



## CALL FOR PAPERS

### **Are We Not Decolonial Yet? Empirical Reflections in Writing and Teaching History in Africa**

A Book Project of the Global South Epistemologies Research Centre

To be published by a Renowned UK Publisher in December 2024

#### **Concept Note**

Since Africa's contact with Eurocentric modernism, its epistemological and ontological landscape has witnessed two major turns. First, "the entrapped" colonial turn characterized by the erasure of the continent's indigenous know-how, the denial of Africa constituting any historical part of the world and the complete silencing of African modes of knowing, social meaning making, imagining, seeing and knowledge production. In their place in the colonial school was the proliferation of contents about the West or at best, European activities in Africa. This is what Escobar (2007) calls Eurocentric epistemologies that assumed the character of objective, scientific, neutral, universal and only truthful knowledges. The effect was that Africans who passed through colonial schools 'understood their communities far less than those of their ages who had never been to school' as their education taught them more about Europe and less about their own society (Rodney, 1982). Even after independence, imperial powers, and their agencies have continued to work together to inscribe coloniality across the African continent.

However, the above state of things has not been without a response from Africans. In fact, attempts at redefining the African cultural and epistemic essence have been an ubiquitous policy commitment in African countries and various African regional/continental organizations. This second turn; the decolonial one, was facilitated by the creation of African Universities which championed epistemological reorientations and school contents with a key focus on decolonization, Africanization and indigenization. What these policy concepts meant for Africa could be captured in the words of Amadou Ahidjo, president of Cameroon (1960-1982) who instructed that, African countries "must shun all servile importing and transplanting of foreign systems... [and that] the structure and substance of [African] educational systems must consult their past, environment, needs, and personality of the African people (quoted in Gwei, 1975). With the collapse of apartheid in South Africa, Malegapuru Makgoba also emphasized that, South Africans have to realize that the cultural ethos which apparently served the [colonial Apartheid] institutions so well in the past must change and South African schools must come to terms with the reality that they are educating Africans in Africa. Africans do not come to school to escape or erase their Africanness, but to confirm and articulate their roots (in Ramoupi and Ndille 2017).

The decolonial turn implies that from the 1960s, African states had clearly understood that worthwhile education should grow out of the environment and that the learning process should be directly related to the pattern of life in each African society dispensing that education. It should be that which generally constitutes the totality of the human faculty of that society resulting from a combination of commonly held societal data, historical experiences, needs and projections. These are embedded not only in documentary and mental repositories but also in societal



routines, processes, practices, and norms. Such needs for reform greatly compounded the task of the school which emerged out of colonialism.

Over 60 years and counting (30 for South Africa) it becomes apparent for reflections on the writing and teaching of history as a decolonial project to be undertaken. Important questions to be answered here include the following;

- What did decolonization, Africanization or indigenization mean for historical writing, research and teaching in Africa?
- To what extent has the African history and history education family responded to these policy demands?
- Have African school history curricula succeeded to build African identities and sustain them within a competing world of cultures and with the challenge of the colonial cultural backgrounds within which such curricula emerged.
- To what extent have the local history courses inserted in the curricula of some departments in the humanities, significantly swayed the curriculum to African-centeredness?
- Have African states been unanimous in their efforts to work in coordination to overcome historical intellectual dependency, through the hastening of Africanization of school history contents, curriculum and learning resources?
- Were national institutions created in African countries to address re-orientations in historical writing, history textbooks, curricula, systems of evaluation and or sponsor historical and archaeological projects that were purposefully ignored by colonial governments?
- What is the state of relationship between history textbook writing and business promoters, multinational cooperations and publishers?
- How have the postcolonial relations between former colonizers and colonized impacted history teaching, approaches to textbook contents and their analysis?
- Maldonado-Torres has argued, that Africa has only moved from a period of 'global colonialism' to that of "global coloniality." (2007, p. 219). Could this be rational assessments of the historiographic and history education trajectory of the various African societies since their attainment of self-rule?
- what does it mean to write and teach history in Africa from each own's perspective and considering the centrality of the decolonial turn and the waning interest in historical scholarship on the continent?
- How are historians and history educators fairing in the African job market and what are the stakes?
- What does it mean to supervise history postgraduate students within the context of the contemporary decolonial turn and the challenges of globalization and the eminent resurgence of coloniality?
- How has decolonization of history education and historiography responded to contemporary challenges of globalization, climate change and more recently COVID-19?



- What accounts for the seemingly unchanging status-quo despite the enormous effort put in place by African historiography?
- Do we seem to be circumnavigating- achieving limited results? Is decolonization really an unfinished project in Africa? What is the key to its finishing?
- Are we decolonial yet? Shall we be soonest and how can we guarantee that?

These questions call for deep reflections on the relationship between African Historiography and the various attributes of history education on one hand and the concept of decolonization and decoloniality on the other. For scholars, researchers and academics working in any of these domains on and about Africa (**historiographers of various forms and themes, teachers of history, history curriculum developers, analysts, textbook developers and researchers, policy makers and analysts, history teacher trainers, learning resources producers, history didacticians, archivists, museum curators, cultural experts etc**) our contributions are critical in generating new knowledge, articulating new perspectives sharing challenges and drawing common lessons for practice and posterity. We recognize the fact that such reflections have been on-going for decades but not necessarily with the same degree of self-awareness and regional and global exchanges as they can be today in the twenty-first century, when one can refer to an increasingly self-conscious and coalitional effort to understanding the field. Reflections must thus continue as a means of sustaining awareness of our achievements and challenges but more importantly, to underscore the centrality of historiography and history education as a critical foundation of African epistemology in sustaining its pedagogy from one generation to another and in enhancing the permanent change; the decolonial turn we seek in the field.

We are working with a renowned UK based publisher to produce an edited book volume by December 2024 on the above tentative title. We solicit scientific contributions on personal field experiences, empirical research papers, historical analyses, as well as conceptual and theoretical discussions on either an assessment of the historiographic landscape in Africa or part of Africa or experiences in imparting historical knowledge in Africa including discussions of the nature, trends and future of the history curriculum at all levels of education. We also welcome papers that discourse textbook development, history didactics, learning and teaching resources, history teaching strategies, as well as those that address heritage sites, museums, archives and their links with history education in Africa. Papers dealing with examination systems and the nature of historical assessments from classroom texts to end-of-course examinations like the GCE, CGCE, WAEC, Matric etc. are also welcomed. Experiences of university history departments in terms of the decolonization of programmes, teaching, supervision, the use of archives, new directions for historical learning and market opportunities for history graduates etc will also be received. Papers could also draw a link between historiography, pedagogy and curriculum as well as challenges in contemporary research and student's motivations in historical learning and employability.

We aim to contribute to the discussions on decolonial turn not only by further clarifying its definition, depth, and scope, but notably by updating existing knowledge and bringing together a wide variety of experiences in one volume. Whichever topic authors are inspired to articulate,



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<https://www.gloserc.org>

it is our hope that it would provide analyses infused by a wide variety of empirical evidence on the past and the present state of things regarding the variables under scrutiny.

**Submission** of abstract/papers: [info@gloserc.org](mailto:info@gloserc.org) cc [decolonial.edu@gmail.com](mailto:decolonial.edu@gmail.com)

**Abstracts** should be limited to 250 Words

**Word Count of Papers:** Maximum 9000 words including references

**House Style:** Chicago Manual of Style (footnotes) 16<sup>th</sup> Edition.

**Foot notes** should be limited to references and not explanations

**Formatting:** Times New Roman 12, Word 2003 default margins

**Title of papers** should be limited to a maximum of 13 Words

**Emphasis:** Authors should focus on addressing the link between history and the decolonial turn in their specific area of work and or research experience.

### Timeline

- Deadline for Reception of Abstracts: 15 July 2024
- Notification of Acceptance: 17 July 2024
- Deadline for Receipt of Full Papers: 10 August 2024 (This date will not be extended)
- Papers peer review process: 12-31 August 2024
- Zoom Meeting with (Accepted) Contributors: 02 September 2024
- Revision of Papers and submission of final drafts: 15 September 2024
- Submission to Publisher: 20 September 2024
- Proposed publication date: 20 December 2024
- Submission of abstract/papers: [info@gloserc.org](mailto:info@gloserc.org) cc [decolonial.edu@gmail.com](mailto:decolonial.edu@gmail.com)

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**Language of Communication and publication:** The editorial bench will communicate with authors in English and minimally in French where need arises. Papers should be submitted in English. Where an author is unable to submit in English, they could do so in French, Spanish, Portuguese or Arabic. They would however be translated to English during the review process and should the publisher insist on publishing all chapters in the same language.

### About the Centre

The Global South Epistemologies Research Centre (GLOSERC) aims at promoting research with Global South, Decolonial, Postcolonial and Subaltern perspectives and in giving visibility to researchers in Historical Studies, Social Sciences and Humanities who are engaged with issues of Global South concern through conferences, seminars, graduate students' methodology workshops, peer-reviewed publications and networking.

The Centre is based at Number 4, 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Newlands-Johannesburg South Africa and at Number 126 UNESCO Building, University of Buea-Cameroon. It draws its research potential from academics and researchers worldwide who share in its vision and mission and voluntarily and individually seek membership and participate in its activities. The Centre also runs a peer-reviewed online journal Global South Perspectives and publishes on a rolling basis. Visit our website <https://www.gloserc.org> for details.