

Janice Busingye's fellowship research project in the young academics research project "Universality and Acceptance Potential of Social Science Knowledge - On the Circulation of Knowledge between Europe and the Global South" at the Institute of Sociology of the Albert-Ludwigs University Freiburg.

Working title

European social science research as a model for African social science research. The position of the global south.

Abstract

The project will research the influences that the social science research model originating from the North has had on the theory and practice of research in the social sciences in the global south.

In Africa, the Eurocentric epistemology is still predominant in the conceptualisation and production of knowledge. Some authors have attributed this dominance to the claim to universality of the knowledge produced in the North. Other scholars have argued that the production of knowledge especially in terms of research has changed overtime, due to various changes in the context where knowledge is produced. Some of the changes that have induced a shift in the focus of research have been changes in the nature of social movements, changes in the patterns of governance and changes in how work is organised (Popkewitz & Fendler, 1999).

This project, basing on the arguments by Habermas that all research is guided by particular interests, will seek to understand how research models originating in the North, specifically Europe, have influenced social science research in the South, specifically, Uganda. African scholars have been arguing that Africa has its own Afrocentric epistemology (Michelson, 1996), which should be the guiding principle for social science research in Africa. However, the major question is how does Afrocentric epistemologies respond to Eurocentric epistemology? The project will first focus on understanding the epistemological shifts in research theory and practice in Germany and Uganda. It will then proceed to carry out qualitative interviews with social scientists on both sites to understand the shifts that have taken place and the reasons why. It will be asking, how scholars in the South have responded to the European model of research. How has this model (s) been applied in the south and what challenges have they met? What has guided research overtime and how has that

been a reflection of the research interests of the North or South or both? It will also explore what alternatives social scientists in the South have developed in response to the shift in social science research in the North.

Guided by the findings of the data collected from the examples in Germany and Uganda, I will develop a broad discussion on the theory and practice of social research in changing contexts.