in CODESRIA's General Assemblies



This is significant, for as Imam noted earlier, their minoritised status in this governing body makes it difficult for them to achieve political goals that go beyond the politics of representation.

This discussion suggests that feminist contestations in CODESRIA have shaped the organisation in important ways. The make-up of the organisation's community has fundamentally shifted since the 1991 Gender Workshop. There is substantially more financial support for emerging female scholars, and the organisation's scientific and governance structures have a much higher rate of female participation. This indicates that gender norms regarding participation in the organisation and its governance have become more equitable. The institutionalisation of gender research and training programmes in CODESRIA arguably reflects this. While the organisational and intellectual foundations laid by AAWORD helped to facilitate these changes, feminist interventions have also expanded and shifted these foundations. Perhaps the most significant difference from AAWORD has been the inclusion of female and male scholars in these programmes, which has broadened CODESRIA's intellectual norms, so that both women and men have conducted research on gender, where this has not been limited to women's concerns, but has also included analysis of the relation between genders and the construction of masculinities. Feminist contestations have also influenced the organisation's institutional memory, by successfully reworking CODESRIA's archive to include reference to older feminist debates that had previously been elided.

These changes have nevertheless been partial and tenuous. Feminists have been unable to ensure that oversight and accountability mechanisms are implemented so that concrete steps are taken to sustain and expand the role of female scholars and feminist scholarship in the organisation. This is reflected in the organisation's support for female students and scholars, which initially increased from a very low base after the 1991 Gender Workshop, only to flat-line at a rate that is still substantially lower than support for male students and scholars. As a consequence, female scholars continue to be a minority in the organisation, while feminist scholarship is largely limited to the *Gender Series*. Against this backdrop, the ghettoization of feminist scholarship and the hollowing out of discourses on gender remains a constant threat.⁶² This risk is perhaps sharpened by feminist scholars' use of ambiguity as a tool to contest the intellectual and institutional trajectory of CODESRIA – rather than a Feminist Institute, the

⁶² This is the case in many other contexts. See, for instance, Zeleza (1997) on gender fronting in Canadian scholarship.

organisation hosts a Gender Institute, and rather than publish books under the rubric of a Feminist Series, the organisation publishes a Gender Series.⁶³ As the previous discussion of AAWORD sought to illustrate, such ambiguity may have strategic benefits when negotiating with powerful actors who are resistant or hostile to feminist work, but it also opens the door to intellectual arguments that attempt to foreclose feminist research. In the last section, I consider how feminists interrogated and reworked the intellectual content of this ambiguity in the scholarship emanating from the Gender Workshop.

6.3. The nature of feminist intellectual work in CODESRIA

In this section, I conduct a close reading of *Engendering African Social Sciences*, the edited collection of articles that came out of the proceedings and debates from the Gender Workshop. In interviews, scholars in CODESRIA consistently highlighted the volume as an important and distinctive publication in the organisation's intellectual history. Indeed, in her review of the volume, Moguerou would write that it constitutes "un travail pionnier", in part because "il demeure aujourd'hui un ouvrage de référence, même si les méthodologies, les approches et les études empiriques basées sur le genre ont évolué au cours des dernières années. Il permet de mesurer l'effort entrepris par la recherche académique depuis une décennie pour faire entrer le genre dans le corpus des sciences sociales africaines." (Moguerou 2004, 191) Despite this, however, it seems that the book has yet to be subject to close and extensive analysis. This section aims to help address this gap. Given the diversity of contributors' theoretical commitments, empirical foci, and disciplinary outlooks, I treat the contributions as an *approach*⁶⁴ to feminism, where multiple traditions converge in their common attempt to make sense of and grapple with gender relations as an important conduit for articulating power. One of the most striking features

⁶³ For instance, Mama warns after the 1991 Gender Workshop, "If present trends continue, deradicalised studies of women, gender studies, gender planning and gender analysis all have more prospect of gaining acceptance in the African academic establishment than overtly feminist and movement-linked variants of women's studies." (Mama 1997a, 423–24)

⁶⁴ By "approach" I have in mind Amartya Sen's use of the term to describe a theoretical account that refuses to "freeze" its normative values "for all societies for all time to come, irrespective of what the citizens come to understand and value. That would not only be a denial of the reach of democracy, but also a misunderstanding of what pure theory can do." (Sen 2004, 78) As this section illustrates, feminist contributors to *Engendering African Social Sciences* appear to share this commitment to pluralism, public deliberation and theoretical modesty.

of the book is contributors' emphasis on gender relations as historically-embedded practices that vary both over time and place. I consider how fidelity to historical complexity underlies their attempts to rework and complicate older intellectual arguments that were developed in the process of setting up women's research organisations, especially AAWORD. I focus on three ideas: first, the idea that the colonial encounter reconfigured gender relations; second, the idea that gender is intertwined with other relations of power; and third, the idea that common identities can be forged out of shared struggle. An examination of these three ideas, I contend, provides us with an opportunity to think through what it means to do African intellectual work.

Contributors' insistence on the historicity of gender relations provides a way for them to enter into critical conversations with a variety of intellectual traditions. Perhaps one of the most interesting of these conversations is their implicit critique of the thesis of *classical matriarchy* exemplified in the writings of Diop (1963) and Amadiume (1997). As discussed above, this tradition was one of the intellectual undercurrents in AAWORD's rejection of northern feminism. Drawing on the study of classical civilisations, and located within a broader framework of Africanist historiography, scholars working in this tradition tend to claim a primordial matriarchal character for Africa, which was disrupted by the patriarchal processes of Arabization and colonisation. On this view, pan-Africanism is a form of self-knowledge, in which Africans come to remember their common matriarchal history and understand how imperialism distorted this. While this tradition, and especially Diop's contributions to it, has been an influential one, contributors only obliquely refer to the thesis of classical matriarchy, referencing, for instance, the "romantic myth ... that the roles of women and men were equal and complementary in good old, harmonious, pre-colonial Africa." (Zezeza 1997, 81)⁶⁵

While the book does not explicitly engage with this tradition, contributors' scholarship nevertheless provides a rich counter-narrative. In contrast to the thesis of classical matriarchy, contributors tend towards a conceptualisation of gender that eschews the notion of the primordial in favour of a way of seeing the social world as a palimpsest. On this view, gender relations are embedded in institutional arrangements that cannot forget or erase the past, because our institutions are grafted out of fragments and traces of the past. This in turn precludes the return to

⁶⁵ One reason for this reluctance may have been the intellectual milieu of the time, which Diouf characterises as one in which "the only acceptable approach is ideological conformity", such that "critical assessment of [Diop's work] is stigmatized as opportunist." (Diouf 1994b, 240) In support of this, he cites the virulent media attacks on AA. Dieng in response to his critique of Diop's work.

an edenic antiquity, because our very conceptualisation of the past is necessarily viewed through the complex institutions of the present. Moreover, as a number of contributors show, institutions have no drive towards internal consistency, and often display contradictory impulses, impulses which contour the meanings of gender in surprising and difficult configurations that resist easy recourse to narratives of primordial matriarchy (Tsikata 2001; Gaidzanwa 1997; Triki 1997) Tsikata's analysis of the gendered nature of the state in Ghana provides a rich illustration of this. She begins by analysing the way in which the colonial state's establishment of cocoa cultivation resulted in struggles over matrilineal laws of inheritance. Women's control over cocoa production was in part constrained by the colonial state's policy of directing agricultural extension services to male farmers. However, she argues, women were also constrained by precolonial legal regimes, which did not provide wives a reciprocal right to their husbands' labour and restricted their access to economic resources, so that women found it difficult to recruit the unpaid and paid labour needed to drive profitable cocoa production. Women with greater levels of autonomy responded by withholding their unpaid agricultural labour and, despite opposition from local male authorities, migrated to urban areas for trading work. Women traders' subsequently made substantial financial and political contributions to the anti-colonial struggle, and were rewarded by the ruling party in the post-independence dispensation. After the overthrow of the First Republic, the exposure of this relationship helped cement the view of women traders as powerful and corrupt, which then made it easy for the state to blame them for the economic and social crises of structural adjustment. When women traders were violently persecuted by the state, Tsikata observes, women's organisations that had been co-opted or created by the state under the banner of the UN Decade for Women remained silent. Here, Tsikata draws our attention to the complex and dynamic nature of gender struggles from the pre-colonial to the post-colonial, in which multiple meanings of womanhood and manhood have been structured by different relationships to land, law and political authority.

In this regard, Tsikata's analysis is a counterpoint to scholarship that seeks to demonstrate that the historicity of gender means that it must be treated purely as a subject of empirical analysis, and cannot be used as an analytical tool to investigate African social dynamics. For instance, Oyewumi (1997), in a variation on the theme of classical matriarchy, conducts a linguistic and cultural analysis of Yoruba society, on the basis of which she argues that seniority, rather than gender, organised pre-colonial Yoruba society. Consequently, she contends, a question

such as “Why are women victimised or subordinated?” is not a first-order question with respect to Yorubaland, because such a question assumes gender, rather than interrogating it (1997, 178). In her review of this book, Geiger (1999, 14) remarks “I would love to be a fly on the wall during a debate between Oyewumi and the scholars represented in *Engendering African Social Science*,” something which was not possible given that the two books were published concurrently. However, one of the contributors, Pereira (2004, 15) subsequently critiques the book, arguing that “Efforts to conceptualise gender need to go beyond showing that gender has not been constructed historically in the same ways in Africa, specifically Nigeria, compared to the West. One would indeed expect that this would be the case. What is of greater interest, however, is the significance of particular conceptualisations of gender, in terms of how this expands or restricts the possibilities for diverse categories of women and men, given the social conditions of their time.”

Indeed, contributors to the book, such as Tsikata, provide a more historically nuanced account, and therefore do not concern themselves with attempting to define ‘Africanness’ in relation to ‘Europeanness’, nor do they suggest that “the roles of women and men were equal and complementary in good old, harmonious, pre-colonial Africa.” (Zezeza 1997, 81) By embracing the notion of a multiplicity of African societies that are deeply complex, challenging and rich on their own terms, they render questions of what constitutes the essence of Africanity irrelevant. This does not mean that they foreclose the possibility of regional comparisons; however, their accounts suggest, meaningful comparisons only become possible in light of careful empirical work that focuses on the ways in which different gender relations have arisen in particular historical contexts, and how these relations have expanded and narrowed the possibilities for women and men in ways that are neither obvious nor uncomplicated.⁶⁶

Fidelity to historical complexity is also at odds with the teleological thrust of developmentalist perspectives that have dominated post-independence scholarship, both on the continent and within Anglo-American scholarship. In particular, modernisation perspectives (Mhone 1997), neo-Marxist perspectives (Hutchful 1997) and the neoclassical perspectives of

⁶⁶ This is clearly but one way of responding to the thesis of classical patriarchy. Contrast this, for instance, with Archie Mafeje’s comments on Cheikh Anta Diop’s work: “Although I have some reservations about the feasibility of [this] project, I feel compromised because I accept the fact that all cultural identities are invented and, therefore, there is no reason to suppose that Africans cannot invent their own pan-African cultural identity. Even so, we cannot with equanimity rule out contestation with African culture so universalised.” (Mafeje 1998, 105) Here, Mafeje takes Diop’s project to be one wholly of invention, where the invention itself is not problematic, so much as its universalising logic.

the World Bank (Elson 1997) characteristically work from the assumption that societies function better once certain economic and political principles are adopted. However, as these contributors argue, the increased exploitation and devaluation of women has often subsidised the development of new modes of ownership, production, consumption and investment in the colonial and post-independence era. Consequently, as Imam (1997) observes, such historicised perspectives of gender tend to complicate and undercut the teleological assumptions of developmentalist discourses. In doing so, they demonstrate that these perspectives have important continuities with colonial discourses on ‘civilising’ Africans, since, from the perspective of women, the political and economic processes associated with all these discourses “have frequently meant a decrease in economic autonomy, access to resources, status and security.” (Imam 1997, 7)

These critiques provide a way of re-reading the ideational relationship between the thesis of classical patriarchy and developmentalist accounts of African societies. Zeleza argues that both traditions produce a “static, frozen history of Africa”, in which fundamental change is conceptualised as an outcome of northern interference (Zeleza 1997, 95). Consequently, Mama contends, historicised accounts of gender invariably surface the deep relationship between “imperialist and Africanist discourses on culture [which] have emerged out of the historical condition of colonialism, more or less out of the same frame of reference, albeit on opposite sides, so that their discourses at once oppose and resonate with each other.” (Mama 1997b, 73) Adopting a historicised perspective on gender relations allows contributors to deftly avoid the same ahistorical frame of reference and thereby offer perspectives that do not treat colonialism as the hinge upon which African history turns.

This historicised conceptualisation of gender is also linked to a view of gender as a messy category – the idea that it is difficult to extricate gender relations from the complex weave of lived experience, marked as it is by multiple configurations of power, such as race, class and religion. Thus, for instance, contributors seldom speak of women or men in isolation from each other or from the broader dimensions of power that structure these relations. But precisely because it is a relation of power, Imam (1997, 20) argues, “Gender does not manifest as an absolute in pristine Splendour. It is present always in conjunction with other systems of social and economic relationship. A woman is not ‘just a woman’, she is also, at the same time, peasant, Wolof, caste, living in neo-colonial Senegal etc. Hence gender relations need to be analysed in

terms of their interrelations with other systems of stratification – and vice versa.” This is because social relations act “as different coloured threads, which are woven together to make the cloth of society. The individual threads can be traced, but to understand the design of the cloth one must also appreciate how each thread relates to the others.” (1997, 20)

Unlike AAWORD scholars then, contributors do not privilege colonialism and racism as the foundation upon which all other forms of oppression, including gendered oppressions, are built. Similarly, they depart from Marxist analyses that view all relations of oppression as explicable in terms of class relations within a capitalist society (Hutchful 1997), as well as the dependency school of thought that analyses oppression in terms of the spatial exploitation between metropole and periphery in the world capitalist system (Zezeza 1997). In place of these foundationalist conceptions of social stratification, they suggest that different threads of power are snarled and entangled with each other in a complex tapestry.⁶⁷

The metaphor of a social fabric is a rich one, and informs both their critique of universalism and particularism, as well as their attempt to conceptualise an alternative social theoretic framework. In the first place, contributors reject the attempt to apply claims rooted in the experiences of one group to the experiences of all – this would be like taking a single thread from a cloth and making it stand in for the entire complex weave. In this regard, they address fellow African scholars who have critiqued the false universalisation of much Anglo-American scholarship, to point out that this critique itself universalises the experiences of a small group of men. Similarly, they echo AAWORD’s concerns about the fallacious and racist ethnocentrism of white feminists, pointing out “there are startling parallels between what feminists find disappointing and insulting in Western philosophical thought and what many women have at troubling in much of Western feminism” (Spelman 1988 quoted in Zezeza 1997, 97). Part of this critique of false universalisms is an empirical one, since “it restricts the ways in which African social researchers are able to think and theorize. We are forced to take on board these norms and

⁶⁷ Although the discussion is focused on social theory, I use the term “foundationalism” from analytic epistemology as it is an apt one. It describes the position that a belief is justified in virtue of being supported by a more basic set of beliefs; similarly, Marxism attributes the force of various forms of oppression to a more basic form of class exploitation. Foundationalism in epistemology is typically contrasted with coherentism, the position that a belief is justified if it coheres with all or most of a person’s other (non-foundational) beliefs; in the social theoretical domain, postmodernism would probably most closely resemble coherentism. Clearly, the feminists under consideration fall in neither camp. The philosophical clarification of their position is an interesting, and to my knowledge, unexplored avenue of investigation, which would be worth exploring in subsequent research.

waste time tilting at windmills to find out why we deviate from these patterns instead of finding out what our own patterns and realities are.” (Imam and Mama 1994, 86) However, the critique is also motivated by political considerations about the ways in which false universalisations help constitute the logic of oppression. By extension then, a retreat into particularism is equally problematic, insofar as it brackets forms of oppression that are theorised in universalist accounts. Imam (1997, 17) explains:

in revolting against Western ethnocentric false universalisations, we should be careful not to enshrine in their place equally false essentialisations of Africanity, which disenfranchise us from examining certain aspects of oppressive relations (whether of gender, class or other group). What should be at issue is less the source of analysis than its nature and implications. These are, of course, intimately related. But the point is that theories should be criticised not because they are Western, but to the extent that, having developed in cultural, historical, class, racial and gender realities in the West, they misrepresent African realities and obscure analysis of *Africa sui generis*.

As a consequence, she argues, “It is precisely to develop a *more holistic social science* that gender analysis needs to be mainstreamed – incorporated as a principal element among those issues and considerations that should be automatically considered and taken into account. Doing so would enrich immensely the *scope and depth of knowledge*, and *clarify the nature of the social terrain* in a very different way.” (1997, 6, emphasis added) This clearly differs from more particularistic forms of feminist scholarship that are “fuelled by the empiricist principle that the more complex and intricate the unravelling of identities, the greater the value and academic standing of the text.” (Lewis 2007, 24) Instead, contributors typically advocate working towards the universal from careful and deep engagement with multiple perspectives. To return their metaphor of a social fabric, they seek to examine the ways in which relations of power are woven together to make complex patterns in the tapestry.

For this reason, it is more useful to consider contributors as advocating what might be called *holism of understanding*, rather than casting their work in terms as either a form of particularism or universalism. Such holism arguably has several characteristics. First, it makes

the claim that understanding is best achieved by investigating the relationship between the particular and the general. Second, individual understanding is at best partial and incomplete; it is when individuals engage each other through intellectual communities that a fuller picture emerges, so that the struggle towards the universal, towards that which we share in common, is a collective enterprise. This is a similar position to that of Sen (1993) who argues that objectivity has two requirements on us: first, it requires one to make one's positionality clear and second, it requires one to engage with views and experiences that are not our own; in doing so, the various ways in which one might be blind to the world come to be illuminated. However, unlike Sen, feminist contributors emphasise a third requirement on objectivity: when there are dissident thinkers, those who are on the margins of a group's consensus, then those thinkers require the strength of organisation and community to make their thought "reasonable" to the consensus – that is, worth considering, worth engaging with. Indeed, as the preceding narrative suggests, feminist struggles in CODESRIA arose precisely because feminist thought was considered unreasonable.

As this discussion illustrates, feminist contributions to CODESRIA's corpus of knowledge are informed by, and critical of multiple intellectual traditions rooted in different places and times. Their work does not reject any intellectual tradition out of hand; instead, they adopt and develop what they see as useful, and critique and discard that which is not useful. This pragmatic approach is evident in their engagement with northern feminist and Africanist traditions. In fact, one of the more interesting moves that contributors make is to draw out useful affinities between northern feminism and Africanist scholarship – not only their shared weakness for false universalisations, but also their beneficial tendency to draw on multiple methods across multiple disciplines in "their efforts to dismantle deeply entrenched biases and recover the history of long-suppressed, exploited and humiliated groups of people." (Zeleza 1997, 99) However, they also draw from intellectual influences that range far beyond these two traditions, and references to scholarly debates in South America, Asia and Eastern Europe pepper the volume, albeit to a lesser extent. Their work furthermore intersects with ideas that have currency outside of scholarship – in women's autonomous organising across the global South, in international development agencies, and in African bureaucracies.

Given this engagement with ideas from multiple regions, in what sense can their work be characterised as *African* scholarship? Conversely, one could ask, in what sense can the work of

feminist scholars located in Western Europe and Northern America be characterised as *northern*? As Geiger (1999) notes, a number of northern feminists have seriously considered critiques from feminists in the global South and attempted to revise their work accordingly. As a consequence, as Imam commented above, feminism is “considerably less White and Western dominated than many other social science paradigms, precisely because of the force and effectiveness of the critiques of African, Asian, Caribbean, Latin American and Pacific women” (1997, 16).⁶⁸

Perhaps then, the origin of ideas is less important than is sometimes supposed. After all, as the example of feminist scholarship in CODESRIA shows, ideas are like water; they do not obey the arbitrary political or cultural bounds that we construct. The river of ideas has multiple sources and many different kinds of thinkers come to drink from its waters and thereby enrich the common pool of knowledge.

Faced with ideas that stubbornly refuse to obey territorial and cultural boundaries, we could instead turn to Hountondji’s response to this question, that African philosophy (and by implication, scholarship in general) is simply the totality of texts written by philosophers who happen to be Africans (1983, 33). But this appeal to definitional fiat does not get us very far, since we have seen how feminist contributors reject the notion that Africanness is a given identity, and suggest that it is neither stable nor singular. If we cannot assume Africanness, as Hountondji does, on what grounds can we judge an intellectual work to be African?

I think that feminist struggles in CODESRIA, and the intellectual work they have produced, suggest the outlines of a different kind of answer, in which the characteristics of an individual’s work are less important than the nature of the intellectual community she participates in, and how this community imagines itself. To see why this might be the case, consider that feminist scholars in CODESRIA share three interesting characteristics. First, contributors are deeply embedded in and responsive to their contexts, and as such, actively attempt to cultivate a historical imagination. Second, they are not isolated from each other, but

⁶⁸ Thus, for instance, reflecting on the contributions of Amadiume, the American scholar Herbert observes that the “distinction between gender and biological sex has come as something of a revelation to western scholars, and yet the abundant literature on initiation makes clear that Africans have known all along that gender is socially, not biologically, created and that it evolves over the life cycle.” (Herbert 1993, 19) This flow of ideas from different regions is not limited to feminism; however, in the context of northern scholarship, these historical flows seem to have been forgotten. This has led scholars, like Appiah (2016), to argue that the concept of ‘western civilisation’ simply has no empirical content. While this argument may be too forceful in its attempt to provide a corrective to nativist and ahistorical understandings of Western European intellectual traditions, it makes clear that hard and fast regional classifications of intellectual and cultural identities are difficult to sustain and intellectually unsatisfying.

are instead located within an institutional framework that enables them to act as a pan-continental intellectual community. The combination of these two characteristics allows for a third characteristic: scholars who address each other, rather than the spectre of the West. As a consequence, they do not waste their time “tilting at windmills” by engaging in theoretical and empirical work in northern scholarship that is of poor intellectual quality or inapplicable to their contexts. Rather, they are more interested in the collective enterprise of understanding their contexts, and as such, draw on intellectual work from any context on the basis of how well it fits their purpose. One implication of this is that they are less concerned to demonstrate what is distinctively ‘African’ about their work, and more concerned with how well their intellectual community makes sense of, and troubles, their social world. Imam puts it succinctly: “This is not to say all points of [our] approach are uniquely peculiar to African scholars, but it is they (we) with whom I am concerned here.” (1997, 18)

In this way, then, they return us to the idea that common identities are not to be found, but are rather to be forged out of shared struggle, an idea that AAWORD incubated in its development of pan-continental and South-South organisational forms. But if shared struggle can enable the flowering of a common African identity, this identity must first be imagined into being. Asked what it means to be an African feminist, Mama reflects:

Because there are so many nations and nationalities on the African continent, feminism in Africa is inherently transnational. The continent has seen many civilizations, and long histories of trade and exchange with the rest of the world, including the recent stories of imperialism and colonialism ... [consequently] feminism takes multiple forms, rooted in struggles that predate and can therefore transcend the structures of modern states, to address the patriarchal legacies of capitalism at multiple locations. (Mama 2014)

For Mama, a historicised understanding of the social world intimately links scholarly engagement to political action, in that politically committed scholarship becomes a meaningful and coherent enterprise in virtue of its ability to imagine different ways of being in the world, an imagination that is fundamentally rooted in deep historical understanding. Asserting an identity as an African feminist is therefore an act of political imagination that draws on shared

experiences of civilizational flourishing and resistance, where an understanding of and participation in the struggles of women and men enables imaginings that can provide transnational and pan-continental views of a more just world.

This view of what it means to engage in African intellectual work consequently departs from Hountondji's belief in "the simple, obvious truth that Africa is above all a continent and the concept of Africa an empirical, geographical concept, and not a metaphysical one." (1983, 66) The statement that a body of scholarship is African not only includes a descriptive reference to the landmass on which these scholars were born, but also an aspirational and political reference to the ways in which feminist contributors are in the process of imagining into being an intellectual community on the basis of shared struggles (which are not only contoured by colonialism and racism, but also by gender, class, caste and so on). This community is bound together in virtue of the way in which its members are engaged in conversation with each other (rather than primarily reacting to northern scholarship) in order to sharpen their understanding of their contexts. Seen in this light, pan-continental scholarly organisations, such as AAWORD and CODESRIA, play an important role in bringing into being the intellectual communities and bodies of scholarship that are, in the deep sense of the word, African.

6.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I asked: *how have feminist struggles shaped CODESRIA as a knowledge commons?* The picture that emerges is of complicated and sometimes contradictory dynamics. From an organisational perspective, the development of feminist scholarship in CODESRIA was partially incubated in AAWORD, with which it had strong institutional ties. While AAWORD was initially suspicious about feminism, its pan-African structure nevertheless enabled a feminist intellectual community to develop. This ambiguity, I argued, was linked to three ideas: that the colonial encounter had profoundly reconfigured gender relations; that gender is intertwined with other relations of power; and that common identities can be forged out of shared struggle.

From a political and economic perspective, structural adjustment had an acutely destabilising effect on African universities and women's research organisations. As the institutional basis for autonomous research declined, feminist scholars, including those in

AAWORD, began to migrate towards the relative haven of CODESRIA, bringing with them their organisational and intellectual resources. The ensuing contestations over the minoritisation of female scholars in CODESRIA and the androcentric biases in its scholarly output were indecisive. On the one hand, the number of female scholars participating in the organisation's scientific and governance structures increased, and gender research was institutionalised in the form of dedicated training and publication initiatives. On the other hand, feminist scholars were unable to get oversight and accountability mechanisms implemented so as to ensure that gains were sustained and deepened. This is reflected in considerably less financial and publishing support for female scholars, the continuing minoritisation of female scholars in CODESRIA's General Assembly, and in the organisation's avoidance of explicitly feminist terminology in favour of more neutral discourses on gender.

Although feminist struggles have only had limited success in changing CODESRIA's organisational character, from an intellectual perspective these struggles fruitfully brought together multiple ideas from different geographies and intellectual domains. Feminist scholars in CODESRIA not only drew energy from critiquing northern feminism, but also engaged with Africanist and developmentalist traditions on the continent. In doing so, they reworked and complicated ideas that had been prevalent in AAWORD. This gave rise to a distinctive approach to doing feminist scholarship, which emphasises the historicity of gender relations in ways that reject essentialist and teleological accounts of African societies. Such historicism is linked to an understanding of gender as a messy concept, in the sense that it is deeply intertwined with other relations of power in ways that are profoundly context-specific. But, rather than embrace a particularistic account of the social world, they argue that the political exigencies of women's subordination requires scholars to build towards the universal out of the particular. This suggests an epistemic position that one might call *holism of understanding*. Holistic understanding has an important political requirement: if an intellectual community disputes or refuses to recognise the reasonableness of marginalised individuals, this community will fail to achieve a holistic understanding of the social world until such time as the marginalised individuals successfully engage in collective action to challenge their status as unreasonable. This requirement was clearly demonstrable in feminist contestations in CODESRIA.

The multiplicity of their intellectual influences, and their rejection of a stable, given African identity, in turn suggests a different way of thinking about what counts as 'African'

intellectual work, one which focuses not so much on the origin or distinctiveness of ideas, but on the nature of an intellectual community and how it imagines itself. What emerges perhaps most strongly from this analysis, then, is the view that African intellectual work is not so much a product of individuals, as it is a product of intellectual communities and their imaginaries. This is not to deny the individual authorial voice, but is rather to suggest that part of what it means to engage in African intellectual work is to situate oneself within a community that understands itself to be founded on the shared struggles of the continent, where members are bound together through critical engagement with one another in their attempts to provide a more holistic understanding of their contexts. As a consequence, their account suggests that excellence is the function of a community, rather than the attribute of a place. In doing so, this form of African feminism offers a genuine institutional alternative to the skewed institutions underlying regional inequalities, insofar as it renders the question of geography irrelevant to considerations of scholastic excellence.

I end this chapter by returning to the idea of ambiguity. We have seen how feminist contributors interrogate and develop the ideas rooted in AAWORD's ambiguous position on northern feminism. In doing so, they elaborate a nuanced and coherent approach to African feminism. But there are other kinds of unexplored ambiguities regarding contributors' positionality. Given the particularly acute difficulties that female scholars have faced within African universities, many of those that manage to engage in meaningful intellectual labour have often had access to independent means or international networks that enable them to withstand the immense political and economic pressures within their institutions. As one scholar in CODESRIA noted, "You have to have an independent fortune to really dedicate yourself to your work." (Anonymous CODESRIA officer 2015) As such, they could be described as a kind of disenfranchised aristocracy within the university. This liminality affords feminist scholars the opportunity to rethink the bounds of what counts as proper intellectual labour, by what authority someone is termed an intellectual and the ways in which the Europhone university in Africa can be reconceptualised accordingly. One way of approaching this would be to ask, what intellectual work have market women's associations, trade unions, farmers' associations, social movements, artists' collectives and the like produced? This is an important question that is not posed by feminist contributors in the book, and it seems like a critical missed opportunity. After all, like feminist scholars, intellectual actors on the margins of society are often treated as though they

cannot engage in meaningful intellectual labour, as though the very nature of their existence is simply a material one. Indeed, it does not seem as if this question has been posed systematically within any of CODESRIA's subsequent publications in the *Gender Series*. These unexplored possibilities, and the undecided outcomes of feminist contestations, suggest that African feminism in CODESRIA is still in the process of unfolding, and that the rich intellectual work feminists have thus far produced is but an intimation of its full flowering.

Chapter 7: Synthesis

In this chapter, I return to the overarching research question: *what factors have shaped CODESRIA as a pan-African knowledge commons in the context of inequality?* As a scholarly community that has not only endured, but has managed to thrive in a context marked by profound economic and political crises, CODESRIA provides a case study of the institutions, practices, and intellectual resources that are required to ensure that African knowledge systems flourish over the long-term. I begin by bringing together the three preceding chapters to consider which features of CODESRIA have contributed to its capacity to weather these crises and challenge epistemic inequality, and which features plausibly threaten its capacity to flourish in the long-term. This analysis emphasises the role of narratives of solidarity, the collective action of marginalised members, and the collective reflection of the community as a whole in building a commons characterised by coherent and cumulative scholarship. Yet if the commons is not autonomous, in the sense that it cannot set its own agenda and govern itself, these expressions of agency are unlikely to be effective. Seen in this light, constraints on CODESRIA's autonomy represent significant threats to its capacity to thrive and endure.

On the basis of this analysis, I then argue that the example of CODESRIA points to two features of knowledge commons that have hitherto been under-theorised. First, insofar as marginalised members are able to organise to compel dominant members to recognise the reasonableness of their concerns, contestations over inequality within a commons can give rise to intellectual and organisational renewal. In particular, the collective action of marginalised members has helped forge new epistemic institutions that mark a meaningful departure from the skewed institutions underlying epistemic inequality. However, when this does not happen as a consequence of constraints on the collective action of marginalised members, inequality can be a source of organisational stasis and atrophy, threatening the long-term sustainability of the commons. Second, knowledge commons are intimately dependent on public goods, such as universities. The analysis suggests that they are plausibly the source, and therefore the limit, of knowledge commons' capacity to flourish over the long-term. As a result, knowledge commons are likely complements to public goods provision, rather than substitutes. Since the problems of inequality and public goods provision are pervasive issues that plausibly affect most, if not all

knowledge commons, these theoretical implications are likely applicable to both southern and northern knowledge commons.

In light of this, I propose several further modifications to the Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework for investigating knowledge commons. I began this study by proposing modifications that were useful for comparative investigations into knowledge commons that emerge in response to inequality, many of which are visibly located in the global South. However, as this iteration makes clear, it may be useful for commons in general.

As such, this analytical synthesis makes three interventions. First, it contributes to the empirical literature on why some knowledge commons succeed and others perish, particularly in the global South. Second, it uses this empirical analysis to develop theoretical insights into how knowledge commons are shaped by the interplay between inequality inside and outside the commons, and elucidates the relationship between knowledge commons and public goods provision. Third, on the basis of this empirical and theoretical analysis, it deepens and extends the methodological framework for investigating knowledge commons. In doing so, the chapter demonstrates that analysing the role of marginalised groups in developing and governing knowledge commons is of empirical, theoretical and methodological value for the study of knowledge commons in general.

7.1. The sustainability of CODESRIA as a knowledge commons in the context of inequality

In this section, I consider which features of CODESRIA have plausibly contributed to its ability to emerge as a flourishing knowledge commons in a complex and difficult historical context, and which of its features might undermine this capacity in the long-term. I consider the problem that CODESRIA was constructed to address, the role of narrative, its intellectual and governance institutions, its relationships with other political and intellectual entities, and the patterns of interaction within its community and the outcomes these have produced.

One of the consequences of theorising commons in terms of experiences in the North is that commons are typically framed as a response to fragmented and expensive intellectual property rights and the problems of over-fencing and enclosure that they pose. However, CODESRIA was established within a very different context – African scholars' experience of

marginalisation and racism in Europe. Moreover, the academic project in Africa was – and is – in a structural relationship of dependency on northern scholarship, where this is characterised by rules of scholastic excellence that are skewed towards the knowledge and intellectual traditions of institutions in the global North. Within this context, institutions have primed African scholars to use northern scholarship and collaborate with northern scholars in a way that that excludes or denigrates other forms of scholarly collaboration. Viewed this way, CODESRIA was not constructed to address problems of intellectual property rights, but was instead constructed to address epistemic problems arising from colonial rule – namely dependency and fragmentation.

In order to counteract these skewed norms and values, CODESRIA needed a powerful counter-narrative which affirmed the possibilities and value of African scholarship. This was the narrative of pan-Africanism, woven from different political strands prominent during the first flush of independence – anti-colonialism, black solidarity, nationalism, state-centred pan-Africanism and third world solidarity. As a consequence, its pan-Africanism has not been confined to the idea of the African continent. Its pan-Africanism is larger than this, in the sense that the idea of the global South and the global North is embedded in it. Its pan-Africanism is also smaller than this, in the sense that it is entangled with the idea of the state. From these different ideational strands, it has forged a distinctive, new organisational form of pan-Africanism, which offers a non-governmental and profoundly intellectual alternative to state-centric and bureaucratic forms of pan-Africanism.

However, while a countervailing narrative of pan-Africanism was necessary for establishing CODESRIA as a pan-continental commons, it was clearly not sufficient. As Caffentzis notes, “no commons without a community” has been an axiom of commons studies in the global North (2012, 32). Yet, the context in which CODESRIA was established was precisely a context marked by an absence of community. This was so for several reasons. First, academic communities across the continent during this period were very much nascent, as universities were largely a fruit of post-independence. Second, the continent was deeply divided and fragmented along colonial lines. Third, inter-continental communication and transport were prohibitively expensive. The Internet had not yet been developed, and given the extraverted transport infrastructure developed under colonial rule, it was often cheaper to travel from Africa to Europe than to travel within Africa (something which is still true today; see, for instance, Fortin 2013). Thus, the founders of CODESRIA had to be committed to building its community.

In this regard, the establishment of CODESRIA required an expansive social imagination and a commitment to solidarity considerably ahead of the status quo. This expansive social imagination has arguably been buttressed by a form of pan-Africanism that is deeply generative, in that it is orientated to bringing about an imagined Africa.

Although the narratives and values of solidarity are important for cohering a new community and establishing its commons, they can also marginalise members who do not comfortably fit within this narrative. In this respect, scholars from the Maghreb and the Indian Ocean islands have sought to expand the narrative of black solidarity which has historically underwritten pan-Africanism. Moreover, the islands have been an important source of questions regarding the use of a continental landmass as an organising principle or unit of analysis in scholarship, and the ways in which this may reflect received colonial topographies rather than historical realities. These creolised identities therefore challenge the colonial conception of Africa as an entity defined by a unitary black identity and a contiguous landmass. As a mode of collective enquiry then, the multiple meanings of CODESRIA's pan-Africanism have created important space for contestations that have sought to trouble and expand the colonial conception of Africa. Even at its most assertive then, CODESRIA's pan-Africanism has retained a fundamental tendency towards the tentative and the experimental. This has allowed for the expression of doubt and conflict, at the same time as providing a normative anchor of solidarity and autonomy, so that CODESRIA's pan-Africanism is characterised by a dynamic and expansive imagination that continues to be questioned and reworked within specific historical constraints.

As the community of CODESRIA became stronger and more coherent, it began the work of building and sustaining intellectual institutions that are significantly different from those underlying the broader context of epistemic inequality between the South and the North. As I argued in the conceptual framework, the rules of scholastic excellence are skewed towards the North in a way that plausibly impedes collaboration between African scholars, so that their knowledge systems become increasingly fragmented and non-cumulative. In order to build a cohesive and cumulative knowledge system, CODESRIA would therefore have to develop an alternative set of intellectual standards. But building new institutions is a difficult and time-consuming affair. CODESRIA's founding commitment to fostering a "critical social science" represents perhaps the first attempts to do so in a systematic way. This intellectual orientation

was very much concerned with critiquing the “ideology of development” (Amin et al. 1978, 23), particularly as advocated by the World Bank during both its industrial policy phase (the period of Africa’s economic expansion) and its structural adjustment phase (the period of Africa’s economic contraction). In this sense, it falls squarely within what Zeleza (2009, 128) has called the “deconstructionist tradition” in African scholarship, which has focused on critiquing the empirical distortions of an externally-set intellectual agenda. While this tradition troubles the intellectual primacy of northern scholarship and institutions, the overarching focus on critiquing northern scholarship means that the terms of the debate are still set in the North.

However, the crises of structural adjustment helped ferment a new, more autonomous intellectual phase in CODESRIA. In the assessment of CODESRIA’s community, structural adjustment represented an attempt to dismantle the capacity for informed public deliberation, which is central to the autonomous and democratic functioning of a society. In light of this, CODESRIA’s community conceptualised its defence of the academic project as part of broader social struggles for sovereignty and democracy. This defence took on two interrelated forms: an intellectual defence and an organisational defence. Its intellectual defence assumed the shape of intense collective introspection on the nature of the academic project in Africa. It is difficult to convey the anguish and precarity of scholars working in this period. For many, it must have been tempting to react by critiquing the external agents driving this assault to the exclusion of all else, or, when faced with the sheer scale and depth of the assault, to resign themselves to the situation and opt out by leaving the continent. CODESRIA’s community chose to respond differently by engaging in collective reflection. This could not have been an easy path to take, but the returns were substantial. This sustained collective reflection contributed to a flowering of new ideas and ways of thinking, not least a distinctive articulation of academic freedom as being deeply bound up in social responsibilities. Indeed, the Kampala Declaration, which represents the first fruits of these collective reflections, continues to function as the main reference point for conceptualising academic freedom and investigating its breaches on the continent (see, for instance, Tamale 2000; Du Toit 2007; Appiagyei-Atua, Beiter, and Karran 2015), and has influenced global debates on academic freedom (UNESCO 1998). As a consequence of these collective reflections, CODESRIA made a decision to move away from its overwhelming focus on development, which arguably represented the demands of an externally-set agenda, and began to create space for scholars to respond to the internal dynamics of African societies and subject these responses to

critique within CODESRIA's community. On the basis of this, its organisational defence focused on providing the institutional and material conditions necessary for the scholarly community to engage freely with itself and ensure its intergenerational survival. In this respect, the Council initiated an academic freedom project; it set up training and support programmes for young researchers; and it dramatically expanded research funding and publications. As such, CODESRIA's defence of the academic project sought to build intellectual institutions that offered the possibility of developing a sustainable commons in which the community set its own terms of debate.

But perhaps the most profound attempt to create new intellectual standards in CODESRIA came from African feminists in the aftermath of adjustment. In the view of African feminists, the Council had adopted an androcentric and patriarchal form of pan-Africanism, which rendered the experiences of African women invisible in their scholarship, and marginalised both female and feminist scholars. In contesting these gender inequalities, they developed a distinctive tradition of feminism anchored in a deeply historicised understanding of gender relations. This feminism engages with and critiques African intellectual traditions, particularly Africanist historiography and political economy, as well as western feminism and mainstream developmental approaches. This multiplicity of intellectual influences, I argued, suggests that the origin of ideas is less relevant than the nature of an intellectual community and how it imagines itself. On this reading, part of what it means to engage in African intellectual work is to situate oneself within a community that understands itself to be founded on shared struggles, where members are bound together through critical engagement with one another in their attempts to provide a more holistic understanding of their contexts. Feminist scholars therefore address each other, rather than the spectre of the West. They do so in order to focus on the collective enterprise of understanding their contexts, and as such, draw on intellectual work from any context on the basis of how well it fits their purpose. One implication of this is that they are less concerned to demonstrate what is distinctively 'African' about their work, and more concerned with how well their intellectual community makes sense of, and troubles, their social world. Imam puts it succinctly: "This is not to say all points of [our] approach are uniquely peculiar to African scholars, but it is they (we) with whom I am concerned here." (Imam 1997, 18) As a consequence, their account does not attempt to shift the geography of reason from the North to the South; instead, it renders the question of geography irrelevant to considerations of

scholastic excellence. Excellence becomes the function of a community, rather than the attribute of a place.

However, feminist scholars have only had limited success in shaping the institutional character of CODESRIA. As a result, there may be multiple, competing standards of excellence within the community. For instance, the discussion of tensions and contestations within CODESRIA's pan-African structure suggests that conflicts over the financial administration of the organisation have sometimes been cast in terms of colonial linguistic divides, which have then been liable to take on intellectual overtones. This indicates the persistence of intellectual allegiances to the scholarly traditions of former colonial powers, such that standards of excellence are orientated around a Francophone/Anglophone axis. Seen from this perspective, the work of institution building is far from complete and is likely to be a source of ongoing contestations within CODESRIA.

The struggle of feminist scholars in turn demonstrates the ways in which dissident thinkers have contributed to rendering CODESRIA more objective. As previously discussed, Sen (1993) argues that objectivity has two requirements on us: first, it requires one to make one's positionality clear, and second, it requires one to engage with views and experiences that are not our own; in doing so, the various ways in which one might be blind to the world come to be illuminated. However, feminist scholars in CODESRIA emphasise a third requirement on objectivity: marginalised individuals are often not seen as reason-bearing, so that it appears as though there is little to be gained from engaging with their views; in such cases, they require the strength of organisation and community to make their thought reasonable to others.

This suggests that it would be a mistake to see inequality, in and of itself, as a source of intellectual and organisational renewal in CODESRIA. Rather, such renewal has come about when inequality has been forcefully contested by thinkers on the margins of the community's consensus. By organising as a collective, these dissident thinkers have compelled dominant members to recognise that they are reason-bearing individuals whose thought is worth considering and worth engaging with. Seen in this light, the collective action of marginalised members has played a significant role in CODESRIA's maturation and growth.

The capacity for CODESRIA to build strong scholastic institutions necessary for creating a knowledge system that is cohesive and cumulative in turn hinges on the ability of all its members to participate in governing the commons. This is because the collective action of

marginalised members, and the collective reflection of the community as a whole, could not effect meaningful change in CODESRIA if its intellectual agenda and governance structures were externally controlled. This implies that CODESRIA's autonomy has been critical to ensuring its flourishing, in the sense that autonomy is the capacity of a community to set its own agenda and govern itself. Moreover, as the chapter on structural adjustment showed, CODESRIA's autonomy has been an important factor in attracting new scholars to the organisation, who have in turn contributed to its intellectual and organisational vibrancy. In this regard, autonomy is important for ensuring the intergenerational renewal of CODESRIA. Linked to this, extensive empirical scholarship on natural resource commons demonstrates that sustainable commons are characterised by rules that are well-matched to local needs and conditions, and that individuals affected by these rules can participate in modifying them (E. Ostrom 1990). When members of a commons cannot participate effectively in its governance, due to the control of external actors, they are liable to grow disenchanted and eventually opt out of the commons, so that the commons becomes increasingly unstable and unsustainable. Seen in this light, autonomy is a central requirement on CODESRIA's capacity to thrive and endure.

CODESRIA's autonomy has been deeply bound up with the fate of African universities and research institutes. These public goods were initially the organisational and intellectual cornerstone of CODESRIA. They constituted the core membership of the organisation; they contributed an important source of funds; and they acted as a wellspring of ideas and scholars vital for maintaining its community. One would therefore have expected their demise under structural adjustment to signal the collapse of CODESRIA. However, the opposite occurred. This was a period of extraordinary intellectual ferment and organisational growth, as the Council became a refuge for scholars fleeing repression and an almost existential hunger for intellectual resources. CODESRIA was able to act as a refuge in part because it had developed into a strong community. But it was also able to draw on the political and economic support of government allies to maintain its autonomy. The Senegalese government granted diplomatic immunity to CODESRIA, which provided critical protection from other African states when they attempted to clamp down on academic and intellectual freedoms. In addition, Scandinavian governments, and in particular Sweden, have not only provided important core funding to the organisation, but have refused to cultivate the patron-client relations evident in the practices of other donors. This strong relationship with Nordic governments is in part an outcome of CODESRIA's unstated

strategy of engaging only with governments and donors that would not attempt to sway its intellectual trajectory. As one officer put it, “Many of us would rather die than have the World Bank tell us what to do research on.” (Anonymous CODESRIA officer 2015) Thus, in the context of increasing hostility towards higher education on the part of African governments and international financial institutions, CODESRIA required not only a normative commitment to autonomy, but also political and economic support from sympathetic governments in order to secure a measure of autonomy.

The destabilisation and decline of African higher education has nevertheless complicated and limited CODESRIA’s autonomy significantly. In the short term, CODESRIA may have been able to survive and grow during structural adjustment. In the longer term, however, the financial and intellectual collapse of African universities has fundamentally weakened the mechanisms necessary for maintaining its democratic character and intellectual vibrancy. In the first place, divestment from higher education coupled with the general constraints of economic crisis changed CODESRIA’s funding structure. As membership fees decreased to negligible levels, the organisation became almost completely donor dependent. This donor dependency appears to have inverted its accountability structure: while the organisation’s Executive Secretariat is formally accountable to the General Assembly, in practice the General Assembly is, in some ways, accountable to the Executive Secretariat. This is because many scholars now lack the financial wherewithal to attend the General Assembly, and since the Executive Secretariat controls the purse strings, it can exercise considerable power over who gets to attend the General Assembly. The Executive Secretariat is in turn accountable to donors, in part because it is tasked with fundraising and managing donor relations. The result is that, when it comes to matters of financial administration and transparency, the organisation appears to have become more accountable to donors than to its own constituency. In this regard, it is telling that, while donors have access to the organisation’s annual financial reports and audits, the General Assembly does not. Donor dependency may also have given donors greater control over CODESRIA’s intellectual trajectory, despite its strong commitment to intellectual autonomy. There are a number of indications of this, not least the closure of the academic freedom programme as a consequence of shifting donor priorities.

CODESRIA has nevertheless striven to minimise the negative effects of donor dependency, in part by ensuring that it has long-term core funding from sympathetic

Scandinavian governments. This has given CODESRIA the latitude to pursue its own intellectual agenda without having to tailor its projects to suit the preferences of donors. However, in recent years its funding has increasingly been composed of short-term project-specific funding from philanthropic foundations in North America and Europe. This kind of funding requires CODESRIA to demonstrate that it meets the requirements of a specific project, which gives donors a greater say in the intellectual agenda of the organisation, and introduces a high degree of uncertainty, which makes it difficult to plan for the long-term. Should Scandinavian donors make a decision to decrease or withdraw core funding, CODESRIA will become overwhelmingly reliant on project-specific funding, which will in turn deepen the constraints on autonomy posed by donor dependency.

As the analysis showed, CODESRIA recognises that it is not compelled to remain dependent on donors, and has in fact identified an endowment fund as the surest means of ensuring its financial autonomy. However, while the idea of an endowment fund was first introduced in 1988, the organisation has taken nearly thirty years to establish it, and by all accounts, the endowment fund is still not fully operational. One reason for this might lie in its inverted accountability structure. The General Assembly has become distanced from matters of financial governance and has left issues of financial strategy to the Executive Secretariat, which is well-funded and therefore has no immediate, pressing reason to pursue an alternative policy. In this way, donor dependency has helped create the conditions that make it difficult for CODESRIA to extract itself from donor dependency.

Moreover, the collapse of research infrastructure and the deterioration of teaching and scholarship in African universities seem to have contributed to a diminution in the quality of intellectual debates within the organisation in two regards. One, the poor training of young scholars in the post-adjustment period seems to have made it difficult for them to contribute as intellectual equals in the organisation, thereby endangering the community's capacity for intergenerational renewal and intellectual vibrancy. Two, there has been a deterioration in the visibility, sustainability and quality of the organisation's journals. In this regard, the erosion of the political and economic underpinnings of the academic project may have impeded CODESRIA's ability to act as a space for critical argument in which the right to intellectual "heresy" is guaranteed. This explains the disappointment of interviewees with the current quality of intellectual work in their community. It also provides an additional reason for the apparent

lack of institutional will to move away from donor dependency, for institutional change to be driven from within arguably requires sustained collective self-reflection and criticism. As a consequence, I have argued, CODESRIA illustrates the ways in which knowledge commons are profoundly dependent on public goods provision, shaping not only the nature of their intellectual resources, but also their organisational forms.

Indeed, one of the strongest limitations on feminists' struggles to change the organisation derives from the character of African universities. The minoritisation of female scholars in African universities has led to their minoritisation in CODESRIA, which has in turn constrained the capacity of feminist scholars to ensure that oversight and accountability mechanisms are implemented so that concrete steps are taken to sustain and expand the role of female scholars and feminist scholarship in the organisation. As a consequence, female scholars continue to be a minority in the organisation, while feminist scholarship is largely limited to the *Gender Series*. Against this backdrop, the ghettoization of feminist scholarship and the hollowing out of feminist discourses on gender remains a constant threat. Moreover, the decline of AAWORD, the pan-African feminist research organisation, seems to have been due in part to the way in which female scholars were often the losers in contests over resources that became increasingly scarce during structural adjustment. This in turn contributed to the movement of female scholars to CODESRIA. This suggests that CODESRIA's expansion may have sometimes been a result of the decline in other pan-African and regional organisations.

In addition to this, the material and institutional weaknesses of African universities, coupled with the enduring influence of colonial frameworks, has complicated and limited CODESRIA's pan-African imagination. The perception that CODESRIA is relatively better resourced than universities on the continent seems to have created a situation in which individuals have attempted to mobilise constituencies in order to access scarce resources in the organisation. To do so, they have used colonial political categories of region and language. This is in part a reflection of CODESRIA's organisational design, which was modelled on the political divisions of first the OAU and then the AU; these divisions reify the Westphalian nation state model and the linguistic divisions bequeathed by colonial rule. It is also in part a reflection of the enduring intellectual influence of former colonial powers in African universities, such that differences between French and Anglo-American scholarship translate into differences between Anglophone and Francophone African scholarship. As a result, colonial linguistic divides are

liable to take on intellectual overtones. However, the competition for scarce resources within the organisation seems to have given colonial boundaries of language and region a new lease on life by investing them with not only symbolic meaning but also political and economic utility. Yet the choice not to pursue the use of African languages, which would plausibly disrupt these patterns, is in part a function of the fact that most African universities do not use African languages as a medium of instruction or research.

This analysis of CODESRIA's intellectual and institutional character suggests that there are four key features which have contributed to its capacity to endure and flourish as a commons in a deeply unequal world. First, CODESRIA was founded on a powerful narrative of pan-Africanism; the expansive imagination of this narrative affirmed the possibilities and value of African scholarship in a context defined by its negation. This narrative was important not only for countering these skewed norms and values, but was also an important source of commitment to building a nascent community of scholars in a highly fragmented and extroverted context

Second, contestations over inequality within CODESRIA have been the source of intellectual and organisational renewal, insofar as marginalised members have been able to organise to compel dominant members to recognise the reasonableness of their concerns, Feminist scholars' collective action, in particular, has pioneered new standards of scholastic excellence that offer a genuine alternative to the skewed standards inherited from colonial rule. These new standards define excellence as the function of a community, rather than the attribute of a place. Such institution building is critical to developing a more cohesive and cumulative knowledge system that is able to engage with other knowledge systems on an equal footing. Third, and related to this, CODESRIA chose to respond to structural adjustment and its assault on African societies by engaging in intense introspection. This introspection helped formulate a more autonomous phase in CODESRIA, characterised by the need to respond not only to the demands of an externally-set agenda, but also to respond to the internal dynamics of African societies and subject these responses to critique within CODESRIA's community. As with the collective action of marginalised scholars, this collective self-reflection has been critical to building new intellectual institutions that offer the possibility of developing a more cohesive and cumulative commons. Fourth, CODESRIA's capacity to maintain its autonomy has been critical to ensuring that such collective action and introspection could bear fruit. Faced with hostility from African governments and international financial institutions, CODESRIA required not only

a normative commitment to autonomy, but also political and economic support from sympathetic governments.

Factors that limit and endanger CODESRIA's autonomy in turn constitute the most significant threats to its capacity to flourish in the long-term. Perhaps the most obvious threat to CODESRIA's autonomy lies in its donor dependency. While the analysis showed that the General Assembly continues to play an important role in governing CODESRIA, donor dependency has nevertheless eroded the organisation's internal accountability mechanisms and given donors greater control over its financial governance and intellectual agenda. CODESRIA's ability to attract core funding from donors that appear to be guided by values of solidarity and non-interference has arguably mitigated the worst effects of donor dependency. Nevertheless, if donors stop providing core funding, CODESRIA will be forced to seek funding for individual programmes tailored to the interests of donors. This will not only give donors a much stronger hand in the organisation's intellectual agenda in the short-term, but will also introduce significant organisational uncertainty, which will make it difficult for the community to make the kinds of long-term, strategic decisions necessary for driving a coherent, far-sighted intellectual programme.

However, donor dependency is arguably a symptom of deeper constraints on CODESRIA's autonomy, which has been deeply bound up with the fortunes of public higher education on the continent. African universities have been an important source of intellectual and organisational vitality in CODESRIA, but they have also complicated and limited its autonomy in a number of different ways. First, the erosion of the political and economic underpinnings of African universities diminished CODESRIA's internal accountability structures and impeded its capacity to engage in self-reflection and critique. This, I argued, has been a key reason for CODESRIA's lack of institutional will to move away from donor dependency. Linked to this, the intellectual decline of African universities under structural adjustment has inhibited intergenerational renewal within CODESRIA, which is essential for its long-term flourishing. Second, the minoritisation of female scholars in universities has led to their minoritisation in CODESRIA, which has in turn constrained the capacity of feminist scholars to effect the kind of deep institutional change required for CODESRIA to build a more cohesive and cumulative knowledge system. Third, universities' intellectual dependence on former colonial powers, coupled with their maintenance of colonial languages, has limited the capacity for CODESRIA to

enact its pan-African vision. Taken together, these factors threaten the capacity of CODESRIA to function as an expansive, self-governing commons for debate and collaboration among African scholars.

7.2. Theorising knowledge commons from an African perspective

The study of the knowledge commons has thus far tended to focus on commons within the global North. Scholarship on knowledge commons in the global South tends to follow this pattern, and considers how communities are excluded from commons in the global North or how their commons are threatened with enclosure by agents from the North. However, the establishment of CODESRIA predates this body of scholarship by almost forty years. Its example compels us to pay attention to the southern commons on their own terms, and not just in relation to the global North. This section considers the theoretical implications of doing so. I focus on two inter-related elements: inequality within the commons, and the relationship between the commons and public goods.

In the conceptual framework, I sought to demonstrate that the skewed institutions underlying systemic inequality constitute a form of over-fencing, and are theoretically a non-pecuniary analogue to complex and expensive intellectual property rights. These skewed institutions should have differential effects: they impede collaboration among subordinate groups and facilitate collaboration among dominant groups. The result is that, while dominant groups are able to build increasingly cohesive and cumulative knowledge systems, the knowledge systems of subordinate groups grow increasingly fragmented and non-cumulative. Moreover, these skewed institutions exclude subordinate groups from governing their own knowledge systems, so that these systems become fragile and unstable. In this regard, inequality can impede the development of flourishing and sustainable knowledge systems.

However, this study of CODESRIA demonstrates that the capacity of subordinate individuals to contest inequality within a commons can also be a source of intellectual and organisational dynamism. By organising as a collective, dissident thinkers can compel dominant members to recognise that they are reason-bearing individuals whose thought is worth considering and worth engaging with. This in turn opens up new ways of thinking and

contributes to building institutions that facilitate scholarly collaboration within the commons. Seen in this light, the collective action of subordinate individuals is critical to developing new institutions that lead away from the problem of over-fencing that systemic inequality poses to the knowledge commons.

When subordinate members are not able to challenge dominant members successfully, however, inequality can lead to stasis and deterioration in the commons. This was evident in two instances in CODESRIA. First, young scholars have not successfully contested intergenerational inequality within CODESRIA by, for instance, demanding structured mentoring programmes that help them to hone their scholarly craft in the absence of quality doctoral and postdoctoral programmes on the continent. Young scholars are the lifeblood of a scholarly community, and without their equal participation in CODESRIA, the organisation has arguably become intellectually brittle and threatened with intergenerational collapse. Second, the advent of donor dependency has shifted the balance of power away from the General Assembly towards the Executive Secretariat and donor organisations. Yet the General Assembly has not successfully contested this by, for instance, demanding financial transparency and the implementation of a functional endowment fund. The result is that CODESRIA's autonomy is subject to the whims of donors who are in a position to exert control over its intellectual and organisational trajectory if they so choose. Without autonomy, CODESRIA will not be able to attract and retain cutting-edge scholars, and the community's collective action and introspection is unlikely to succeed in building the institutions necessary for a more cohesive and cumulative knowledge system. Viewed from this perspective, when inequality is unsuccessfully challenged, it can render a commons unstable and unsustainable over the long-run.

This suggests that the collective agency of subordinate members is central to the flourishing of knowledge commons. They play a key role in determining whether a knowledge commons flourishes or withers. Since inequality is likely present in most, if not all social settings, it is arguably of theoretical significance to many knowledge commons, regardless of whether they are located in the South or the North. If this is correct, then the collective agency of marginalised members, and the constraints on this agency, should have a *prima facie* foundational role to play in investigating the dynamics of knowledge commons in general. That is, it is likely a good rule of thumb to assume that inequality is an important variable when beginning an investigation into a knowledge commons until the evidence shows otherwise. This

is a significant departure from much scholarship on the knowledge commons, which has paid little attention to the role of inequality in the knowledge commons, or the capacity of subordinate members to challenge this inequality and thereby shape the commons.

The second theoretical element concerns the relationship between knowledge commons and public goods. This study demonstrates how deeply CODESRIA has been bound up in the fortunes of public universities on the continent. This is because its community is largely constituted by scholars who are located within these universities. As a consequence, the character of public universities has had a profound impact on the intellectual and organisational composition of CODESRIA. The intellectual preoccupations of public universities, the quality of their scholarship and training, their institutional autonomy, and the financial constraints under which they operate all have profound impacts on the nature of CODESRIA. While African universities have been a wellspring of ideas and scholars for CODESRIA, these universities have also complicated and limited its autonomy. Their intellectual and linguistic dependency on former colonial powers has narrowed the scope for CODESRIA to enact its pan-African vision, while the minoritisation of female scholars in universities has constrained the capacity of feminist scholars to effect deep institutional change in CODESRIA. Moreover, the decline of African universities during structural adjustment initially contributed to CODESRIA's growth and influence. However, over the longer term, it has diminished CODESRIA's internal accountability structures, impeded its capacity to engage in self-reflection and critique, and inhibited intergenerational renewal within the organisation. These limitations on CODESRIA's autonomy, I argued, have plausibly constrained its capacity to build a cohesive and cumulative knowledge system, and have helped to ossify and destabilise it.

It is unclear how these problems will be resolved in the immediate future. Universities continue to grapple with these problems, and as the analysis indicates, CODESRIA has only been able to influence African universities to a limited extent, in part because it is deeply dependent on them. This suggests that African universities are the source, and therefore the limit, of CODESRIA's capacity to flourish over the long-term. As a consequence, CODESRIA cannot be approached as an alternative to universities, for they are the bedrock upon which CODESRIA rests.

This indicates that knowledge commons are often better understood as a complement to public goods provision, rather than a substitute. While much of the commons literature has

focused on the ways in which commons present alternatives to both the market and the state, a small but important body of scholarship has sought to demonstrate that commons are entangled with resources that are governed in the public domain or through private property arrangements (see, for instance, Benkler 2014). This study of CODESRIA contributes to this literature, and adds a further insight – the characteristics of public goods provision may shape the characteristics of the knowledge commons in ways that are complex and not immediately obvious. For instance, while knowledge commons may emerge in the short term as an apparent solution to the decline of public goods provision, in the long-run the decline of public goods provision may contribute to increasingly fragile and fragmented knowledge commons. As a consequence, the relationship between knowledge commons and public goods provision cannot be treated as a background assumption, but is of central theoretical importance when considering the factors that contribute to the flourishing of the knowledge commons, as well as its deterioration. This is so particularly in contexts where public goods are ill-provisioned, threatened with closure, or managed in ways that are unequal or unsustainable. Many knowledge commons located in both the South and the North clearly operate within such contexts; moreover, knowledge commons that attempt to operate on a global level are likely shaped by the provisioning of public goods at national and regional levels.⁶⁹

This in turn provides a concrete check on the tendency to view “community production as an alternative model for knowledge production [with the risk that] community production may be emerging as an alternative panacean approach.” (Frischmann, Madison, and Strandburg 2014a, 6) By making the relationship between knowledge commons and public goods an explicit object of enquiry, this approach contributes to commons scholarship that emphasises the risks of trying to apply “abstract cure-all proposals for solving complex problems”, and therefore develops theoretical tools to guard against panacean thinking (E. Ostrom, Janssen, and Anderies 2007, 15176).

This theoretical discussion is derived from an empirical study of a knowledge commons that emerged in response to the problem of systemic regional inequalities between the South and the North. Indeed, many southern commons, such as the Scientific Electronic Library Online

⁶⁹ Wikipedia is a good illustration of this. A study conducted in 2015 found that 45 percent of all edits to Wikipedia came from five countries (the United States, United Kingdom, Germany Italy and France) and that there are more Wikipedia editors from the Netherlands than all of Africa combined (Graham, Straumann, and Hogan 2015). The overwhelming dominance of northern editors to Wikipedia is likely due to a complex set of factors, including lower levels of broadband in the global South and lower levels of state investment in education in these countries.

(SciELO) in Latin America and the Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS), are visible responses to the problem of such inequality.⁷⁰ As a consequence, this theoretical discussion is most clearly applicable to southern commons. However, as I have argued, the problems of inequality and public goods provision are pervasive issues that plausibly affect most, if not all knowledge commons, regardless of their geographical location or the original problem they were constructed to address. It follows that the theoretical implications of this study are likely applicable, to a lesser or greater extent, to both southern and northern knowledge commons.

7.3. Revisiting the IAD framework for investigating knowledge commons

On the basis of the preceding empirical and theoretical analysis, this section considers several further revisions to the IAD framework which are plausibly useful for investigating knowledge commons. Although this framework is specifically developed for the study of commons that emerge in response to the problem of inequality, which are most visibly located in the global South, I have argued that the theoretical implications of this study likely apply to most, if not all knowledge commons. As such, this formulation of the IAD framework may also prove useful for investigating commons that do not emerge in response to the problem of inequality.

At the start of this study, I examined existing formulations of the framework, which largely conceptualise knowledge commons as a response to the problem of over-fencing that intellectual property rights pose. However, I argued, in the context of southern knowledge commons a different form of over-fencing may be more relevant: that arising from systemic inequality which is institutionalised in the form of skewed standards of scholastic excellence. In addition, inequality can exist both outside and inside the commons. I therefore adapted the IAD framework for investigating the role of external and internal inequalities in knowledge commons. The aim was to operationalise the framework to help identify the general set of elements and questions that comparative research on southern knowledge commons would plausibly need to consider. To do so, I used the theoretical analysis of the relationship between inequality and the knowledge commons that I had developed in the conceptual framework. As such, the proposed

⁷⁰ For an overview of the genesis, objectives and history of SciELO, see Packer (2009). The ACSS (2017) provides a brief history of its establishment, and Tshirgi (2006) provides a summary of the early discussions that led to its establishment.

questions were tentative and open to revision on the basis of the subsequent empirical analysis.

The empirical and theoretical analysis in this chapter indicates that these initial questions are useful ones and should be retained. However, the discussion also indicates several lacunae in this early version of the framework. These include the agency of subordinate members of the commons, the role of public goods provision, the autonomy of the commons, and its potential costs. I therefore propose a further set of questions that addresses each of these issues.

Table 7 sets out the revisions to the IAD framework. The first column sets out each element of the IAD framework as specified by Frischmann et al. (2014a). The second column outlines the buckets of questions that were developed at the start of this study in order to guide an investigation into knowledge commons, such as CODESRIA, that arise in the context of inequality. The third column indicates how the buckets of questions could be supplemented to reflect the empirical and theoretical analysis in this chapter.

First, the capacity of subordinate members to challenge inequality within the commons is now made an explicit object of investigation, particularly with reference to the creation of new institutions that facilitate collaboration within the commons, and the ways in which this may shape the capacity of the commons to produce high quality scholarship and renew itself over time. Since struggles over inequality may be more or less successful in generating strong institutions, such struggles may give rise to a situation in which there are multiple, conflicting institutions. The dynamics and consequences of this are also highlighted in the framework. On the other hand, when subordinate members are not able to challenge dominant members successfully, inequality can lead to stasis and deterioration in the commons, so that the commons begins to function as an old boys' club. This is particularly explored in the sections addressing participation in the action arena and its resultant patterns of interaction.

Second, the role of public goods provision is treated as a central factor in investigating the underlying situation of the commons, its action arena and the resultant pattern of interactions. This is in keeping with the insight that the character of public goods provision may contribute to the flourishing of the knowledge commons, as well as its deterioration.

Third, autonomy is introduced as an evaluative criterion for judging the flourishing of the commons. The framework emphasises that the capacity of the commons to set its own intellectual agenda and govern itself cannot be taken for granted, but should instead be the subject of empirical investigation. While the determinants of a commons' capacity to maintain its

autonomy are left fairly open, the framework does provide the possibility of linking autonomy to public goods provision, so that the framework is flexible enough to investigate autonomy in different contexts.

Finally, although the initial formulation of the framework deliberately underspecified the costs and risks of the outcomes emanating from the commons, this formulation specifies the way in which a knowledge commons may have negative outcomes in two ways. First, it indicates that a commons can ossify into an “old boys’ club”, and links this back to the dynamics of inequality within the commons, where this may be inflected by multiple power relations, such as gender, age, language and so on. Second, it indicates that commons may crowd out other initiatives or benefit from their decline.

As discussed in the methodological framework, this formulation of the IAD framework is necessarily provisional. The framework was originally developed to facilitate the comparative analysis of institutions, and in particular, the institutional arrangements of natural resource commons. Since the management of knowledge presents different kinds of problems and opportunities, scholars have had to adapt the IAD framework for the study of knowledge commons. Yet empirical work on knowledge commons is still in its infancy and it would be premature to expect these early adaptations of the framework to capture the deep structural dynamics and nuances of knowledge commons. As a consequence, the IAD framework for knowledge commons is very much a work in progress, and should be refined and reworked as our empirical understanding of knowledge commons improves.

Table 7: IAD framework for studying knowledge commons in a context of inequality

<i>Original formulation in the context of inequality</i>	<i>Supplementary questions</i>
1. Underlying situation	
1.1 Background environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent is inequality salient to the context? What is the institutional nature of this external inequality? ▪ Which public goods are salient in this context? What are their characteristics? ▪ To what extent, and with what consequences, are public goods ill-provisioned, threatened with closure, or managed in ways that are unequal or unsustainable?
i. Resource characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How do the institutions underlying external inequality shape the intellectual and material resources of the commons? How does inequality within the commons shape access to resources? ▪ How does the provisioning and governance of public goods shape access to resources?
ii. Community characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How is participation inflected by vectors of inequality within the commons, such as race, class, gender, age, nationality? ▪ How does the provisioning and governance of public goods shape participation in the commons?
iii. Aims and objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is the commons constructed to address problems arising out of inequality external inequality (such as over-fencing) or problems that arise aside from such inequality (such as curating research that is linguistically fragmented)?
iv. History and narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How has the commons changed over time? What is the narrative of its creation and operation with regard to inequality? How do changes in the narrative over time, or conflicts embedded within the narrative illustrate debates over purpose, illuminate the normative foundations of commons and highlight points of conflict, particularly with regard to inequality within the commons?

i. Openness and control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How is access and governance inflected by vectors of inequality within the commons, such as race, class, gender, age, nationality? 	
ii. Exogenous governance mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are the prevailing external standards of scholastic excellence in terms of language, style, intellectual tradition, intended audience? Who and what do they rule in and rule out? To what extent do these standards discourage collaboration within the commons? ▪ How is the commons nested in broader social systems? Which organisations fund the community, and how do they play a role in governing the community? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How does the provisioning and governance of public goods shape the governance mechanisms of the commons?
iii. Endogenous governance mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Who does the community serve – scholars and universities, international donors, international organisations, social movements, trade unions, markets, national governments? How does the broader context of inequality shape its capacity to serve its constituencies? ▪ What are the self-governance mechanisms? How do they differ from the exogenous governance mechanisms? How do conflicts or points of convergence between formal and informal rules reflect inequalities inside and outside the commons? ▪ To what extent do self-governance mechanisms rely on external institutions? 	
iv. Rules and norms for particular action arenas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are there different rules and norms for different action arenas? What does this reveal about the ways in which inequality is contested and reproduced? 	
2. Action arena		
2.1. Who are the subjects?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How are participation and incentive structures inflected by vectors of inequality within the commons, such as race, 	

<p>2.2. How do subjects interact?</p>	<p>class, gender, age, nationality?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How do participants respond to inequality inside and outside the commons? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How do subordinate or marginalised participants contest inequality within the commons? What factors enable or constrain their successful contestation? ▪ How do participants respond to crises inside and outside of the commons?
<p>3.1. Patterns of interaction:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do patterns of interaction suggest that actors are isolated from one another or are there clusters of strong collaboration? What light does this cast on inequality outside and inside the commons? ▪ Are the patterns of interaction stable over time, or do some actors opt out of participating? What does this reveal about the dynamics of inequality outside and inside the commons? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How does the provisioning and governance of public goods shape the patterns of interaction in the commons?
<p>3.2. What are the benefits?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do patterns of interaction result in standards of excellence that promote collaboration within the commons? ▪ Do patterns of interaction result in research that is connected and cumulative, and who benefits from this? ▪ Do patterns of interaction ensure that the commons is able to renew itself over generations? What are the likely impediments to this? ▪ What is the relationship between these standards of excellence, the nature of scholarly production, and the sustainability of the commons? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are the outcomes of struggles over inequality in the commons? ▪ To what extent do struggles over inequality result in new institutions? How do these institutions promote or disable collaboration and in what ways do they shape scholarly production and the resilience of the commons? ▪ To what extent do struggles over inequality result in conflicting institutions? What are the consequences of these conflicts, and how are they negotiated or resolved? ▪ To what extent is the commons autonomous – that is, able to set its own intellectual agenda and govern itself? What factors enable or constrain its autonomy?

3.3. What are the costs?

- What are the costs and risks of the outcomes emanating from the commons?

- To what extent does the commons function as an “old boys’ club”, excluding those without the necessary networks or those with a different epistemic orientation? To what extent is this a function of inequalities within the commons that are unsuccessfully challenged?
- Does the commons crowd out other initiatives or benefit from their decline?

7.4. Conclusion

This chapter provided an analytical synthesis of the empirical findings in order to examine the factors that have contributed to CODESRIA's emergence and persistence as a thriving commons in a context of inequality marked by profound economic and political crises. This generated three insights. First, it indicated that narratives of solidarity, the collective action of marginalised members, and the collective reflection of the community as a whole have all played an important role in building a commons characterised by coherent and cumulative scholarship. Yet CODESRIA's community has only been able to do so in virtue of its carefully guarded autonomy. Factors which undermine CODESRIA's autonomy therefore represent significant dangers to its long-term flourishing.

Second, this chapter cast light on two features of knowledge commons that have hitherto been under-theorised: inequality and public goods provision. In the first instance, it shows that contestations over inequality within the commons can be a source of intellectual and organisational renewal when marginalised members are able to organise to compel dominant members to recognise the reasonableness of their concerns. In particular, their collective action can lead to new institutions that depart in meaningful ways from the skewed institutions underlying external inequality. But when marginalised members are not able to challenge inequality successfully, inequality in the commons can be a source of organisational stasis and atrophy. This suggests that the collective agency of marginalised members is central to the flourishing of knowledge commons. When investigating a knowledge commons, it is therefore a good rule of thumb to begin by assuming that the interplay between external and internal inequality will play an important role until the evidence indicates otherwise.

In addition, the chapter illustrated the ways in which knowledge commons are deeply bound up with the fortunes of public goods. They are plausibly the source, and therefore the limit, of knowledge commons' capacity to flourish over the long-term. However, knowledge commons, especially in the form of research networks, have sometimes been proposed as an alternative to public goods provision, particularly in contexts where public goods provision is threatened.⁷¹ In contrast to this, the analysis shows that knowledge commons cannot be treated as

⁷¹ This view has been particularly common among donors during structural adjustment and its aftermath. For an overview of donor support for African research networks vis-à-vis universities, see Kinyanjui (1994) and Sall

a panacea for the retreat of the state. Moreover, the relationship between knowledge commons and public goods is neither obvious nor direct. This means that the relationship between knowledge commons and public goods should not be treated as a background assumption, but is of central theoretical importance when considering the factors that contribute to the flourishing of the knowledge commons, as well as its deterioration.

Since the problems of inequality and public goods provision are pervasive issues that plausibly affect most, if not all knowledge commons, these theoretical implications are likely applicable to both southern and northern knowledge commons. This suggests that theorising from the perspective of southern commons provides new ways of understanding the dynamics of knowledge commons in general.

Third, this chapter showed that reconceptualising knowledge commons in terms of inequality opens up new lines of empirical investigation. Building on the preceding empirical and theoretical analysis, this chapter further revised the IAD framework to consider issues which are plausibly useful for investigating knowledge commons. These revisions address the agency of subordinate members of the commons, the role of public goods provision, the autonomy of the commons, and its potential costs. This framework is specifically developed for the study of commons that emerge in response to the problem of inequality, which are most visibly located in the global South. However, since the theoretical implications of this study likely apply to most knowledge commons, it may also prove useful for investigating commons that do not emerge in response to the problem of inequality.

As a whole then, this chapter demonstrated that rethinking the knowledge commons in terms of the predicaments of African intellectual communities provides new ways of understanding the possibilities, constraints and contradictions of knowledge commons in an unequal world.

(2003). For an indication of donor thinking on the importance of supporting research networks as an alternative to universities, see Calsson and Wohlgemuth (1996).

Chapter 8: Conclusion

In this final chapter I present a summary of the findings. I discuss how the study contributes to existing scholarship on knowledge commons and African intellectual communities. I then examine potential implications of the study for CODESRIA, and consider how the findings might inform future research. I conclude with personal reflections on the research journey.

8.1. Summary of findings

This study aimed to cast light on the emergence and persistence of CODESRIA as a pan-African knowledge commons in a context of inequality. It was guided by a central question:

What factors have shaped CODESRIA as a pan-African knowledge commons in the context of inequality?

As a way of answering this question, I examined three inter-related debates in CODESRIA: the different meanings of pan-Africanism in CODESRIA, CODESRIA's defence of the academic project under structural adjustment, and African feminists' struggles to change CODESRIA. This yielded the following sub-questions:

1. How have different meanings of pan-Africanism shaped CODESRIA as a knowledge commons?
2. How did CODESRIA respond as a knowledge commons to structural adjustment?
3. How have feminist struggles shaped CODESRIA as a knowledge commons?

These debates exemplify the ways in which different generations of African scholars in the post-independence period have sought to make sense of and respond to the problems of inequality – both outside of CODESRIA and within CODESRIA. As such, they provided a way of exploring the confluence of ideational and material factors that have shaped CODESRIA as a knowledge

commons.

First, the findings of Chapter Four suggest that CODESRIA's pan-Africanism has played an important role in all areas of the commons. It functions as a narrative; it shapes membership and governance institutions; and it structures the action arena and the scholarship emerging from this arena. As a powerful counter-narrative to prevailing ideas of African intellectual inferiority, CODESRIA's pan-Africanism has been an important motivational source for establishing and cohering a pan-African scholarly community. As an organisational form, CODESRIA's pan-Africanism has its roots in ideas that were prominent in the first flush of independence – anti-colonialism, black solidarity, nationalism, state-centred pan-Africanism and third world solidarity. From these different ideational strands, however, CODESRIA wove a distinctive, new organisational form of pan-Africanism, which offers a non-governmental and intellectual alternative to state-centric and bureaucratic forms of pan-Africanism. As a mode of collective enquiry, the multiple meanings of CODESRIA's pan-Africanism have created important space for contestations that have sought to trouble and expand the colonial conception of Africa. However, African universities' intellectual dependence on former colonial powers, coupled with their maintenance of colonial languages, has limited the capacity for CODESRIA to enact its pan-African vision. In the context of acute resource scarcity, colonial linguistic and regional categories have sometimes been used as a mechanism for organising constituencies in order to access resources in CODESRIA. Its pan-Africanism is therefore characterised by a dynamic and expansive pan-African imagination that continues to be questioned and reworked within specific historical constraints.

Second, the findings of Chapter Five indicate that structural adjustment fundamentally reshaped the intellectual and material underpinnings of CODESRIA with complex and ambiguous results. In the short term, CODESRIA's analysis of structural adjustment led to considerable intellectual and organisational innovation so that it grew in size and influence. In the assessment of CODESRIA's community, structural adjustment represented an attempt to dismantle the capacity for informed public deliberation, which is central to the autonomous and democratic functioning of a society. In light of this, CODESRIA's community conceptualised its defence of the academic project as part of broader social struggles for sovereignty and democracy. This defence took on two interrelated forms: an intellectual defence and an organisational defence. Its intellectual defence assumed the shape of intense introspection on the

nature of the academic project, which initiated a more autonomous intellectual phase in CODESRIA. This phase was characterised by the need to respond not only to the demands of an externally-set agenda, but also to respond to the internal dynamics of African societies and subject these responses to critique within CODESRIA's community. On the basis of this, its organisational defence focused on providing the institutional and material conditions necessary for scholars to engage freely with each in a community, and aimed to contribute to the intergenerational survival of the academic community. Critically, it was able to do so through political and economic support from the governments of Senegal and Scandinavia. The Council initiated an academic freedom project; it set up training and support programmes for young researchers; and it dramatically expanded research funding and publications. As such, CODESRIA's defence of the academic project sought to build intellectual institutions that offer the possibility of developing a more cohesive and cumulative commons, and as a consequence, it grew substantially in both size and influence. This explains the apparent paradox of CODESRIA's remarkable organisational growth at the height of the crackdown on African universities. Yet, this growth came with costs. State divestment from higher education substantially increased CODESRIA's financial dependence on donors. This seems to have inverted its accountability structure, giving donors greater control over its governance and intellectual agenda despite CODESRIA's commitment to autonomy and democratic practice. The concomitant intellectual decline of African universities appears to have inhibited intergenerational renewal within CODESRIA, and thereby impeded its capacity to engage in self-reflection and critique. In the long-term then, the evidence suggests that structural adjustment has constrained CODESRIA's organisational and intellectual autonomy.

Third, the findings in Chapter Six suggest that the struggles of feminist scholars to change unequal gender norms in CODESRIA have been a source of significant intellectual and organisational renewal despite substantial constraints. Contestations over inequality within CODESRIA have given rise to a distinctive form of African feminism, which emphasises the historicity of gender relations in ways that reject essentialist and teleological accounts of African societies. This form of African feminism is informed by, and critical of multiple intellectual traditions, ranging from Africanist historiography to northern feminism. It further intersects with ideas that have currency outside of scholarship – in women's autonomous organising across the global South, in international development agencies, and in African bureaucracies. The

multiplicity of intellectual influences stems from feminist scholars' commitment to develop a collective understanding of their contexts, so that they draw on any intellectual work on the basis of how well it fits their purpose. As a consequence, this form of feminism renders the question of geography irrelevant to considerations of scholastic excellence, so that excellence becomes the function of a community rather than the attribute of a place. As such, this form of feminism has pioneered new standards of scholastic excellence in CODESRIA, which offer a genuine alternative to the skewed standards inherited from colonial rule. These standards promote greater collaboration among African scholars, and thereby foster a more cohesive and cumulative knowledge system. Yet feminists have only had limited success in institutionalising their work. The minoritisation of female scholars in African universities has led to their minoritisation in CODESRIA, which has in turn constrained the capacity of feminist scholars to ensure that oversight and accountability mechanisms are implemented so that concrete steps are taken to sustain and expand the role of female scholars and feminist scholarship in the organisation. As a consequence, female scholars continue to be a minority in the organisation, while feminist scholarship is largely limited to the *Gender Series*. Against this backdrop, the ghettoization of feminist scholarship and the hollowing out of feminist discourses on gender remains a constant threat.

Taken together, these findings suggest that there are four key features which have contributed to CODESRIA's capacity to endure and flourish as a commons in a deeply unequal world. First, narratives of solidarity have played an important role in establishing and cohering the community in a context defined by fragmentation and narratives of inferiority. Second, CODESRIA's decision to respond to economic and political crises by engaging in collective introspection and organisation building helped to grow and strengthen its community. Third, the collective action of marginalised feminist scholars has pioneered new standards of scholastic excellence that offer a genuine alternative to the skewed standards inherited from colonial rule, in that excellence is defined as the function of a community, rather than the attribute of a place. Such institution building is critical to developing a more cohesive and cumulative knowledge system that is able to engage with other knowledge systems on an equal footing. Fourth, CODESRIA's capacity to maintain its autonomy has been critical to ensuring that such collective action and introspection could bear fruit.

Factors that undermine CODESRIA's autonomy in turn constitute the most significant

threats to its capacity to flourish in the long-term. Although donor-dependency presents the clearest threat to CODESRIA's capacity to set its own intellectual agenda and govern itself, the study found that donor dependency is a symptom of deeper constraints on CODESRIA's autonomy. These constraints derive from CODESRIA's dependence on African universities, which have been an important source of intellectual and organisational vitality for CODESRIA, so that their decline under structural adjustment has significantly complicated and limited CODESRIA's autonomy. The erosion of the political and economic underpinnings of African universities diminished CODESRIA's internal accountability structures and impeded its capacity to engage in self-reflection and critique, while the concomitant intellectual decline of African universities has inhibited intergenerational renewal within CODESRIA. Outside of the dynamics of structural adjustment, the minoritisation of female scholars in universities has led to their minoritisation in CODESRIA, which has in turn constrained the capacity of feminist scholars to effect the kind of deep institutional change required for CODESRIA to build a more cohesive and cumulative knowledge system. In addition, universities' intellectual and linguistic dependence on former colonial powers has limited the capacity for CODESRIA to enact its pan-African vision. Taken together, these factors threaten the capacity of CODESRIA to function as an expansive, self-governing commons.

On the basis of these findings, I further developed a theoretical account of knowledge commons that emerge in response to inequality. I began the study by arguing that processes of colonial incorporation plausibly created epistemic institutions that are skewed towards northern scholarship, such that judgements about the intellectual superiority of northern scholarship come to have the appearance of being consistent with good evidential reasoning and meritocratic principles. These skewed standards theoretically facilitate collaboration between dominant groups, but impede collaboration among subordinate groups. This creates a situation in which the knowledge systems of subordinate groups become increasingly fragmented and non-cumulative, fragile and unstable. Thus, even if there were no discernible differences in quality to begin with, over time differences in quality between subordinate and dominant groups would emerge, so that these skewed institutions would become self-fulfilling. As a form of over-fencing, these skewed institutions are a non-pecuniary analogue to complex and expensive intellectual property rights, but unlike property rights, their negative effects are theoretically limited to the knowledge systems of subordinate groups.

However, this case study of CODESRIA demonstrates that contestations over inequality within a commons can be a source of intellectual and organisational vibrancy insofar as marginalised members are able to organise to compel dominant members to recognise the reasonableness of their concerns. When marginalised members are unable to organise successfully, inequality can be a source of organisational stasis and atrophy. The collective agency of marginalised members is therefore central to the flourishing of knowledge commons. This case study of CODESRIA also illustrates the extent to which knowledge commons are dependent on public goods, such as universities. The analysis suggests that they are plausibly the source, and therefore the limit, of knowledge commons' capacity to flourish over the long-term. As a result, knowledge commons are more accurately conceptualised as complements to public goods provision, rather than substitutes. For this reason, knowledge commons cannot be treated as a panacea for the retreat of the state. Since the problems of inequality and public goods provision are pervasive issues that plausibly affect most, if not all knowledge commons, these theoretical implications are likely applicable to both southern and northern knowledge commons.

Building on this empirical and theoretical analysis, I further revised the institutional analysis and development (IAD) framework for comparative research on knowledge commons. At the start of the study, I adapted the framework for studying commons that emerge in response to inequality, which are most visibly located in the global South. This yielded the following methodological guidelines: (1) that the enquiry examine the confluence of ideas and material factors in shaping the commons, particularly its epistemic institutions; (2) that it analyse the interplay between inequality outside and inside the commons; (3) that the outcomes for evaluating the commons should be identified in terms of the problems that inequality theoretically generates – fragmented and non-cumulative knowledge systems that are unstable and fragile; (4) that it focus on the commons as a whole, by investigating the relationship between all three areas in the framework in an iterative manner. On the basis of this study of CODESRIA, I then proposed a further set of revisions: (5) that the enquiry examine the collective agency of subordinate members of the commons; (6) that it explore the role of public goods provision in the commons; (7) that it include the autonomy of the commons as an important evaluative criterion; (8) and that it consider its potential to crowd out other commons. These revisions, I argued, may be useful for exploring commons in general, and not just those that emerge in response to the problem of inequality. Understood this way, reconceptualising

knowledge commons in terms of inequality opens up new lines of empirical investigation.

8.2. Contribution of thesis

There are several contributions that this study makes to understanding CODESRIA as a knowledge commons. First, this study contributes to the empirical literature on African intellectual communities. It provides a systematic scholarly account of CODESRIA, which for the first time casts light on the confluence of ideational and material political and economic factors in shaping CODESRIA as a pan-African intellectual community. It elucidates CODESRIA's distinctive organisational and intellectual contributions to African scholarship with regard to pan-Africanism, structural adjustment, and African feminism. In doing so, it demonstrates the capacity of marginalised scholars to successfully challenge epistemic inequalities through collective action and reflection, and casts light on the factors that enable and constrain these endeavours. This provides an indication of the profound intellectual and organisational creativity of pan-African intellectual communities, and an example of how the limits and contradictions of pan-African scholarship might be negotiated.

Second, this study provides critical knowledge on a scholarly community that has not only endured, but has managed to thrive in a context of profound economic and political instability. This indicates the institutions, practices, and intellectual resources that are likely required to ensure that African knowledge systems flourish over the long-term. As such, this study contributes to empirical literature on why some knowledge commons succeed and others perish, particularly in the global South.

Third, this study makes a theoretical contribution to the literature on knowledge commons, by considering the implications of conceptualising knowledge commons that emerge out of the predicaments of African intellectual history. This yields a theoretical account of knowledge commons, which examines not only the negative impacts of inequality on the commons, but also the capacity for marginalised individuals to counter this inequality and thereby contribute to the flourishing of commons. It further specifies an account of the intimate relationship between knowledge commons and public goods provision, such that the character of public goods provisioning plays an important role in the flourishing of knowledge commons.

Fourth, this study makes a methodological contribution to the literature on knowledge commons. Building on existing commons research, it develops a methodological framework for comparative research on southern knowledge commons, which may nevertheless also be useful for commons in general. In doing so, it shows how reconceptualising knowledge commons in terms of inequality opens up new lines of empirical investigation.

As a whole then, this study demonstrates that analysing the role of marginalised groups in developing and governing knowledge commons is of empirical, theoretical and methodological value for the study of knowledge commons in general.

8.3. Implications of the study for CODESRIA

This study has several implications for CODESRIA as an organisation in terms of its commitment to act as an autonomous and intellectually vibrant scholarly community. In this section, I consider strategies that CODESRIA could pursue in order to strengthen its autonomy and improve gender parity.

First, this study found that factors which undermine CODESRIA's autonomy constitute the most significant threats to its capacity to flourish in the long-term. While a number of these factors are linked to divestment from African universities and their concomitant intellectual decline, and are therefore largely beyond the scope of CODESRIA, there are two clear internal organisational strategies that CODESRIA could pursue to strengthen its autonomy.

The first strategy for strengthening autonomy concerns the apparent inversion of its accountability structure. This inversion has distanced the General Assembly from matters of financial oversight and strategy, which in turn impedes CODESRIA's capacity to move away from donor dependency and thereby threatens its long-term financial viability. As a matter of policy, it may therefore be useful for CODESRIA to consider tools for improving financial transparency and oversight in the General Assembly. Linked to this, it may be useful for CODESRIA to consider what is required to achieve a fully functioning and financially viable endowment fund. For instance, introducing a dedicated fundraising officer within the Executive Secretariat would provide the human resources necessary for building a successful endowment fund.

The second strategy for strengthening autonomy concerns African universities' intellectual decline. This decline has contributed to the lack of intergenerational renewal within CODESRIA, which is essential for its long-term flourishing. As CODESRIA scholars pointed out, the Council has largely overlooked the importance of mentoring programmes within the organisation, so that emerging scholars would be able to engage with established scholars on a more equal intellectual footing and develop the competence to set its intellectual and organisational agenda. CODESRIA's recent launch of a programme to support doctoral schools at African universities is therefore an encouraging development (CODESRIA 2017). However, the evidence of low levels of intergenerational renewal within CODESRIA, and the concomitant risk of intellectual ossification, suggests that it may also be important to consider actions that repair the intergenerational cleavage within the organisation. In this respect, existing programmes, such as the Multinational Working Groups, could act as vehicles for developing intellectual apprenticeships for emerging scholars by encouraging, for instance, systematic collaborative research between established and emerging scholars.

In addition to these constraints on autonomy, the study found that the collective action of female scholars has been an important source of intellectual and organisational renewal in CODESRIA. However, their minoritisation in the organisation has significantly limited their capacity to effect deep institutional change. While the minoritisation of female scholars in African universities has undoubtedly contributed to their minoritisation in CODESRIA, the nature of African universities does not wholly determine the membership of the Council. As an illustration of this point, while some countries, like Malawi, have a very small number of academics, the voting rules in the General Assembly allocate votes to country blocs rather than individuals, so that otherwise minoritised scholars have an equal say in the governance of the organisation. In light of this, it may therefore be useful to consider policies that would actively counter the minoritisation of female scholars. Given the evidence that young male scholars have received the lion's share of funding from CODESRIA, it may be useful to target funding to support young female scholars. Similarly, given the evidence that male scholars are the overwhelming majority of participants in the General Assembly, it may be useful to establish gender quotas to ensure equal levels of participation in CODESRIA's governance. Since the participation of female scholars has been critical to the flourishing of CODESRIA, enhanced gender parity would plausibly enhance the organisation's flourishing.

8.4. Further avenues for research

This study focuses on the material and ideational dynamics of CODESRIA as an African intellectual community, and in this respect, it is an attempt to take up Hountondji's invocation to adopt a sociological approach to southern scholarship:

The study of the relationship between science and society is the specific object of a fairly new discipline, the sociology of science. Not more than fifty or sixty years old, this discipline has, until now, focused on the relationship between science and society within industrial societies, leaving aside the crucial issue of scientific and technological relations of production on a world scale and ignoring the conditions of the production of knowledge in so-called developing countries. What I have attempted to demonstrate is that a new chapter in the sociology of science remains to be written about this specific range of issues. (Hountondji 1990, 14)

While this study relied principally on qualitative techniques, there is a need to understand the dynamics and consequences of knowledge flows at a more aggregate level. For instance, at the start of this study, I noted that a bibliometric analysis of CODESRIA's publications is necessary to identify the extent to which its scholarship is connected and cumulative, particularly given the sheer quantity of scholarship produced by CODESRIA over time. At the time of writing, however, this was not possible as CODESRIA had not digitised its publications prior to 2001, and there was no citation index of its publications. CODESRIA has subsequently begun to digitise some of its publications and is currently in the process of developing an African Citation Index (Nwagwu 2015). Once this is complete, it would undoubtedly be useful to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the citation and co-authorship patterns in CODESRIA's publications. This would help identify whether the hypothesized negative effects of inequality obtain in terms of leading to fragmented and non-cumulative research. This kind of work is critical, since there is very little quantitative research on scholarship published in the South, and as a consequence, it

is difficult to understand the nature of knowledge flows circulating within the South.⁷²

Second, there is a need to conduct further cases studies of southern knowledge commons within the IAD framework so as to test and develop the theoretical and methodological insights from this study. In this regard, it would be useful to compare this case study of CODESRIA with other knowledge commons in Africa and the global South. The chapter on African feminism, for instance, provided some indication of the distinctive problems facing autonomous women's research organisations on the continent. Conducting a structured case study of organisations such as the Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD), and then comparing this with CODESRIA, would strengthen understandings of why some knowledge commons flourish and others perish, particularly in the global South.

Third, and related to this, this case study has briefly examined CODESRIA's institutional relationships with other knowledge commons, such as AAWORD, the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO) and the African Association of Political Science (AAPS). The narrative suggested, for instance, that CODESRIA's institutional and personal relationships with CLACSO informed its organisational structure and intellectual trajectory. It would be useful to understand the factors that enable and constrain such relationships, and the extent to which these relationships contribute to mutual learning and facilitate the sustainability of these commons, especially since these relationships may have consequences that are neither direct nor obvious. For instance, the narrative suggested that, while CODESRIA supported AAWORD, it may have indirectly benefited from the decline of AAWORD, insofar as this motivated female scholars to join CODESRIA, which in turn helped catalyse intellectual and organisation renewal in CODESRIA.

8.5. Reflections on the research journey

I began this study with an overwhelming preoccupation: the marginalisation of African scholarship. I consequently thought of CODESRIA primarily as an organisational challenge to

⁷² This is in part because southern journals are significantly under-represented in the most commonly-used citation indexing services. For instance, as of 2014, the Web of Science had only indexed forty African-published journals out of over 12,000 journals in its database (Bakuwa 2014). In comparison, African Journals Online hosts over 500 peer-reviewed African journals, although it currently does not have the resources to provide a citation indexing service (AJOL 2017).

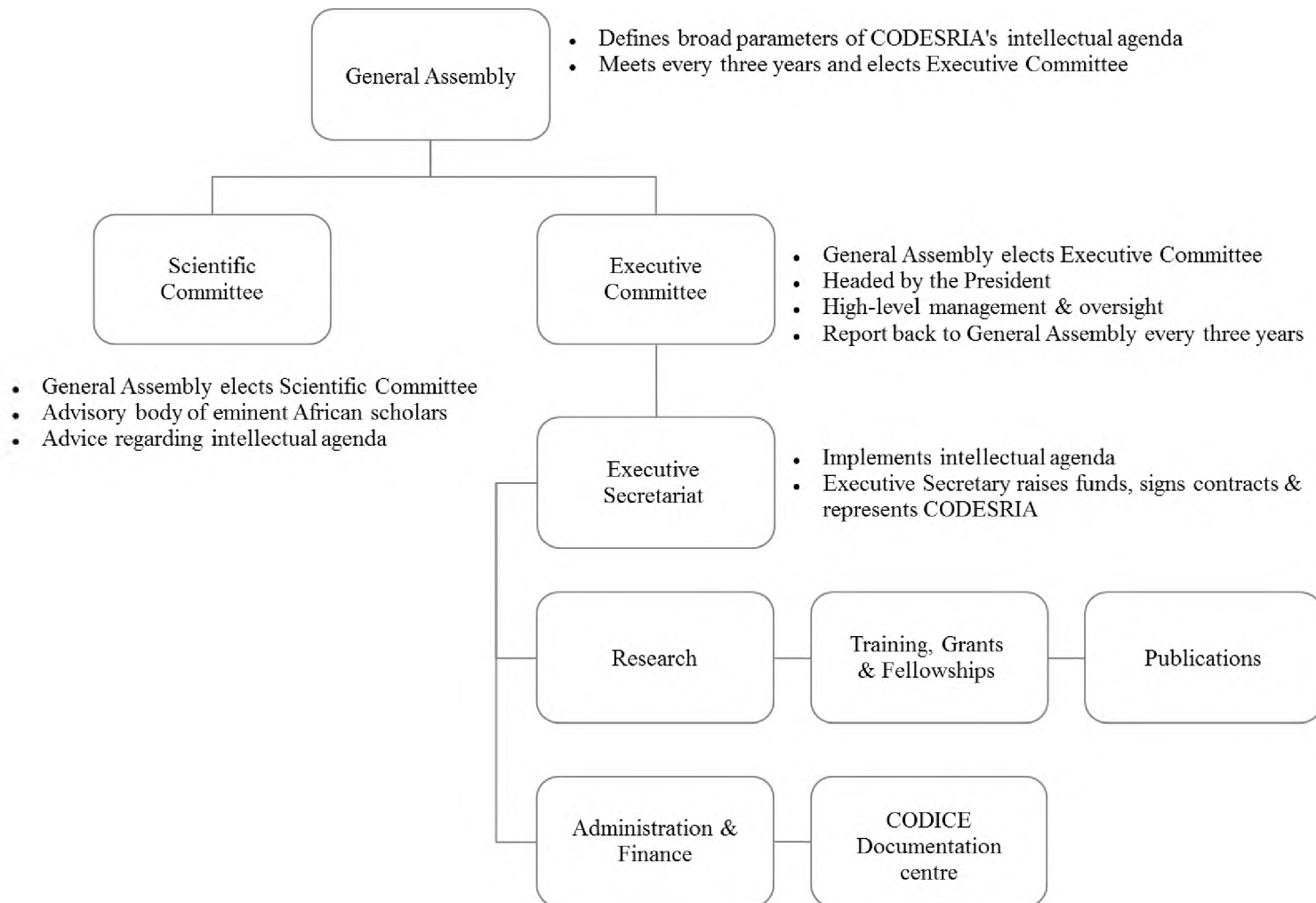
regional inequalities in scholarship. It was, in hindsight, a narrow view of the organisation, characterised by the kind of adversarial stance that Zeleza so aptly diagnoses, one which gives rise to “the seductions and sanctions of writing Africa by analogy” (2009, 131).

I continued to hold to this view for some time, until the student protests in South Africa took off. Their political action has had a number of important consequences, not least that it has helped to re-energise and deepen debates around decolonising education. But as the protests wore on, many student activists seemed to grow increasingly disheartened, for they often spoke of South African universities as innately violent and beyond redemption. It was then that I began to think of CODESRIA as offering a study of the value and possibilities of the academic project in Africa, and an example of how its limits and contradictions might be negotiated.

Against this backdrop, this thesis became a work of critical appreciation. I began to think less in adversarial terms, and became more interested in bringing to light some of the richness and complexity of CODESRIA’s organisational and intellectual contributions, and subjecting these contributions to critique. But this study is emphatically not a ‘court history’ of the organisation. Indeed, the conflicting accounts I received often left me feeling puzzled as to which version to select as valid. My interpretation of these conflicts, gaps and silences will not please all informants, but I hope they will be satisfied with my attempts to cross-check these points of disagreement, and treat them with nuance and sensitivity. Remaining faithful to their critical spirit seems to me the best tribute I could pay to CODESRIA.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: CODESRIA's organisational structure



Appendix 2: CODESRIA's leadership

President of the Executive Committee

1973-1976	Jacques Kazadi Nduba Wa Dile
1976-1979	Kankam Twum-Barima
1979-1981	Justinian F. Rweyemamu
1982-1985	Jacob Mumbi Mwanza
1986-1989	Claude Ake
1989-1992	Taladidia Thiombiano
1992-1995	Ernest Wamba-Dia-Wamba
1995-1998	Akilagpa Sawyerr
1998-2002	Mahmood Mamdani
2003-2005	Zenebework Tadesse
2005-2008	Teresa Cruz e Silva
2008-2011	Sam Moyo
2011-2014	Fatima Harrak
2014-2017	Dzodzi Tsikata

Executive Secretary

1973-1975	Samir Amin
1975-1985	Abdalla Bujra
1985-1996	Thandika Mkandawire
1996-2000	Achille Mbembe
2001-2009	Adebayo Olukoshi
2009-2017	Ebrima Sall

Appendix 3: CODESRIA's formal institutional partners

<i>Africa national</i>	<i>Africa regional</i>	<i>South-South</i>	<i>South-North</i>
Africa Institute of South Africa	Africa Governance Institute	African Forum for Alternatives	African Studies Association, USA
African and Arab Research Centre, Cairo	African Institute of Agrarian Studies	Arab Council for the Social sciences	African Studies Centre, Leiden
African Research and Resource Centre, Nairobi	African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development	Asian Political and International Studies Association	African studies in Europe
Cabral Chair, Praia	Association of African Universities	Chinese Academy of Social Sciences	Centre d'études africaines, Sciences Po
Centre d'Etudes, de Documentation et de Recherche économiques et sociales	Association of African Women for Research and Development	Conseil Latino-Américain des Sciences Sociales	CMI, Bergen, Norway
Centre de Recherche en Anthropologie Sociale et Culturelle	Center for Democracy and Development West Africa	Indian Council of Social Science Research	European Academy of Sciences
Centre de Recherche sur le Savoir Local, Bamako	Educational Research Network for West and Central Africa	International Development Economics Associates, New Delhi	European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes
Centre for Basic Research, Kampala	Forum for African Women Educationalists	Jadaliyya	European Centre for Development Policy Management
Centre pour la gouvernance démocratique, Ouagadougou	Mo Ibrahim Foundation, Dakar	Latin American School of Social Sciences	FAFO, Oslo
Forum for Social Studies	Open Society for West Africa	Le Forum Social Mondial	Institut de recherche pour le Développement
Ghana Center for Democratic Development	Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa	South-South Sustainability Forum	Les Afriques dans le Monde

Human Science Research Council, South Africa	Southern African Regional Universities Association	Third World Forum	Nordic Africa Institute
Institute of African Studies, Ghana Legon	The African Academy of Sciences	Third World Network	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Institute of African Studies, Rabat	UAPS (Union for African Population Studies)	World Forum for Alternatives	
Kwame Nkrumah Chair, Accra	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Addis Ababa		
Makerere Institute of Social Research, Kampala	WACSI (West African Civil Society Institute)		
Mwalimu Nyerere Chair, Dar-es-Salaam			
Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar			
Université de Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso			
Université Eduardo Mondlane, Mozambique			
Université Gaston Berger de Saint-Louis			
University of Botswana			
University of Cape Town			
University of Ghana Legon, Ghana			

University of the Western
Cape, South Africa

University of the
Witwatersrand,
Johannesburg

Source: (CODESRIA 2016)

Appendix 4: List of interviewees

Table 8: Primary interviews

Name	Description	Gender	Generation	Country
Shahida El Baz	Former member of the Executive Committee; long-standing member of CODESRIA	Female	1 st	Egypt
Fatou Sow	Director of various Gender Institutes, Co-Editor of <i>Engendering African Social Sciences</i> , member of the Scientific Committee at various points as well as long-standing member of AAWORD	Female	1 st	Senegal
Samir Amin	Founding member of CODESRIA and Executive Secretary (1973-1975)	Male	1 st	Egypt
Thandika Mkandawire	Executive Secretary (1985-1996)	Male	1 st	Malawi
Carlos Cardoso	Director of Research (2009 to present)	Male	2 nd	Cape Verde
Randrianja Solofo	Member of the Executive Committee at various points since the 1990s, most recently re-elected in 2015	Male	2 nd	Madagascar
Sam Moyo	President of CODESRIA (2008-2011); passed away in 2015	Male	2 nd	Zimbabwe
Teresa Cruz e Silva	President of CODESRIA (2005-2008)	Female	2 nd	Mozambique
Abou Moussa Ndongo	Joined CODESRIA in 1985 as Assistant Librarian; appointed as Chief Librarian in 2002	Male	2 nd	Senegal
Bahru Zewde	Currently Editor of the <i>Africa Review of Books</i>	Male	2 nd	Ethiopia
Ebrima Sall	Executive Secretary (2009 to present)	Male	2 nd	Gambia
Francine Adade	Programme Assistant, Office of the Executive Secretary (2009 to present)	Female	3 rd	Senegal
Jean-Bernard Ouedraogo	Currently Editor of <i>Méthod(e)s: African Review of Social Science Methodology</i>	Male	3 rd	Burkina Faso
Mambinta Sall	Director of Administration, Finances and Membership Services (2010 to present)	Female	3 rd	Senegal
Williams Nwagwu	Director of CODICE (2015 to present)	Male	3 rd	Nigeria

Yves Elonga	Marketing and Distribution Officer (2006 to present)	Male	3 rd	Cameroon
Isabel Casimiro	Member of the Executive Committee (2015 to present)	Female	3 rd	Mozambique
Jimi Adesina	Long-standing member of CODESRIA	Male	3 rd	Nigeria
Aghi Bahi	Currently Editor of <i>Media and Mass Communication</i>	Male	3 rd	Ivory Coast
Aminata Diaw	Former Programme Officer, Training, Grants and Fellowships (2009-2016) and former Vice-President of the Scientific Committee, as well as long-standing member of AAWORD	Female	3 rd	Senegal
Ousmane Kane	Long-standing member of CODESRIA	Male	3 rd	Senegal
Raufu Mustapha	Long-standing member of CODESRIA	Male	3 rd	Nigeria
Shamil Jeppie	Member of the Scientific Committee (2015 to present)	Male	3 rd	South Africa
Alex Bangirana	Director of Publications and Dissemination (2010 to present)	Male	3 rd	Kenya
Ibrahim Oanda	Programme Officer for Research in Higher Education (2015 to present)	Male	3 rd	Kenya
Anonymous Programme Officer	Joined in 2013	Male	4 th	Ghana
Lyn Ossome	Director of the Gender Institute (2015)	Female	4 th	Kenya

Note: full interview details are provided in the bibliography

Table 9: Secondary interviews conducted by others

Name	Description	Gender	Generation	Country
Mahmood Mamdani	President of CODESRIA (1998-2002) and Convener of the Kampala Symposium on Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility	Male	2 nd	Uganda
Amina Mama	Convener of the first Gender Workshop at CODESRIA; Editor of <i>Engendering African Social Sciences</i> , Founder of <i>Feminist Africa</i>	Female	3 rd	Nigeria
Souleymane Bachir Diagne	Elected twice as a member of the Executive Committee and currently Chair of the Scientific Committee	Male	3 rd	Senegal

Dzodzi Tsikata	President of CODESRIA (2015 to present)	Female	3 rd	Ghana
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Note: full publication details are provided in the bibliography

Appendix 5: Primary administrative documents

Table 10: List of administrative documents in CODESRIA

<i>Type</i>	<i>Title</i>
Policy document	Founding Charter 1976 Amended Charter 2005 Strategic Plan 2007 – 2011 Strategic Plan 2012 – 2016 Research Policy statement 2010
Annual report	Annual Reports from 2006 – 2014
General Assembly report	General Assembly Reports 2002 – 2015
Organisational review – internal	CODESRIA Internal Review 1996 Internal Evaluation of Membership and Governance 2015
Organisational review – donor	CODESRIA Evaluation Report 1985 Report of UN Mission to CODESRIA 1996 Consolidation and Renewal: CODESRIA in the New Millenium 2007

Note: full publication details are provided in the bibliography

Appendix 6: Bibliometric and administrative datasets

Table 11: List of bibliometric and administrative datasets

<i>Title</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Institution</i>	<i>Retrieval details</i>
Catalogue of Theses and Dissertations Sponsored by CODESRIA 1988 – 2009	Dataset of 1004 masters and doctoral thesis published with financial support from CODESRIA	CODESRIA	Provided on request by the Centre for Documentation and Information (CODICE) at CODESRIA, Avenue Cheikh Anta Diop, Canal IV, Dakar.
List of CODESRIA Publications 1979 – 2010	Dataset of the 372 books published by CODESRIA from 1979-2010	CODESRIA	Provided on request by the Centre for Documentation and Information (CODICE) at CODESRIA, Avenue Cheikh Anta Diop, Canal IV, Dakar.
General Assembly participation data 2002 – 2015	Dataset of participant characteristics in CODESRIA's four General Assemblies from 2002 – 2015 (this is the period that CODESRIA began collecting this data).	CODESRIA	Provided on request by the Centre for Documentation and Information (CODICE) at CODESRIA, Avenue Cheikh Anta Diop, Canal IV, Dakar.
List of <i>Africa Development</i> journal articles 1976 – 2012	Dataset of the 502 articles CODESRIA published in its longest-running journal from 1976-2012	JSTOR	Journal articles downloaded from JSTOR at https://www.jstor.org/journal/afrdevafrdev
Government spending on education as percentage of GDP, 1975 – 2016	Dataset of government spending worldwide	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)	Data retrieved from UIS at http://data.uis.unesco.org/

Appendix 7: Selected interview transcript

The following interview was conducted with Abdul Raufu Mustapha (Raufu) on 8 December 2015 via skype. This transcript has been made available with his written permission. I underline parts of the interview which were directly quoted in the study and provide their page reference in the footnotes.

Nimi: OK great, can you hear me alright?

Raufu: Yes, that's ok, I can hear you alright ... And you heard that Sam [Moyo] died?

Nimi: Yes, yes.

Raufu: It was quite a big shock. It's one of those things you know. Talking from my generation we've always seen the world as there's time out there for us to do things. Already now one or two of us from my generation are going one by one. So it's getting to our turn. And it's a bit of a, it's like a wake up call of sorts. [Pauses] Shall we get on with our interview?

Nimi: Yes, that would be good. Thank you Raufu. How were you introduced to CODESRIA?

Raufu: I can't remember immediately, I mean, the details now. But that must have been when I, around the time I started my academic career as a graduate assistant. So we hear about – this was in Zaria when we were just starting out. We had finished our first degree and we were just starting our second degree and like apprentice. And you hear there was something going on in CODESRIA in Dakar. Or the odd book would come through. So it's just through a slow process of osmosis at that stage. This was sometime in the late 70's.

Nimi: And the first time you actually went to a CODESRIA meeting of some sort and met other people within a CODESRIA setting, how did you come to that? Was it that somebody introduced you or was it through something else?

Raufu: I think there was a conference which I submitted a proposal for. And the proposal was chosen. So I think that must have been it.

Nimi: Ah I see. So then, in your view, what was the main problem that CODESRIA set out to address? So when you first encountered them what did you see as being the main problem that CODESRIA set out to address and do you think that this problem is still salient today?

Raufu: Ja. I think it's, hmm. In fact, at that stage I don't think I was particularly clued onto the politics of knowledge production. I mean I will say all of this because it's you and I know you. So I can tell you all of this.

Nimi: [Laughs]

Raufu: We were, for instance, reading people, reading scholars in the Review of African Political Economy and then you liked particular people. That was for instance how I got to know of the works of Gavin Williams and that's how I ended up in Oxford as a student, and ended up here generally. At that point in time CODESRIA was just one more site of knowledge production along with, say, the Review of African Political Economy Network. There was also another one in Nigeria which was more local; I think it was called the Socialists whatever. It's like activists but it's also a platform for debating issues. So CODESRIA seemed to be the kind of pan-African one. But the more one understood the whole politics of knowledge production you begin to understand that CODESRIA occupies a very important niche. Even now I'm a kind of editorial advisor in the Review of African Political Economy, so it's not as if I don't have a role there. But I think there's a, it's unfortunate, but some of our western colleagues as being gatekeepers in a way which I find intolerable. I mean some of our African colleagues may make a case like, I'm Nigerian, so when I talk about Nigeria you accept what I say. Or I'm South African. I also don't accept that. But I certainly do not accept that maybe someone from Birmingham or Manchester will say, "Take this out of their paper, we don't want to see it," because of their own politics or networks or whatever. So I've become much more aware of gatekeeping if you like.

In fact, I was discussing that with a student, a Ghanaian student of mine this afternoon. He's

about to finish. I was discussing with Nelson this afternoon, Nelson do you have any publications? He says, ah well, I submitted this one, which is the work I did in the Commonwealth. I didn't think much of it but it's been accepted. But I submitted this other one which I thought was cutting edge and they're asking all sorts of irrelevant questions. I don't really understand. I say, well, welcome to the world of academic publishing politics. You know, I'm not suggesting at all as if Africans are especially targeted. I'm sure even as a British guy, if you say something the particular cluster don't like they can shut you up on ideological grounds. But I just find it a bit tedious to be honest that someone will try to tell me what to say about Nigeria. I mean you may read about it till the cows come home. I grew up in it. I have a certain kind of engagement with it that, uh, the best I can say is: let's debate. One of the people that I respect most actually here who works on Nigeria, and I'm totally opposed to his positions, Professor Murray Last, you know, but I know that Murray Last is honest, and he goes to Nigeria every year, so he exposes himself to the same things that I expose myself to – you get what I mean? Two Nigerians don't have to have the same opinion of the country, so neither does Murray Last need to have the same opinion with me, and he doesn't pull rank. He's older, he's all of that. So I'm perfectly happy to say, sorry Murray, I disagree. But when someone just says, “I'm the editor of this, you do that!” I find that a bit bothersome.

So to come back to your question, CODESRIA provides at least a platform to get away from some of that. With time I have come to recognise it as such. It's partly what you say; it's also in fact the whole agenda of what you want to say. Because sometimes even what you research and what you bother yourself about can be quite overdetermined as it were by other people.

Nimi: Can you just explain that a little bit more?

Raufu: No, you have a situation where you have, I don't, I'm looking for an appropriate example to use. One way it comes across is that you find colleagues for instance here who – I mean, I'm concerned. Recently I've been working on religion and conflict and religious extremism and intolerance and all of that. And you find a colleague who will say, have you read this so and so that someone wrote somewhere in the west here? It's almost like a navel-gazing approach. And it's okay to follow what other people are saying and to understand. But that for me is a secondary

issue. The primary one is to go out there. So in a sense the way the agenda is set can sometimes reflect people's concerns, and quite frankly, the concerns are not always the same. I remember going for a seminar here once, when I was a student, to the African Studies seminar, you know the Thursday one. And this woman was talking about bell-ringers in churches in Kenya. And put so much energy into it. I just thought, for crying out loud, for all the things you could have studied in Kenya. I mean, okay, people were actually [saying] no no, these bells of this weight, and they named all the weights, and you could even hear them on the BBC sometimes, our church bell today is cast in so and so a place. I mean, I'm not belittling it, it's part of religious culture. But of *all* the things that you could do in Kenya, I don't think that bell-ringing ... [laughs] Anyway. It's not just gate-keeping; it's also agenda-setting in a sense. So when CODESRIA works best it helps people to do that in an *open* way in the African context. And then you can see concerns, comparative material, and so for me that's actually the model of CODESRIA that I want to see.

Nimi: So this kind of, this open space, but one that is also more informed, and has a sense of urgency and relevance to what is done in that space?

Raufu: Hmm, an open space that is kind of, has a sense of place and responsibility. But is also academically rigorous, professional. Because the fact that we are going to study maybe South African agriculture doesn't mean that we do it in a sloppish way or whatever. But also one that allows one to open up to other things because we have a clearer idea of where we are coming from. So one of the things, for instance, I remember Sam [Moyo] with most, he organised – you know he runs this Agrarian Institute? – and he organised one at Rhodes University in Grahamstown. And I went, he was there. And there were a couple of Indians and Brazilians. And I just found that very, very rewarding. I learnt so much from those Brazilians and the Indians too. But I was also, I mean, my own material, the lectures that I gave there, sound boring to me to be honest, because [laughs]. It's that kind of, engage with your own reality, but take it to a wider plane. I mean, there are many of our western colleagues, it's either that they feel threatened by you because they think you are going to play a card of authenticity or whatever, or they are trying to be gatekeepers as I explained earlier. The people who engage with you, okay Raufu I agree with you or I disagree with you, people like Murray Last, Robin Cohen, Gavin [Williams],

they are *few*. So it's not that they're not there. But you have to search those out, because those are the people I feel I can strongly express myself and they'll know *exactly* where I am coming from. Some other people you'll do it to, they will think you are trying to, you know. And that's why when teaching with students you are always very cautious because you can't afford to say everything you want to say otherwise some of them may not understand it in the spirit in which it's given.

Nimi: And, I don't want to go too much down this avenue, but do you think that this is particularly a problem you are facing teaching in England? That that might not be the same kind of problem you would face if you were teaching somewhere else, on the continent for instance?

Raufu: No, I think, I tend to see it in terms of knowledge production generally. And when you look at it that way it's actually a global process rather than – I mean, I feel it here to the extent that I rub against the *dramatis personae* on a day to day basis. But if you were in Pietermaritzburg or Zaria and you have an article on agriculture, and you send it to x journal in England, it's the same gatekeepers you are dealing with. So, no, it's not so much. And I think it's not really a position of where you are at, no.

And you have colleagues also – I mean there's the other side of the coin, at least in Nigeria, and I suspect possibly in South Africa – colleagues who, under the guise of “we are locals” have no sense of professional responsibility and conduct themselves in a way which is actually quite frightening. So I'm not suggesting for a minute that wherever you're located, no it's just the *way* knowledge is produced about Africa, there's a tendency for, particularly in the West, I think, for people to make presumptions and to expect you to fall in line. And CODESRIA makes it possible for you to say, no thank you, I am not playing that role.

Nimi: Okay, so how would you then characterise the community of scholars that participates in CODESRIA, and in your view how has this community changed over time?

Raufu: Ja, no, the community has really changed. In the 70s when I got to know about it you are talking about people who were my teachers, so to say. The generation of professors who taught

me. So it was quite a generational thing. So after a while my own generation began to cluster around itself, and begin to meet at various CODESRIA functions. So I knew one or two people in Ghana and in Senegal, and some you get along with and some you don't, so you are forming your own network, your own kind of generational network. And then later you begin to see generations that are younger than you. I think in that sense it's, at one point we were worried that the generational transmission wasn't working as well as it should. But I think more recently you see many more people of a younger generation. They could be put more into powerful positions to learn, say editorial boards and things like that. And there are committees that choose these or make that grant. So you can feel that many more generations after mine are coming on board, which is good. But generally I think they also reflect a weakening of the intellectual fibre of the African university. A lack of books, cutting corners and things like that. So they haven't been quite as, for want of a better word, professional as some of us were encouraged to orient ourselves. So it's a much wider network now. By necessity some of the bits of it you don't quite understand. And then, generally, I get the impression it's slightly weaker in terms of the coherence of the professional quality of the people who come through. But that's basically just reflecting the problems in the universities. Now in the past few years the universities have started picking up so maybe things will pick up as well.

Nimi: It's interesting because CODESRIA has this kind of symbiotic relationship with the universities on the continent. It can only be as strong as the universities are.

Raufu: That's true.

Nimi: But perhaps, you know, some people would say, but then at the same time, the growing strength of universities now in some ways, it presents other kinds of intellectual avenues aside from CODESRIA. And so, there's that question of relevance that arises then.

Raufu: No, absolutely, absolutely. I think CODESRIA has to, I also get the impression there's a tendency to do some things because we used to do it that way before. And I don't think that's good enough. It has to try and reinvent itself. And I don't think enough of the critical thinking that is necessary is going on. Precisely for the reason that you point out. Now there are so many

more avenues. And there are also very many African academics in the diaspora. All of this has to be managed properly. I mean, I sat on a scientific committee at one point, the majority of us were from the diaspora. I don't quite know whether that's a good thing or a bad thing, or a good thing; i.e. we are still committed enough to keep contact with our network. But then, how would those who are at institutions on the continent feel you know? So there are all sorts of questions that at any one point need to be put on the table and debated. And I think maybe, over the past few months there have been a series of reviews that have been going on. I don't know if you've heard about them?

Nimi: Ja.

Raufu: So to some extent some of the thinking is going on, but the key lessons need to be put out there for general debate so that we all have a clearer ... I suspect also – I mean this is purely my personal hunch, I may be right or wrong – there's a certain – have you ever been to the ASA [African Studies Association] in the US?

Nimi: No, never.

Raufu: I see. You have thousands and thousands and thousands of people. Multiple sessions, right, left and centre. Quite often you don't know whether you're going or coming. So that kind of 'size matters' approach, I think that's another thing I'm spotting in CODESRIA activities which I find a bit, slightly – I think we need to keep things down, so that we can actually, almost a face to face, sit round a table and argue all evening for three, four hours. I don't know if I'm making sense to you? Rather than 30 minutes here because that's the slot for this session and then we have to dash off to the next one and then dash off the other one. You are so busy, you are so exhausted, but you don't really – I think there's that kind of expansion of activities, of numbers. I mean that may just be my own kind of conservative, old school [laughs].

Nimi: [laughs] Well no, I think it's interesting because it sounds almost like you're saying there's a difference between a kind of an academic, careerist way of thinking about an organisation, and a different way, which is a more kind of intellectual space, which is not necessarily as careerist,

and competitive and busy and output focused.

Raufu: Ja, you can over-manage something. You can also be caught up so much in the formalities, you know. Seven multiple sessions going at the same time, and then the next one. I'm not suggesting for a minute that you huddle all of us into one room and that you choose two or three good and mighty and ask them to address us all day, no! But something human-sized, not kind of skyscraper approach to organising things. I think CODESRIA has gone a bit towards that you know. So that the very many people you ask about the ASA, they go there not so much for the academic thing but for the network or for the socials. When in fact you can connect all of those together, have some really useful debates and then have a drink afterwards and social sessions. So I will really go for scaling things so that you don't have more than say, two or three, four parallel sessions; i.e. I can meet you in this session now and then two or three sessions down the line, so that there's a kind of a community experience rather than this kind of individual, everybody will make up their portfolio and be running around from pillar to post all day.

Nimi: I hear what you're saying. And so then I think that then ties into the next question, which is, whom does CODESRIA aim to serve and to whom is it accountable in your view?

Raufu: Well, I think, those are part of the discussions that need to be had in terms of it always reinventing itself. It's really done well for us in the structural adjustment period. Quite frankly, if it wasn't for CODESRIA, people like me wouldn't have an academic career as such. It was a platform where I could engage with my contemporaries, where I could engage with my seniors. I could get some resources to do fieldwork, I could try and publish.⁷³ It and the Review of African Political Economy in Sheffield served that purpose for me. But you need to constantly evaluate these things. Are they necessary? Can they be done somewhere else? Is there something in which you have a special advantage? I think those are – the roles and tasks are being debated, I don't think there's any clear consensus just yet. I think the management also – CODESRIA has always been able to impress upon its foreign backers, the Scandinavians and all of that, to give it money in an open-ended way, to spend that money in a responsible way, and to account for it intellectually and financially. I think for most of its history it has done that. In fact, what really

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really got me angry about the – you must have heard about the Achille Mbembe –⁷⁴

Nimi: Yes.

Raufu: OK, CODESRIA was also where I met South Africans. And okay, kind of, wow! You guys don't have horns. And I made very good friends. And I can't remember the name now. I know the guy is Jewish, I know he studies rural Lesotho, because he was in exile there for a while. And to my shame I can't remember his name. And I know he has a Lesotho wife as well. He said, why don't you come to South Africa and spend some time. This was, I think, either '94 or '95. That's how I ended up in 1995 in Durban. I took him up on his challenge. So it's *that* kind of thing that CODESRIA made possible on terms that are actually mutually beneficial. Now I don't know if we – and then they spend the money. Oh sorry! I was going to tell you about Achille Mbembe.

Nimi: Ja.

Raufu: One of those people I met, one of the South Africans, in a subsequent meeting, she said she flew to Dakar from Paris. And I said, why, do you have to? I knew that South African Airways used to go to the US through Dakar. And then she said, oh, they didn't send her ticket on time and she had to call Achille to find out if she can still come, and Achille said, just buy a ticket and go to Europe and come. No, you can't spend people's money like that! Those who gave us this money, if they spend it like that, we'll have *nothing* for them to give to us.⁷⁵ So that was actually one of the things that made me realise that guy, his sense of responsibility is a bit questionable.

Nimi: So, can I, I'm kind of trying to figure out how the organisation works a little bit. Can I perhaps give you my understanding and you can perhaps correct me where I'm wrong? My understanding is it's accountable to SIDA, for instance, and to the other donors from Sweden and Norway and so on, in terms of, it will give them a financial report. But does the General

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Assembly have access to this financial report, for instance?

Raufu: I suspect that they do. Well, I think that they do. I mean, I haven't. It depends on what level of accounting you are talking about. If you are talking about \$35 was used for this, and that's the receipt, and \$40 was used for that. I don't think it's at that level that they account to the General Assembly.

Nimi: No sure.

Raufu: But I think that there's a general understanding whether things are going well or not that most people share. And there are a number of platforms where those kinds of questions could be raised. The Executive Committee is obviously one of it, and then sometimes the General Assembly, it may not be the overall, but in this project you had this problem. So it might not be as well-structured as one might expect. But I think there's a general understanding if you feel things are not going well. Like I said, under Achille, you had when people are being encouraged to just spend money for this or spend money for that. They'd say, no no, you can't spend people's money that way.⁷⁶ And of course in our own individual interactions also, you know. I take a taxi from my house to St Clements, to catch the coach to go to Heathrow to fly to Dakar, I have to get a receipt. If I don't, nobody pays me.

Nimi: So then, the question is, as an organisation, who is CODESRIA then accountable to?

Raufu: Well, I think, technically it's accountable to the General Assembly. And in between General Assemblies it's accountable to the Executive Committee. In reality, however, I suspect that the Secretariat and the General Secretary does have quite some clout as to what happens and where. Maybe the kind of accountability you should be talking about is not so much the pen and paper; i.e. not so much the kind of formal accountability. There's also the informal sense of whether it's connected or not connected to the community,⁷⁷ if you get what I mean. I mean, it's not as if Achille – I think Achille's problem was that after a while many members of the

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community felt detached from him and therefore were amenable to suggestions to take decisions against what he wanted, despite the clout he had as the Executive Secretary.

Raufu: I mean, I remember one General Assembly I went, and there were like two Cameroonians for every Nigerian, which is completely unthinkable if you look at the demographic, you know?

Nimi: [laughs]

Raufu: [laughs] In that sense, heuristically it's accountable to the community, and if somebody steps too far out of kilter with the basic instinct of that community, or substantial sections of it, I think you will hear a grumble, possibly even some mobilisation. But then in the kind of everyday, you have a powerful Secretariat, which can act or not act depending on what their interests are.⁷⁸ And then of course you have the Executive Committee, and there are tensions there, there are institutional tensions that are emerging, in terms of not micro-managing and bureaucracies always have their own interests anyway, regardless. So who is it accountable to? Yes, it's accountable to the wider African community, in that wider sense. And then it's also accountable to the Executive Committee, and then possibly to the – accountability within the Executive Secretariat.

Nimi: So I think I might return to this question in a little bit, in a slightly different way, a bit later in the conversation. But perhaps to switch tracks for a little while, I'm kind of interested not just in how the organisation has been founded, but also the *ideas* that have shaped the emergence of CODESRIA. Particularly the ideas of solidarity, such as pan-Africanism, and a kind of intellectual sovereignty. In your view, what have these ideas played in the development of CODESRIA? And also, what are the limits and the unexplored possibilities of these ideas?

Raufu: I think they've been quite central, especially the ideas of pan-Africanism. We're not doing enough – well I don't know whether that's the right way to put it. There are gaps between North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. There are gaps between the largely Anglophone and

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Francophone and then the Lusophones. There are tensions, all sorts of – but by and large there's a certain commitment to pan-Africanism which is there. And also a sense of a shared – at least up to, say, my own generation, I don't know about the younger generation, quite how they see things. Maybe they have a much more utilitarian approach. Up to my generation there was a sense in which it was a platform to interact, to explore, to understand, so that. I was talking to one of my students, and she's American, and she now teaches in Denmark, she's in Oxford here for a term. And she was saying you introduced me – and she's one of the specialists on Ghana now – and she said you introduced me to x, y, she named four people I introduced her to, and that's how she got going in her career in studying Ghana. And I thought, oh ja, that does, that makes sense. One of those people was my student here at Oxford who has very strong Ghanaian links. You know the ODI fellowships?

Nimi: Mmm.

Raufu: She went back to Ghana as ODI fellow. One is a Ghanaian, or two are Ghanaians. So it's that kind of a *network* that I don't think you can build it elsewhere, and it's not just nationalist, it's kind of pan-national. So it still does serve that purpose I think. So it's pan-Africanism, it's looking at the gaps with North Africa, with the Lusophone. It's looking at the – for instance, if you take the West African region, the two members of the Executive Committee, when we had this regional representation, ja, we decided, one goes to the Lusophone, one goes to the Francophone, it's just – you see we're all kind of learning to live and let live, kind of. I think there's still a lot we can do there – translate things in Portuguese into English, things like that, to bring literature closer to others, or English to Portuguese or whatever. But it does, there are certain values of solidarity, pan-Africanism that makes it possible for individuals to build on that, build their own people they know; I mean I knew Sam enough to consider him a personal friend but also an intellectual colleague, and to feel quite a sense of loss when he died, those are all possible through CODESRIA.

Nimi: A sense of community.

Raufu: Ja, a sense of community, yes, in the proper sense of the word – a sense of community

where you debated amongst yourselves and find common purpose with some. I think, the kind of, you also don't want an insular community. I'm always very worried about that. Insisting, for instance, only one particular method can be used or whatever. I think, mercifully, to the best of my knowledge, it's never gone quite that way.

Nimi: [Laughs] So you think that insularity hasn't really been a problem for CODESRIA?

Raufu: There have been moments when there are, you know, kind of bits and pieces of insularity. National agendas and things like that. But I think by and large, if you take the long duree, it's been able to manage them. So I wouldn't say strictly speaking "insular". And I'm sure, you were there in Dakar. The idea is even to disband some of these regional clusters, which is the institutional hub of national insular attitudes.

Nimi: I see what you're saying. So then, perhaps just to explore this idea of solidarity and pan-Africanism, what do you think are the limits of these ideas? And also, are there any kind of unexplored possibilities that really haven't been tapped into with regard to these ideas? So could solidarity or could pan-Africanism be conceptualised in different ways, or opened up in certain ways? And what kinds of limits are there to the way people are thinking about pan-Africanism and solidarity now?

Raufu: As far as I'm concerned, there are maybe two things that need to be kept in mind. We are academics, not politicians, and that does come with its own responsibilities to method, to facts, separating opinion from fact and all of that. We should not – solidarity and pan-Africanism is not a license to substitute our own prejudices for anybody else's. Secondly, I don't think that we should, it's not an exercise in authenticity, closing ourselves off from the world, and claiming that we know best, no I don't think so. I think what solidarity means for me is that I can go to, I can – you know, these things, you can see them in small ways and big ways. Even here in QEH, you know, you take a taxi in Abuja or Kano, they say, "where's your receipt?" Anybody who has lived in Kano won't ask me for a receipt for those things. So it's just a place where you can say what you did, and people won't ask you the *obvious*, sometimes out of they don't know, or sometimes out of "do it our way" or whatever. So it's a useful platform in that sense. And then

you can use it to set the agenda as I suggested, and you can use it to have debates, and then you can also use it to reach out to others. So in a sense, ja, that's the kind of pan-Africanism I would subscribe to.

Nimi: So then, perhaps to move slightly away from ideas and into political economy factors, I'm interested in your views as to how structural adjustment programmes shaped CODESRIA, both enabling and constraining the growth of CODESRIA. How do you see CODESRIA having played itself out during the period of structural adjustment?

Raufu: I think there was a sense that African academics were on their last legs, so to say. Partly that did work out well for CODESRIA, because it then got a lot more resources to try and address some of those problems, and in many cases it did, you know – thesis grant, and this grant, and that institute, and methodology workshops, all trying to put its finger in all the leaking holes of the ship, you know. So I think there's a sense in which, but for CODESRIA, many African academics would have gone down with the whole structural adjustment programme – had very little money for research, very little money for travel, very little avenue to get to know what other people are doing, access to books. All of those became possible in that period because of CODESRIA.⁷⁹ Now of course the problem is that period is slightly over. African academics are now getting some attention, some resources, even some personnel. And now CODESRIA has to survive it, I mean change its own strategies, if you get what I mean, and engage differently with these institutions, and I think that is the new challenge now.

Nimi: So if I get you right, you're almost saying that, in some sense, structural adjustment was a boon for CODESRIA, it may have been terrible for the continent as a whole, but you know CODESRIA then –

Raufu: No, I wouldn't quite put it that way because then it will look like CODESRIA was running its hands in glee.

Nimi: [Laughs]

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Raufu: It's not quite that way.

Nimi: No, that's not what I meant.

Raufu: Ja, because structural adjustment threatened the community, and CODESRIA realised it could do something to address some of those threats, and then it did exactly that, it mobilised people, it mobilised resources, it rose up to the challenge, and by so doing was able to attract attention, resources, prestige to itself.⁸⁰ So I don't quite know how to put that.

Nimi: So then, but also at that time, there's also a really interesting intellectual trajectory that CODERIA takes as well with regard to a critique of structural adjustment programmes. I'm kind of interested in how do you think, is there a way of saying, although CODESRIA isn't a uniform community, but are there perhaps certain thematic strands that one could pick up in terms of its intellectual agenda at that time?

Raufu: I think that, by and large, CODESRIA, particularly at that time, attracted a very particular kind of academic. At the very beginning it was a much more kind of directors and people who were close to the establishment and all of that. But at this particular time we are talking about it begins to attract much more kind of pan-Africanist, activist, feminists – people who had an axe or two to grind with their home governments, partly over education policy, over structural adjustment, over democracy.⁸¹

I remember one of my roles, my last roles in the Nigerian academic system before I came out here, I was the chairman of the, chairperson of the committee on human rights and academic freedom of the trade union of academics at the university. That union had a human rights and academic freedom committee. And the agenda we pursued was essentially two. One to insist on professional conduct within the academia – you know, senior colleagues plagiarising the work of junior colleagues or people relating in particular to the female colleagues and females students.

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All of these things we put it squarely on the agenda. That's one. The second one was to defend ourselves against the state, and we went to CODESRIA, we got the resources and organised our committee and organised – in fact there were a number of people who dismissed by the military regime that we supported,⁸² and up to today, they are still kind of, “oh that's my chairman”, you know, referring to my role in that committee.

Nimi: May I ask, what years was this?

Raufu: I can't remember, this must have been in the mid to late '80s.

Nimi: And what university were you at, was this Ibadan?

Raufu: No, no, I was at Ahmadu Bello University.

Nimi: Ah, Ahmadu Bello. Ok.

Raufu: But then the people who were sacked were in Ibadan, one was in Jos, some were in Abuja. You know, the regime wanted to sack them, isolate them and then break their spirits. And we basically refused. Through CODESRIA we were able to get some resources to give to them to keep body and soul together. We made sure we mobilised colleagues in their institutions, and at every point when we had some complaint against the state, like salary or whatever, we made sure we smuggled them into the agenda. And in the end the state had to reabsorb them back into the university system. So in that sense CODESRIA was quite instrumental in helping us ride some of the worst excesses of structural adjustment and the authoritarianism that went with it.⁸³

Nimi: You know, you said something interesting, which is that the people who sort of came up in that period were, like you said, perhaps less institutional and perhaps more activisty, whether it was with regard to pan-Africanism or to feminism. And I find it very interesting that a feminist agenda emerges in the early '90s. Is there any link between the structural adjustment

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programmes and the growth of feminism within CODESRIA or is it just a kind of product of its time?

Raufu: No I think it's all a debate about the role of the institution, the ideas that it pushes. At one point then I think CODESRIA used to support a feminist research network called AAWORD or something like that – African Women's whatever whatever, I can't remember. And many felt, well we've supported them, the job was done. But then the women started – and these are the women of my own generation, the generation above us is very male-dominated, but my own generation there are a number of very strong feminist academics who started raising the issue. So the good thing about it is then the organisation decided let's have a conference on this, which was exactly what was done.⁸⁴

And I remember the General Assembly after that some women were suggesting that there has to be a gender – almost like a gender thought police. That everything written should be sent to a committee to clear it for gender. Said no, we're doing nothing of the sort!⁸⁵ [Laughs]

Nimi: [Laughs]

Raufu: This is taking the gender argument into bad territories. People should be educated, they should be given access to resources to be gender sensitive. If they write something that is less than, you take your pen and educate them! The sense that we won't – so there's always been that tension that this one is not gender sensitive enough, or that one is too right-wing, or this one is using post-structuralism, there's all sorts of parochialisms that creep up once in a while.⁸⁶

Nimi: That's interesting. So you mentioned that under structural adjustment CODESRIA received quite a bit of funding. And I imagine this was then from external donor-funded research, from SIDA and the like. I'm interested in the implications in external donor-funded research for CODESRIA. So what have been the challenges, and the opportunities, and also the limits of such donor-driven support?

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Raufu: I mean, my understanding of SIDA is actually that you're talking of international solidarity in the best spirit of the word. I think the Scandinavians felt that Africa's problems will not be solved unless you have African voices. And they went *out* of their way to make that possible.⁸⁷ And I give them credit for it. I've been to Sweden on a number of occasions, where they debate these things, SIDA funding and all that. And my personal experience is that it's done at the highest level of solidarity and responsibility.⁸⁸ And you could very much say, and you notice the same, and you interact with different people, even outside the CODESRIA context, I've done research work with the Dutch, also they give you the resources, but they are quite open, and they respect your professionalism, which is different sometimes you know when you deal with the British. There was one project I had to, there was a British guy who was working – this was around 1999 actually, we'd just had a return to civil rule, and the government was trying to formulate a new policy in agriculture, and the DFID guy responsible for agriculture said, "come and work with us to develop a programme to sell to the government." I said, "I don't have the time, but I'll be able to create maybe a two-week window and work with them and then some of my colleagues can take over." He said, "oh that's fine." So I went with them to the Ministry of Agriculture. We had all these Nigerian directors in the Ministry sitting across the table and I was on the DFID side with him. I knew this guy quite well, and I had a sense where the Nigerians were at. And every time he wanted something, he wanted them to do something, or give him something, or whatever, prioritise something, and they showed reluctance, he'd say, "oh, there's this FAO meeting coming up in Rome. Are any of you going? My office can making it possible." You know, *bribing!* I mean, there's a lot of that. I'm not saying all of DFID's work is like that, but there's clearly a lot of that in the work that I see them doing. Now the Scandinavians are far from that. Either my experience of them in Sweden, or watching them in CODESRIA meetings, or even here in what happened between them and CODESRIA officials. So it's a bit, it's not the best arrangement to run an organisation like that on donor funds. But quite frankly, if we had to take donor funds, better the Nordic ones.⁸⁹

Nimi: Sure, sure.

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Raufu: Sorry, the alternative would be of course to get something from African governments and those ones would rather be shot than empower people who would organise them awkward questions. [Laughs]

Nimi: [Laughs] So that's kind of interesting, because my understanding is that the way that CODESRIA was founded, Samir Amin was saying, he went to Senghor and said, "can we have a space within Senegal that will give us the independence we need to do the kind of work that we want?" And so, in some sense, at least one African government has been, to some extent supportive of CODESRIA in a positive way.

Raufu: Ja, well, CODESRIA has diplomatic status within the AU system and in Senegal. So, ja, people like Senghor, they're much more intellectually orientated; he was a poet in his own right. But the average African president is far from it. I mean, you can't, they just won't understand, but I just gave Nimi \$2 million, why is she writing this book to abuse my government? [Laughs] That would be their attitude.

Nimi: And maybe, not even, a sense of the *value* of intellectual activity. I know that the Zuma administration just recently cancelled all of our funding for the Timbuktu archives.

Raufu: Really? Well, there you go.

Nimi: So now the management of this incredible archive has now moved back into German and Dutch hands, and French hands.

Raufu: Well, there you go.

Nimi: So CODESRIA has developed a significant corpus in European languages. But it hasn't yet developed a significant corpus of African-language literature, with the exception of some Arabic-language literature. In your view, why is this the case?

Raufu: To be honest, I don't think there's a particular demand for vernacular language as such. And that's what I was saying, we are not asking to go back into some kind of authenticity ghetto, we need to be interacting with the world. And of course, English, French, to a lesser extent Portuguese, those are the languages of international interaction. That doesn't mean – you know it also has the humanities institute in Accra, by Kofi Aiydeho or something like that, which really engages in poetry and orature. So all of that, the cultural production, I can see why you want to engage with local forms. But intellectual production, we've all been raised in either the British or the French or the Portuguese tradition, and we want talk across ethnic borders, across national borders, across continental borders, that means we need to learn to use these languages properly, precisely, to express our own thinking. I don't think there's been any particularly serious demand for indigenous languages in that sense. We want to indigenise knowledge production, but not necessarily the language in which it's articulated.

Nimi: So, in your view, what do you think are the major difficulties that CODESRIA has faced in the past, and how has it responded to them? And then, looking into the future, what do you think will be the most significant difficulties confronting CODESRIA, and why?

Raufu: I think the answer in my view is the same to both questions. CODESRIA needs to learn to adapt and change, and reinvent itself, and make itself more relevant, find out the niches of the moment and plug in. It's a bit disconcerting to see yourself in those lights, if you know what I mean, but that is exactly what it needs to do so that it's constantly relevant. But to do that well, so in the past, it faced the challenge of the university. Before it was set up, directors of institutes and universities that were seen as well-performing, and then all of a sudden all of those sank. And CODESRIA rose up to the challenge, along away from the debris. In doing so, it's done it using some instruments, some methods, and these have become institutionalised and ossified, and it needs to reinvent itself. And my own general contribution to the General Assembly and to our conversations generally since then, is that less done, done very well, with the requisite impact is better. I think there is also the view that we should be seen everywhere, our hands should be visible in every pie, to show that we are also on par with x institution and y institution, that kind of thing I was saying about the General Assembly moving from manageable three parallel sessions to you have 15 and you are running here and there. I met a Nigerian, I was

supposed to be writing a paper with him. I met him in Dakar when he was leaving. I said “oh, I saw you with your back, have you just arrived?” He said, “No I’m leaving.” I said, “But I had no idea you were here!” He said, “I saw you on a panel, I didn’t want to come and disturb you.” So, there are parallel sessions, people have lost any kind of thread about any coherent message. So I think the challenge of the past was not being dragged down when the university was being dragged down, but dragging its community up. The challenge of the present is freeing itself from its habits and developing the creativity and the energy that identifies new challenges for new times. Which must necessarily be a very painful thing. Something you think works well, but you remodel your programme to face the new challenges before you. And I think that’s what CODESRIA needs to learn. I think someone told me recently that they are meeting sometime in March to consider some of those issues. So one looks forward to them. The very fact that they’ve set up those review committees that they did, and the kind of debates that have been going on within them suggests that there’s a recognition that some things can be done better. But how we agree on a particular way of going about it remains to be seen.

Nimi: Do you know, I think I have the governance review that Thandika Mkandawire did, but there’s then also the review of the scientific committee that you were part of. Is that right Raufu?

Raufu: No, that’s the intellectual, academic.

Nimi: Ah right, when will that be out?

Raufu: We’ve submitted it. We don’t know when they are going to make it available to the community. I suspect, what’s today? The Executive Committee is actually supposed to meet tomorrow to consider the report. At least that’s my understand of it.

Nimi: The last thing I wanted to ask you, is maybe my memory is playing tricks on me, but I swear you were doing some kind of project where you were kind of interviewing some of the intellectuals who were involved in CODESRIA for a kind of archive. Is that right?

Raufu: Not me directly. Jimi was. You know Jimi?

Nimi: Yes, that's great!

Raufu: Jimi was. He's actually recording them on video. So it may be possible that he has some of those videoed. Is there any particular person who you are interested in hearing their particular views?

Nimi: Well, actually, I'm actually just interested first in Jimi being interested in doing this archive. I'm actually interested in hearing his views before I look at the videos. You know why Raufu? This year when I was in Dakar I met a Brazilian PhD student who is doing her PhD on CODESRIA, and there's also a South African student at Makerere who is doing a more intellectual history engagement with CODESRIA. So there are three of us. Whereas before, there was nothing. And then there were those Chinese guys, or those Hong Kong guys, who were interested in understanding how CODESRIA works. So I think it's a really nice opportunity for people who are thinking about CODESRIA in different ways to come together and share thoughts and collaborate a little bit.

Raufu: I understand there's a French guy who wrote a book.

Nimi: Yes, I've ordered the book. It's a chapter in a book. I was reading it, and my French is not that great when I'm reading, but it's a comparison between CLACSO and CODESRIA.

Raufu: You know what's interesting about this guy – he never went to go talk to CODESRIA at all.

Nimi: What? Really?

Raufu: At least you are going about asking questions. You are entitled to your opinion when you are done. But if you didn't and kept in Joburg and then pontificated. Do you see the problem that I am trying to point out? [Laughs]

Nimi: I'm going to treat that now very carefully, I'm going to read his stuff with a grain of salt, thank you.

Raufu: He never went to talk to anybody, I asked.

Nimi: Well, thank you so much for your time Raufu.

Raufu: It's my pleasure Nimi. I'm sorry we didn't get to do this much earlier.

Nimi: Oh not at all. And I just wanted to say that, I think that some people have this view that I'm interested in the internal politics of CODESRIA, or that it's a kind of a programme evaluation. But I'm not really, I'm just really fascinated by how the organisation has emerged. I think there's a lot of value in the organisation, and a lot that is very worthwhile, and I'm interested in how CODESRIA operates as an intellectual organisation.

Raufu: I can understand. Some people will feel a bit edgy. Even our own review committee, we are constantly told, it's not an evaluation, but well what is it? I put all of that down to bureaucracies, that they develop their own interests. So long as they also understand their democratic principles and co. I mean you are asking about our own report. I think some of the things we are advocating, some of the people would prefer to see something else. But I haven't seen any attempt to shut us down. They've said, well, we'll have a meeting between now and March, we hope you guys can come and push your line. Well, that's the proper thing. But people are necessarily quite edgy about what they see as being evaluated, they feel that you might maybe interpret them in the worst possible light on circumstantial evidence, not consider the circumstances in which they were operating. And I'm quite sure that's not the spirit in which you are doing your work. I think it's important for CODESRIA to reinvent itself. Some of that learning can come from people like you, comparing them to others, or pointing out things. I'm hoping that one way or another, the kind of thing you are doing, and the Brazilian person, will all fit into that process of internal re-imagination.

Nimi: Mmm. And I also think that, aside from imagination which is so incredibly important,

from a South African context we have a very parochial imagination, a very narrow imagination, and we've had some incredible things happen this year, and it's good for us to start looking outside of ourselves and to understand the continent as a whole and where we fit into that continent. And I think that CODESRIA in that sense is a way of expanding our imaginations. It works both ways.

Raufu: In fact, the South African I told you who encouraged me to come to South Africa the transition, his name is Levin, I think Richard Levin. Does that ring any bell?

Nimi: No it doesn't, but I mean, I'm also a very ignorant person. [Laughs]

Raufu: Don't worry, whenever I came to South Africa, I'll introduce you to my friends, your fellow countrymen!

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