# Advancing Management Knowledge and Practice in Africa: A Decolonial Perspective

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# Chapter 6

## Advancing Management Knowledge and Practice in Africa: A Decolonial Perspective

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**Abstract**

Colonialism in Africa has significantly shaped the continent's institutional, economic, and organisational development, leaving behind a legacy that continues to influence contemporary management practices. Despite Africa's rich cultural and epistemological diversity, mainstream management paradigms remain dominated by Eurocentric frameworks that marginalise Indigenous knowledge systems and local realities. This chapter critically examines the colonial underpinnings of management theories and highlights the enduring impact of imposed Western bureaucratic models. Drawing on decolonial theory, postcolonial critique, and relevant decolonial concepts, the chapter reveals how colonial legacies persist in shaping knowledge production and organisational practices in Africa. It advocates for the integration of Indigenous epistemologies and philosophies into management education and practice. By employing Indigenous and postcolonial methodologies, the chapter proposes actionable strategies and policy recommendations to decolonise management research, reframe academic curricula, and reclaim African agency in the global management discourse.

**Keywords:** Decolonisation, Africa, Colonialism, Indigenous knowledge

'But he [the white man] says that our customs are bad; and our own brothers who have taken up his religion say our customs are bad. How do you think we can fight when our own brothers have turned against us? . . . Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart'.

(Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart, 1958)

## Introduction

The persistent reflections of colonial domination continue to shape contemporary African society, including its organisational and management practices (Taiwo, 2010; Maseland, 2018). The epigraph drawn from Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* captures the enduring internal divisions imposed by colonialism, which not only fractured communities but also set the stage for a legacy of epistemic subordination and the internalisation of inferiority among Africans (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2021). This chapter interrogates how management knowledge and practice in Africa have been limited by Eurocentric paradigms that marginalise Indigenous epistemologies and argues for a decolonial reorientation that recognises and integrates local realities.

Central to this inquiry lies a critical reflection on the colonial underpinnings of mainstream management theories. The imposition of Western bureaucratic models and educational frameworks during the colonial era was not merely a transfer of administrative practices; it was a deliberate strategy to devalue Indigenous knowledge systems (Oppong, 2017; Mawere, 2024). Besides, before addressing these issues, it is crucial to understand what being "African" entails. As Oppong (2017, p. 238) succinctly puts it, "Africans are people from diverse cultural and social backgrounds but with strong similarities that make them common people. They are people who have witnessed hundreds of years of colonial influence that attempted to erase the common thing that holds them together." This definition shows the complexity of African identity, which is made up of many different traditions that are connected by a common history of strength and resilience in the face of relentless external imposition.

The critique of Eurocentrism in management and organisational studies is grounded in a broader decolonial discourse, which contends that the legacy of colonialism permeates not only political and economic domains but also the very production of knowledge (Wijesinghe et al., 2019; Jammulamadaka et al., 2021). Scholars such as Said (2003), Spivak (1988), and Bhabha (1994) have provided critical frameworks through concepts such as Orientalism, subalternity, and hybridity that expose the epistemic injustices inherent in dominant Western narratives. Their work reveals how the process of "othering" systematically silences alternative voices, particularly those emanating from the African context. Consequently, management practices in

Africa often reflect a borrowed set of principles that do not necessarily resonate with the lived realities of its people (Chilisa et al., 2016; Verhoef, 2021). This disconnect calls for a reassessment of what constitutes "African management" and an understanding of management practices that are distinctively African (Verhoef, 2021).

A critical examination of African management practices reveals a historical trajectory marked by the erosion of Indigenous organisational systems. Pre-colonial African societies were characterised by community-based governance structures that emphasised collective responsibility and shared identity (Basheka & Auriacombe, 2020). However, the colonial legacy disrupted these systems, replacing them with Western models that privileged individualism, hierarchy, and rationalised bureaucracies (Bradley, 2005). This not only led to the marginalisation of Indigenous practices but also created a management paradigm that remains ill-suited to addressing the socio-cultural and economic complexities of modern African organisations (Verhoef, 2021).

Furthermore, the challenge of decolonising management knowledge is compounded by the internalisation of Western epistemologies by African scholars and practitioners alike (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2021; Falola, 2022). The prevalence of "whiteness" in management research illustrates a form of epistemic self-colonisation, where African voices are often co-opted or silenced by dominant Western narratives. This phenomenon reinforces a cycle of dependency and intellectual subordination, undermining the potential for an authentic African contribution to the global discourse on management and organisation studies (Oppong, 2017; Gaio et al., 2024).

This chapter employs a literature review to examine how colonial underpinnings continue to influence management knowledge and practices in Africa. By interrogating both the historical legacies of colonialism and the contemporary challenges of applying universalised management theories, this study seeks to explore pathways toward an Indigenous management paradigm. Such a paradigm would not only recognise the rich diversity of African epistemologies but also reframe management education and organisational practices in a manner that is contextually relevant and culturally grounded. Ultimately, this chapter seeks to advance management knowledge and practice in Africa by proposing a shift from reactive rejection of Western paradigms to a proactive integration of Indigenous perspectives. This approach aspires to reconstitute a management framework that honours the complexities of

African identity and leverages the continent's unique cultural heritage as a foundation for innovation and development.

## Decolonial Theory, Postcolonial Critique and Colonial Legacy in Management Studies

Decolonial theory and postcolonial critique have emerged as critical lenses for interrogating the production of knowledge and power structures that underpin management studies (Jammulamadaka et al., 2021; Banerjee, 2022). At their core, these approaches challenge the hegemony of Western epistemologies that have long dominated academic inquiry and practice (Seremani & Clegg, 2016; Tembo, 2022). Despite the widespread use of the term "decolonisation", there remains a persistent lack of conceptual clarity, often reducing the term to a buzzword (Sondarjee & Andrews, 2022). Instead, it requires an engagement with decolonial and postcolonial debates that unpack their theoretical foundations and examine their relevance for management knowledge, particularly in Africa (Nkomo, 2011; Balogun & Woldegiorgis, 2025).

According to Maldonado-Torres (2011), decoloniality refers to the process of dismantling power structures and knowledge systems that perpetuate racial, gender, and geopolitical hierarchies established or reinforced during the modern colonial era. It seeks to create a new, post-conquest humanity free from racial hierarchies and unequal power structures (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). Therefore, decolonising management knowledge involves critically challenging and reshaping the dominant Eurocentric frameworks that have long dictated how management is conceptualised and practised (Jammulamadaka et al., 2021; Banerjee, 2022). It means recognising and valuing Indigenous epistemologies and local realities, which have been systematically marginalised (Girei, 2017). This approach is not merely about de-Westernising management knowledge but calls for a reorientation of both academic research and practical management strategies to incorporate culturally grounded, context-specific insights, thereby fostering a more inclusive, authentic, and sustainable management paradigm that truly reflects Indigenous experiences (Gaio et al., 2024; Ojha, 2024).

Edward Said's concept of *Orientalism* serves as an early, influential critique of Western representations of the "Other." Said (2003) argues that Western scholarship has constructed the non-West as exotic, inferior, and inherently different. This process of othering was not merely a misrepresentation; it served as a justification for colonial domination by establishing a hierarchy in which Western knowledge and practices were positioned as universally valid.

Similarly, Gayatri Spivak's work in Subaltern Studies exposes how the voices of marginalised groups are silenced within dominant discourses (Spivak, 1988). Spivak contends that even well-intentioned efforts to decolonise scholarship can inadvertently reproduce the very power structures they seek to dismantle if they fail to critically engage with the conditions that produce epistemic inequality.

Homi Bhabha's contributions further refine these debates by introducing the notion of hybridity. Within this perspective, hybridity emerges as a space of cultural negotiation – a "third space" where identities are fluid and continuously redefined (Bhabha, 1994). This concept challenges binary oppositions between the coloniser and the colonised, suggesting instead that the process of cultural exchange can generate new forms of knowledge that resist total assimilation into Western norms (Seremani & Clegg, 2016; Jayawardena, 2023). Together, these scholars illustrate how the production of knowledge is inherently political and deeply embedded in historical and cultural power relations.

Central to decolonial critique are the concepts of epistemic injustice and epistemicide. Tobi (2020) and Byskov (2020) provide robust accounts of how certain groups are systematically denied credibility as knowers. On the one hand, epistemic injustice occurs when prejudicial biases, rooted in race, ethnicity, gender, or social class, disqualify individuals from contributing to the collective pool of knowledge (Fricker, 2007; Byskov, 2020; Muzanenhamo & Chowdhury, 2023). Furthermore, Byskov (2020) identifies five distinct conditions (disadvantage, prejudice, stakeholder, epistemic, and social justice) that contribute to epistemic injustice. He argues that these conditions can give rise to a range of unfair outcomes in various contexts. Specifically, he highlights the potential for biased judgments regarding an individual's epistemic capacity, where certain individuals or groups are unjustly deemed less knowledgeable or credible. Additionally, Byskov discusses the unfair denial of rights for stakeholders, particularly in situations where their voices and contributions are marginalised or overlooked. He also points to the unjust rejection of knowledge, whereby valuable insights from certain communities or individuals may be disregarded simply because of prejudice. Lastly, epistemic injustice highlights existing vulnerabilities that certain groups face, which can exacerbate their marginalisation within knowledge-dominant spaces. Thus, identifying epistemic injustice enables us to analyse claims of harm against knowers, exposing and preventing institutional and individual contributions to inequality (Byskov, 2020).

On the other hand, epistemicide refers to an act that devalues, silences, kills, or annihilates a knowledge system or a way of knowing (Patin et al., 2021). It captures the deliberate eradication of Indigenous ways of knowing, representing a more extreme form of epistemic injustice (Yeon et al., 2023). Balogun & Woldegiorgis (2025) further argue that epistemicide refers to the processes by which colonial regimes not only marginalised local epistemologies but actively destroyed them, rendering alternative knowledge systems invisible or irrelevant. Consequently, Tobi (2020) suggests that the lasting impacts of colonialism, through harmful acts like epistemicide, serve as a justifiable reason for us to reimagine and decolonise knowledge.

The relevance of these debates to management knowledge in Africa is profound. The colonial legacy in Africa is not confined to political or economic dimensions; it extends to the realm of knowledge production and dissemination (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2021). Pre-colonial African societies exhibited rich, context-specific organisational practices that were grounded in communal values, oral traditions, and Indigenous epistemologies (Ezeanya-Esiobu, 2019). However, colonial rule imposed Western bureaucratic models that redefined what constituted legitimate knowledge. This imposition not only delegitimised Indigenous practices but also set the stage for a global management discourse dominated by Eurocentric theories (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2017).

Critically, the marginalisation of Indigenous management practices is not an unintended consequence of historical developments but rather the product of deliberate processes of epistemic control (Bhargava, 2013). The selective production and validation of knowledge have reinforced hierarchies that privilege Western modes of thinking while devaluing Indigenous knowledge. This critique is further compounded by the observation that even African scholars and practitioners sometimes adopt Western frameworks uncritically, perpetuating the cycle of decolonisation as a reactionary rather than transformative process (Taiwo, 2022). Such dynamics underscore the urgent need for a more balanced approach that integrates Indigenous epistemologies into the global discourse on management.

In summary, decolonial theory and postcolonial critique offer essential frameworks for understanding and challenging the colonial legacy in management studies. By foregrounding the concepts of epistemic injustice and epistemicide, these approaches reveal how knowledge production is intrinsically linked to historical power dynamics. The dominance of Eurocentric management theories has not only marginalised Indigenous practices but has also hindered the

development of a management framework that is truly reflective of African realities. Addressing this imbalance requires an ongoing critical re-examination of how knowledge is defined, validated, and disseminated – a process that is central to advancing management studies in Africa in a way that honours its rich, diverse heritage (Oppong, 2017; Balogun & Woldegiorgis, 2025).

## Historical Context: Pre-Colonial and Colonial Influences on Management Knowledge in Africa

Pre-colonial Africa was characterised by management systems that emerged organically from communal practices, indigenous governance, and shared cultural values (Zoogah, 2021; Ibeh et al., 2022). Historic centres such as Timbuktu stand as evidence of sophisticated administrative and scholarly traditions, where management knowledge was transmitted through oral and written practices (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2017; Ibeh et al., 2022). Similarly, the planning and construction of monumental structures like the pyramids in Egypt illustrate the ability to mobilise vast human and material resources through complex project management and logistical coordination (Ezzamel, 2004; Oppong, 2017). These practices were embedded in Indigenous organisational structures that valued communal leadership and consensus decision-making, reflecting an African relational worldview where authority was distributed, and decisions were reached collectively (Jackson et al., 2008; Aliye, 2020). Such systems were adaptive, culturally rooted, and tailored to local social and environmental contexts, challenging any simplistic notion that pre-colonial Africa lacked sophisticated managerial practices (Basheka & Auriacombe, 2020; Heto & Mino, 2023).

The advent of colonial rule, however, initiated a profound transformation in the continent's management landscape. Colonial administrations systematically displaced indigenous systems, replacing them with Western bureaucratic models that were seen as more "modern" and universally applicable (Decker, 2010; Ikeanyibe, 2017). Scholars such as Kiggundu (1991) have documented how colonial masters deliberately undermined indigenous governance structures, arguing that pre-colonial administrative systems, though effective in their own right, were inferior to European methods. This imposition was not a neutral transfer of ideas but a process of epistemic domination, where Indigenous knowledge was delegitimised and portrayed as primitive (Mudimbe, 1988; Tobi, 2020). As a result, the rich legacy of communal and consensus-based management was sidelined in favour of rigid, hierarchical structures that prioritised control and uniformity.

Colonial education systems played a crucial role in entrenching these Western paradigms. By designing curricula that celebrated European administrative practices while neglecting local knowledge, colonial powers ensured that new generations of African elites were distanced from their indigenous roots (Ezeanya-Esiobu, 2019; Johnson & Mbah, 2024). This educational strategy contributed to the long-term marginalisation and delegitimisation of Indigenous epistemologies (Akena, 2012), reinforcing a view that effective management was synonymous with Western-style bureaucratic efficiency. As noted by Toivonen & Seremani (2021), this imposition not only erased local practices but also reoriented the production of management knowledge, privileging theories and methods developed in the Global North over those that were rooted in African realities. Nevertheless, critical perspectives from decolonial theoretical lenses such as Orientalism, Subaltern Studies and Hybridity, underscore the need to understand decolonisation not merely as a rejection of Western models but as an active engagement with the complex legacies of both Indigenous and colonial systems.

Furthermore, the "whiteness" of management research in Africa has exhibited a pervasive influence of Western paradigms in both academic literature and practical management. Scholars such as Nkomo et al. (2015) have argued that the legacy of colonisation continues to shape research agendas, methodologies, and theoretical frameworks in ways that marginalise Indigenous voices. Management theories produced in the Global North are often presented as universal truths, despite their limited applicability in African contexts. Such universalist approaches fail to consider the historical, cultural, and social specificities of African organisational environments, thereby perpetuating a cycle of intellectual dependence and epistemic subordination (Oppong, 2017). Moreover, this colonial imprint is evident in the way management knowledge is disseminated. The dominance of Western academic journals, textbooks, and curricula reinforces the notion that Western management practices are superior, sidelining local approaches that may be better suited to address African realities. As Balogun & Woldegiorgis (2025) note, the pervasive influence of Western paradigms not only constrains African scholarship but also distorts the continent's self-perception by privileging externally constructed narratives over Indigenous experiences. The universalist claims of Western management theories, while presented as globally applicable, frequently overlook the specificities of African contexts, thereby perpetuating a cycle of intellectual dependency and cultural misrepresentation (Balogun & Woldegiorgis, 2025).

Moreover, the legacy of colonial rule is evident in the ongoing challenges faced by African institutions in reconciling inherited Western models with Indigenous practices. The colonial

imposition not only redefined what was considered legitimate knowledge but also reoriented organisational goals towards those that serve the interests of global managerialism rather than local development (Fennell & Arnot, 2008). The result is a persistent tension in which Indigenous methods of communal leadership and relational decision-making are either suppressed or co-opted, leaving a gap in the management discourse that fails to address the unique needs of African organisations (Oppong, 2017).

Ultimately, it has become clear that the colonial legacy in management studies is not a relic of the past but an active force influencing contemporary organisational life in Africa. Addressing this legacy requires a critical re-examination of existing paradigms and a move towards integrating Indigenous epistemologies that are better aligned with African realities (Falola, 2022; Het & Mino, 2023).

## Contemporary Challenges of Eurocentric Management Practices in Africa

The impact of colonial disruptions on management knowledge in Africa extends beyond historical transformation; it continues to influence contemporary organisational practices. Despite the end of colonialism in Africa, African management remains deeply intertwined with the dominance of Western management theories and practices. Multinational corporations (MNCs) and global business schools continue to shape management education and practice in Africa, often reinforcing Eurocentric paradigms that privilege Western concepts over Indigenous practices (Shizha, 2011; John et al., 2023). The presence of Western expatriates in African organisations further amplifies this trend, as they often bring with them management styles and strategies that are ill-suited to the local cultural and socio-economic contexts (Nkomo et al., 2015). Such dynamics create an environment where local challenges and contextual nuances are frequently overlooked, perpetuating a one-size-fits-all approach to management that undermines the potential for developing context-specific solutions. Moreover, Adams et al. (2018) argue that the colonial legacy in Africa shaped the language, culture, and practices of international business. MNCs, driven by rent and resource-seeking, use this Eurocentric model, which perpetuates neocolonialism and negatively impacts African development.

Complicating this landscape is the role of Indigenous managerial elites who, at times, are complicit in maintaining these colonial management practices. Scholars like Toivonen & Seremani (2021) argue that local elites often adopt Western management frameworks uncritically, using narratives of progress and modernity to justify the continued dominance of

global managerialism. This internalisation of Western norms not only marginalises Indigenous knowledge systems but also reinforces the power imbalances established during the colonial era. By aligning with Western theories, these elites inadvertently contribute to a cycle where traditional practices are devalued, and the unique characteristics of African organisational life are sidelined. Such complicity has profound implications for the development of management practices that are truly reflective of local realities, as it limits the scope for alternative, culturally rooted approaches (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015; Toivonen & Seremani, 2021).

Neocolonial economic policies have further entrenched Eurocentric management practices in Africa. For example, Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) and policies encouraging foreign direct investments (FDIs) represent contemporary forms of economic control that mirror earlier colonial strategies (John et al., 2023). SAPs, imposed by the World Bank and IMF, generally had negative impacts on African economies, causing economic contraction, increased poverty, and social unrest, despite initial hopes for economic independence (Geo-Jaja & Mangum, 2001; United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2013). Oppong (2017) highlight that these policies often lead to adopting organisational structures and human resource policies modelled after Western corporations, thereby deepening the reliance on externally derived management practices. Global capitalism, with its emphasis on efficiency, market-driven strategies, and standardised managerial processes, imposes a framework that frequently conflicts with the social and cultural fabrics of African societies. Such economic policies not only shape organisational hierarchies and operational methods but also constrain local firms to a narrow set of managerial practices that may be ill-equipped to address Indigenous challenges.

This interplay of external economic forces and internal managerial practices has produced a scenario where the "whiteness" of management research and practice continues to dominate (Oppong, 2017). The global dissemination of Western management knowledge, combined with the local adoption of these paradigms, perpetuates an imbalance that marginalises alternative epistemologies. This situation is compounded by the lack of critical engagement with Indigenous managerial knowledge and practices, which have historically offered more flexible, relational, and community-oriented approaches (Nkomo et al., 2015; Oppong, 2017). Thus, decolonising management knowledge and practice in Africa has become even more important in contemporary African organisations to foster unique African management practices and mitigate risks imposed by Eurocentric perspectives.

## Towards a Decolonised Management Knowledge in Africa

Decolonising management knowledge in Africa requires a significant reconfiguration of existing academic and practical paradigms to centre Indigenous epistemologies, cultural practices, and local realities. This reorientation challenges the long-held dominance of Western management theories that have defined what constitutes legitimate knowledge through centuries of colonial and neocolonial influence (Nansubuga & Munene, 2020; Toivonen & Seremani, 2021). To achieve a genuinely decolonised management framework, it is necessary to embrace Indigenous knowledge systems, adopt African-centred methodological approaches, integrate alternative epistemologies, and reform management education and organisational practices across the continent.

A key pillar in this transformative agenda is recognising and incorporating Indigenous knowledge systems in management. African societies boast rich oral traditions, communal decision-making, and non-hierarchical leadership models that have long governed social and economic life. For example, the philosophies underlying Ubuntu – which emphasise collective well-being, interdependence, and communal harmony – offer a stark contrast to the individualistic and profit-driven models prevalent in Western management (Ibeh et al., 2022). Ubuntu's emphasis on collective well-being directly challenges the Western focus on individual achievement and profit maximisation, advocating instead for interdependence and communal harmony within African organisations. This decolonised approach prioritises collaboration, shared responsibility, and the holistic well-being of employees and the community, fostering a more inclusive and sustainable organisational culture (Naude, 2019; Van Norren, 2022; Adeola, 2024). By embracing such Indigenous philosophies, African organisations can develop management practices that are culturally relevant, ethically sound, and contribute to equitable and sustainable development, moving away from the exploitative tendencies often associated with Western models.

Furthermore, traditional practices such as those observed in Igbo entrepreneurship in Nigeria, the managerial systems of the Kikuyus in Kenya, the dynamic commercial networks of the Mourides in Senegal, and the unique socio-economic arrangements of the Maasai in East Africa illustrate how Indigenous management practices are not only viable but can also offer sustainable alternatives to global managerial norms (Jackson et al., 2008; Nnadozie, 2002; Osiri, 2020). These examples demonstrate that Indigenous approaches emphasise resilience,

adaptability, and a deep connection to local cultural values, which are essential in addressing the challenges unique to African contexts.

In parallel, there is a need for rethinking the methodological approaches to decolonising management research (Konadu-Osei et al., 2023). Indigenous methodology, which advocates for research conducted by and for Indigenous people while drawing upon local cultural traditions (Smith, 1999; Oppong, 2013), challenges the prevailing Western-centric research paradigms. Such methodologies call for the active involvement of local communities in knowledge production, ensuring that research outputs are both contextually relevant and empowering (Oppong, 2017). Postcolonial methodologies further enrich this agenda by incorporating strategies like decolonisation, defamiliarisation, and reading erasures. These approaches challenge the dominance of managerial colonialism by questioning taken-for-granted assumptions and exposing the inherent biases of Western theories (Oppong, 2017). For instance, defamiliarisation disrupts the normalcy of conventional management practices, making the familiar (e.g. Westernised models) strange so that alternative ways of organising and leading can emerge (Kaomea, 2003). This disruption creates a space where alternative modes of organising can emerge, challenging the status quo and inviting innovative approaches that better reflect local realities (Subreenduth, 2013; Waghid & Meda, 2023). In practical terms, managers might apply defamiliarisation by deliberately questioning routine practices during meetings or training sessions, thereby encouraging critical dialogue on how traditional approaches may no longer serve contemporary needs. Meanwhile, reading erasures involves critically uncovering and reconstructing elements that have been systematically omitted from mainstream management narratives, such as the rich Indigenous contributions that have shaped local practices over centuries (Kaomea, 2003; Oppong, 2017). By revisiting historical records, oral traditions, and cultural artifacts, organisations can reintroduce and celebrate these overlooked insights, fostering a more inclusive and contextually relevant management framework. Together, these approaches advocate for an African-centred research framework that privileges local voices and diverse epistemologies, ultimately reshaping management thought and practice in a manner that is both innovative and culturally authentic.

The concept of "border thinking" further expands the decolonisation discourse by positing that knowledge is inherently plural and context-specific (Faria, 2013). This is crucial because, while Eurocentric Western thought often constructs "borders" – be they geographic, ontological, or cultural – as limits between identity and difference, decolonial thought, including "border thinking", proposes a new economy of difference (Yousfi, 2021). This challenges the idea that

cultural productions are external to the colonial relationship. As such, border thinking, as Mignolo (2011) views it, is an embodied consciousness where dualities and vulnerability become central to decolonising how we think about the geo- and body politics of knowledge, political economy, and gender. Border thinking implies that knowledge production is always located and anchored in specific bodies, territories, and local histories, in contrast to the disembodied, abstract, universalist knowledge that generates global designs (Mignolo, 2009, 2012). Thus, Mignolo argues that border thinking is a way of thinking from the outside, using alternative knowledge traditions and languages to challenge the hegemonic discourse of Western modernity and promote decolonial ways of knowing. This approach is particularly relevant for advancing management knowledge in Africa, as it encourages the incorporation of diverse, locally grounded perspectives that challenge universal, abstract management models and foster practices rooted in the continent's own cultural and historical realities.

Furthermore, the concept of "pluriversality" challenges the universalist claims of Western management theories by asserting that multiple knowledge can coexist without being subordinated to a single dominant paradigm (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). It embraces the diverse ways of existing, understanding, and engaging with the world, all of which are deeply rooted in their historical contexts and intertwined with the environment around us (Faria, 2013; Mohnot et al., 2021). This approach encourages scholars and practitioners to listen to subaltern voices – those that have historically been silenced by colonial epistemologies – and integrate these perspectives into mainstream management education (Minoia & Castro-Sotomayor, 2024). Thus, African scholars can resist epistemic silences and reclaim the space for Indigenous narratives, thereby creating a more inclusive and authentic global discourse on management (Gwaravanda & Ndofirepi, 2020).

Reclaiming African agency in knowledge production is central to the decolonisation project (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2021; Falola, 2022). African scholars have a pivotal role to play in advancing decolonial management studies by challenging the dominance of Western epistemologies and contributing original insights that reflect the continent's diverse experiences. Creating platforms for African voices in global management discourse is essential. Conferences, journals, and collaborative research projects should prioritise the work of African academics and practitioners, thereby facilitating a more balanced exchange of ideas. This not only enriches the global pool of management knowledge but also empowers local communities by validating their ways of knowing and doing. As noted by Balogun & Woldegiorgis (2025), such efforts are critical to dismantling the persistent hierarchies that have long marginalised

Indigenous perspectives in favour of imported theories. One way to reclaim African agency is by engaging in "epistemic disobedience", which refers to "delinking from the illusion of the zero point epistemology" (Mignolo, 2009, p. 160). It is, therefore, a deliberate rejection of the dominant Western knowledge systems that have long governed management practices in Africa. Epistemic disobedience calls on African scholars and practitioners to challenge and subvert established norms, thereby reclaiming Indigenous epistemologies and enabling a more contextually relevant approach to organisational strategy (Mignolo, 2009). This critical stance not only facilitates the inclusion of suppressed local voices but also fosters innovative management practices that resonate with the unique cultural, social, and economic realities of African organisations (Johnson & Mbah, 2024).

In practice, a decolonised management framework would necessitate a multi-faceted approach that combines policy reform, academic transformation, and grassroots empowerment. At the policy level, governments should foster an enabling environment that supports indigenous entrepreneurship and facilitates access to capital for local enterprises. This could involve incentivising partnerships between local firms and international investors under terms that safeguard Indigenous interests and promote knowledge transfer. Adam et al. (2018) recommend that African governments implement a nationalist-modernising strategy whereby the export levels from local businesses are proportioned to the levels of MNC resource-seeking activities. Such a strategy would ensure the proliferation of local business groups, granting them better access to both local and international capital. By promoting local production and reducing dependence on MNCs, governments can help create a more resilient and self-sustaining economic environment. Moreover, this approach minimises the manufactured risks associated with capital flight and ensures that the benefits of economic growth are more evenly distributed among local communities. Such policy measures, when coupled with educational and organisational reforms, form a comprehensive strategy for advancing a decolonised management knowledge base that is truly reflective of African realities (Adam et al., 2018).

Simultaneously, academic institutions must undertake curriculum reform and adopt research methodologies that centre on Indigenous epistemologies, ensuring that future managers are well-versed in both global best practices and local knowledge. Decolonising management education in African universities represents a crucial front in this transformative agenda. As Gaio et al. (2024) argue, curricula in business schools and management programs must be reformed to include African management philosophies, case studies, and practical examples that resonate with the local context. This entails not only integrating Indigenous theories such

as Ubuntu, but also reassessing the pedagogical methods that currently privilege Western models of instruction. A reformed curriculum should promote experiential learning, encourage critical reflection on the colonial legacies of management thought, and support dialogue between Western and Indigenous perspectives. Such reforms would empower students to become active participants in knowledge production rather than passive consumers of imported theories, thereby fostering a generation of leaders who are equipped to address Africa's unique developmental challenges (Gaio et al., 2024; Johnson & Mbah, 2024).

At the organisational level, indigenising organisational strategies in African firms is vital. There is an increasing call for African organisations to adopt culturally relevant business practices that balance global managerial standards with local traditions (Nachum et al., 2023; Razak et al., 2024). For instance, while global managerialism emphasises efficiency and standardisation, African companies might benefit from models that incorporate communal decision-making and relational leadership (Nkomo et al., 2015; Pérezts et al., 2020). Such approaches not only align better with local cultural practices but can also drive innovation and sustainability. The challenge lies in striking a balance between adopting best practices from the global arena and retaining the distinctive elements of Indigenous management knowledge. Embracing this balance can lead to a management paradigm that is both competitive on the international stage and deeply rooted in local realities (Oppong, 2017; Nkomo et al., 2015). Thus, companies can initiate internal reforms by incorporating traditional decision-making processes and emphasising communal values in their corporate culture. For example, businesses could adopt practices that mirror the inclusive, consensus-based approaches observed in traditional African societies. Such initiatives not only enhance employee engagement and loyalty but also lead to more sustainable and contextually relevant management practices. Moreover, the integration of Indigenous philosophies such as Ubuntu can serve as a powerful tool for building organisational resilience and fostering a sense of shared purpose among employees (Oppong, 2017).

**Conclusion**

Moving towards decolonised management knowledge in Africa requires fundamentally rethinking existing paradigms across policy, education, organisational practice, and research. By elevating the voices of African scholars and practitioners, the continent can begin to reshape the global management discourse in a way that is both inclusive and reflective of its diverse realities. Embracing Indigenous knowledge systems, adopting African-centred methodological

approaches, integrating alternative epistemologies like border thinking, and reforming management education and corporate strategies are essential steps in this journey. Through these efforts, African societies can reclaim their agency in knowledge production and forge a management framework that is not only competitive globally but also deeply rooted in local cultural realities. This comprehensive transformation promises to challenge the lingering shadows of colonial influence and pave the way for a more equitable, sustainable, and contextually relevant approach to management in Africa.

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