

Transcending academic dependence: Bernard Magubane's contribution to the race and class debate in South Africa

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Abstract: *This article aims to foreground the conceptual premise that the valorisation of the works of prominent African scholars is an important effort towards overcoming epistemic dependence. The marginalisation and invisibility of the work of prominent African scholars is an aspect of academic imperialism, if not addressed this current trend will further reinforce the dependence on ideas. A case in point is the work of the late Professor Bernard Makhoszwe Magubane - a prominent South African scholar who made significant theoretical contributions in debates about race and class in South Africa. Given the wide acknowledgement of the scholarly works of Bernard Magubane across the African social science community and North America, the absence of his works from the curriculum and debates in South Africa is intriguing. This paper explores the scholarship of Professor Bernard Magubane by engaging with his works on race, class and inequality. His specific contributions to the enterprise of knowledge production are identified and discussed in relation to his critique of Western Social Science and commitment to endogenous knowledge production. This paper is based on a critical analysis of data generated from interviews conducted with him, his autobiography, tributes written in honour of him as well as some of his published works on race and class.*

Key words : *Bernard Magubane, Academic dependence, Race and Class, Endogeneity, Afrocentricity.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

The need to decolonize knowledge production has received urgent attention in academic conversations in recent times. Yet, these conversations are not new. Decolonial work has been part of post colonial studies for at least two decades, and it has been broadly conceptualised as an intentional undoing and dismantling of eurocentric knowledge hierarchies in order to create and build alternative spaces and ways of knowing (Crawford, Mai-Bornu & Landstrom, 2021). A number of committed scholars from the African continent have worked tirelessly to challenge the eurocentric bias and models of expression in knowledge about Africa and its people. They have over the years engaged with theories about the 'captive mind' as articulated by Alatas (1979), Altbach (1978), Houtonji (1997) and others. For example, debates on Egyptology, Ancient Egypt and Black Africa highlight the important role of African scholars who are at the centre of production of knowledge. Also, theories formulated by scholars such as Diop, Obenga and those based in North Africa and who publish in Arabic have continued to make an impact that has displaced Eurocentric theories that inform studies in Egyptology. While it remains uncontested that we have African role models and pathfinders who have contributed to endogenous knowledge production, the challenge that remains is the poor citation and engagement with the works of these prominent scholars. Yako (2021) referred to this trend as the 'politics of citation' and argued that African scholars are expected to cite predominantly Euro-American elite scholars in order for them to be recognised as rigorous scholars in their disciplines. This trend further marginalises the work of African scholars and promotes the 'çaptive mind' in a more subtle form. Thandeka Mkandawire lamented that :

"We are probably the only part of the world about which it is still legitimate to publish, without reference to local scholarship"... "Africanist scholarship proceeds blithely as if its African counterpart did not exist and one is struck by the deafening silence over and unqualified dismissal of African scholarship"(1997:29).

Although these sentiments were expressed over three decades ago, Kessi, Marks and Ramugondo (2020) argue that little progress has been made in attempts to engage with the work of African scholars. This paper is an attempt to address the invisibility of the works of a prominent scholar – the late Professor Bernard Magubane with a view to illuminate the significance of his Afrocentric scholarship which creates Africa’s own intellectual perspective on issues pertaining to Africa, and stand in contradiction to the Eurocentric biases in the production of knowledge about Africa.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies on knowledge production on a global scale tend to draw analogies from theories of political and economic imperialism, hence the conceptualisation of academic dependency and intellectual imperialism. This section begins with the assumption that the theory of intellectual imperialism provides an important framework within which academic dependency can be understood. Syed Farid (1969; 2000) is one of the few postcolonial scholars who brought our attention to the issue of intellectual imperialism. While political imperialism involves the economic and political domination of one group by another, in much the same way intellectual imperialism involves the “domination of one people by another in the world of thinking” (Alatas, 2022:14). During colonialism, intellectual imperialism was facilitated and maintained via colonial power and the setting up of colonial academic institutions. In the 1970’s and 80’s the idea that intellectual imperialism was perpetuated by academic dependence gained footing. In this view, academic dependence was linked to the centre periphery model of development which viewed academic dependence “as a natural product of dependent development in which the ‘captive mind’ needs to be decolonized” (Lee & Chen, 2000: 25). Syed Farid Alatas work marked the full development of the academic dependency theory. He framed six types of academic dependence: 1) dependence of ideas, 2) dependence on the media of ideas, 3) dependence on the technology of education, 4) dependence of aid for research as well as teaching, 5) dependence of investment in education and 6) dependence of third world scientists on the West for their skills. An academic community is said to be completely dependent if it meets any of the six dimensions of academic dependency (Lee & Chen, 2000).

Various authors problematised the notion of academic dependency in different fields. The dominant observation in these works was the idea that academic dependency created asymmetrical power relationships between knowledge communities and importantly in the production of knowledge. Garreau explored academic dependency with specific reference to the Social Sciences and argued that Social Science communities in the north were dependent on the ideas of the western social sciences such that “research agendas, the definition of problems areas, methods of research and standards of excellence were determined and borrowed from the west” (1985:114). In the 90’s Houtondji (1990) argued that one of the consequences of dependency was the absence of theoretical activity. The lack of theoretical activity has roots in the global division of labour which tended to make knowledge production a monopoly of the North, while confining Southern countries to the importing and application of these inventions. In this way, the theoretical vacuum was just as specific to colonial scientific activity as industrial vacuum was to economic activity. Houtondji (1990:8) argued that “in the overall process of the production of knowledge, colonies functioned as immense data banks, as storehouses of bare facts and information that was exported to the ruling country, just as they used to serve as storehouses of raw materials that were exported to the same ruling countries”. Houtondji also argued that one of the consequences of the lack of theoretical activity is the dependency on ideas, a dimension of dependency highlighted by Alatas.

Syed Hussein Alatas developed the concept of the ‘captive mind’ to conceptualise the nature of scholarship in the developing world in relation to western domination of knowledge production in the Humanities and Social Sciences. The phenomenon of the ‘captive mind’ refers to a way of thinking dominated by western thought in an imitative and uncritical manner. Alatas (2006:36) summarised the characteristics of the captive mind as the inability to devise original analytical methods, alienation from the main issues of indigenous societies, uncritical imitation of western social science manifested in the areas of problem selection, choice of research methods as well as the levels of theory and substantive work. Altbach (1978) argued that the captive mind “is a form of intellectual bondage that is not directly brought by intellectual imperialism, but rather self-induced”. This form of self-imposed dependency forms what Houtondji (1990) referred to as a new form of dependence that persist even in the post-colonial period. Whilst acknowledging the impact of colonialism on knowledge production in the colonies, he argued in the early 90s that there had been a change in the centre periphery relationship that had been evident during the colonial period. He argued that the theoretical vacuum could no longer be denounced, since political independence brought about an increase in research facilities which facilitated and encouraged scientific activity and even indigenous knowledge production in various fields. In spite of all these developments, he however argued that scientific activity in the North remained extraverted and alienate as evidenced by the 13 indices he identified.

This paper focuses on the 1st indice concerning which he argued that extraversion of scientific activity in the North was as a result of the lack of communication among African scholars, hence the marginalisation of African scholarship in important debates. In a similar vein, Kein (2008: 27) argued that knowledge production in Africa occupy a marginal position within the international community. Kein went further to note that intellectual output from the North generally lacked recognition in spite of the fact that many scholars from the North have made significant contributions to knowledge production and have produced work that do not ascribe to the 'captive mind'. This invisibility of the work of African scholars is a dimension of a wider crisis of academic dependence, if unchecked this current trend will also reinforce the domination of western knowledge systems. There is therefore a need to make greater efforts to know each other's work on Africa. This demand is not to appease individual egos but it is essential for progress in scientific work (Mkandawire, 1997:34). This paper addresses the problematic invisibility of the work of Bernard Magubane in South African debates on race and class.

3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

From a broadly critical perspective, this study explored the scholarship of professor Bernard Magubane by engaging with his works with a view to bring out his specific contributions to knowledge production broadly, and the South Africa race question in particular.

4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS :

This study was guided by two main questions:

1. What key contributions did Professor Magubane make in South African debates on race class, and inequality?
2. What can a new generation of scholars learn from the life and scholarship of professor Bernard Magubane?

5. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY :

Exploring the scholarship of professor Bernard Magubane necessitated the use of the qualitative approach, which was also underpinned by social constructionism and interpretivist paradigms. Social constructivism emphasises the historical and cultural specificity of knowledge, which means that knowledge is socially and culturally embedded in the context in which it is created (Burr, 1994:4). Positioning the study in the social constructivism paradigm was particularly useful because it offered an opportunity to situate Professor Magubane's discourses in the wider context in which he worked, and which shaped his ideas. This revealed that his works on race, class and overall approach to knowledge production did not develop in a vacuum, instead they were embedded in the complex dialectical realities which informed his thoughts and concerning which he wrote.

The use of the interpretive paradigm in exploring the life and scholarship of professor Magubane made it imperative to give credence to the experiences and perspectives of Professor Magubane, not just what he did, but why he did it- the meaning attached to an action. The interpretive approach also gave insight into Professor Magubane's 'world by producing data which revealed the meanings, values, rules and interpretive schemes for his social reality. Data was collected through content analysis of Magubane's scholarly outputs on race class and inequality and these included his autobiography- *My Life and Times* (2010), *Race and the Construction of the Dispensable Other* (2007), *The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa* (1979), and *The Making of a Racist State: British Imperialism and The Union of South Africa* (1996). Content analysis was supplemented with in-depth interviews which involved face to face interaction with Professor Magubane. Two sets of interviews were conducted and these interviews focused on the turning points in Professor Magubane's life and his interpretation of the events that had been significant in terms of the development of his ideas. These life history interviews were important in that they were an entry point into understanding the social, economic and political factors that shaped Professor Magubane's life and his scholarship.

5.1 MAGUBANE'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE RACE QUESTION IN SOUTH AFRICA

The legacy of Professor Bernard Magubane lies in his contributions to knowledge production, particularly his theorisation of the social inequalities in South Africa. He did not produce knowledge for knowledge's sake, his scholarly works were instrumental in challenging mainstream social science theoretical perspectives and provoking a paradigm shift in African political economy. He was an engaged scholar and one of the founders of the Anti- Apartheid movement through his instructive writings which addressed the global fight against racism and oppression. His academic writings helped frame the liberation struggle and were central in the debates that shaped the struggle against apartheid. In *The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa* (1979:x), Magubane states the intention of his book which is to provide a glimpse of some horrors inflicted upon South African people by white people. The purpose he argued, "is not to invoke pity, but to indicate the necessity for transforming the system of oppression so that we may help establish and

create a society in which our children and our children's children will be free from exploitation, deprivation and ignorance" (Magubane, 1979: x). Implied in this statement is also his political commitment which shows that he did not engage with literature for its own sake but it was precisely for the purpose of social transformation and change

The development and practice of racism in South Africa elicited various explanations and a complex literature. Magubane was amongst many other scholars who attempted to provide a theoretical basis for conceptualising social inequalities in South Africa. One of the issues about the early production of historical knowledge in South Africa is that the majority of the academics who were at the forefront of the race and class debates, representing the liberal and the Marxist, revisionist/radical schools of thought were white South Africans. The absence of black scholarship in these debates had implications for the race narratives circulated in literature, and ultimately the solutions to the South African problem (that is institutionalised racism and pervasive systems of racial discrimination and glaring disparity between white affluence and black poverty).

The theoretical orientations around race and class by the radical and liberal schools enjoyed great currency in Scholarly debates, yet they were flawed and reductionist. The critique of liberal analysis of race relations in South Africa formed the very basis of Magubane's work and his contributions to the debates on the South African problem. Liberal scholars showed a particular interest in the problems of the time, and viewed race as the dominant and determinant variable shaping the nature and content of South African society. Because of their inability to comprehend society in terms of class struggle, the concept of class did not enter their analysis of the South African situation. The liberal position is thus characterised as a declaration of the analytic primacy of race over class, and of the complete dysfunctionality, rather than functionality, of segregation broadly and the apartheid policies, specifically for capitalism in South Africa. The strategy for the solution of the South African problem thus involved the elimination of apartheid and its replacement by non-racialism.

The liberal approach has been accused of having a marginalist methodology manifestly unsuitable for answering certain questions about the nature of South African economic development. One case in point is the continued existence of racial inequalities even after the end of apartheid. Liberal scholars explained economic inequality in South Africa in terms of individual limitations or institutionalised racial discrimination alone, without incorporating an analysis of the structural constraints on the majority of the African working-class members. Then, since institutionalised racism was taken as the only systematic determinant of the inequality of resources, opportunity and income in the country, the removal of Apartheid was seen to be sufficient to restore at least equality of opportunity and resources to the population as a whole. Clearly institutionalised racism was not the only determinant of inequality. Despite the transition to an inclusive democracy, old forms of inequality have been perpetuated and entrenched more deeply and unequal socio-economic outcomes have remained defining characteristics of the post-apartheid period (Terre Blanche, 2002: xv). The liberal school made no serious effort to trace the manner in which race, class and other markers of social difference intersected and either reinforced or contradicted one another in the course of social action.

The radical revisionist analysis of the South Africa situation was equally reductionist. They took issue with the primary role liberal theory had accorded to the variables of race and they emphasized instead, the importance of class. The radical revisionists played down, and others entirely denied, the significance of race in the country's past. Legassick (1972) for instance accepted the importance of racist ideology, but others claimed that class explained all, dismissing racism as a mere false consciousness. While the fact of racial discrimination could not be denied, revisionists could argue and did argue that it was merely a cloak, a mask for class exploitation, and that the significant cleavages in South African society were, and always had been those of class rather than of race, though they acknowledged that the two had often coincided (Saunders, 1988).

On the contrary, Magubane recognised the duality of race and class in the development of capitalism and racial inequalities in South Africa and lodged various criticisms against the two schools of thought. Specifically, Magubane noted that these studies completely ignored the colonial situation in explaining the causes of inequalities in African societies. What in Magubane's opinion is striking is the almost complete absence of the African as a historical subject in spite of the long history of national struggles. In Magubane's view, almost nothing of what had been written from both liberal and neo-Marxist perspectives about the African experience took into account the African memory. The author's central argument, therefore, is that any discourse on historical memory in South Africa should of necessity

focus on the African memory.¹ This makes the work of Bernard Magubane important for he took the initiative to unreservedly and uncompromisingly defend African history, particularly the issues of race, class and inequality in South Africa. *The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa* (1979), *The making of a Racist State: British imperialism and the Union of South Africa* (1996), and *Race and the Construction of the Dispensable other* (2007) are good examples on how he deals with the racial and class basis of social inequality in South Africa. Magubane integrates sociological, economic, historical and political approaches in an effort to comprehend the development of inequality and racism during South Africa's painful and complex history. The relevance of Professor Magubane's works lies in his adoption of the intellectual legacies of Marxist scholarship in explaining the class basis of social inequality in South Africa. He criticized the western social science and its application to Africa, particularly the liberal analysis. In this section I discuss the key lessons that can be learnt from his scholarship. These lessons are closely linked to the manner in which he theorised race in South Africa.

5.2 LESSONS FOR A NEW GENERATION OF AFRICAN SCHOLARS

The lessons that can be gleaned from Magubane's scholarship include i) his commitment to Afrocentric and endogenous knowledge production and ii) his methodological rigour, particularly his adoption of the historical materialist approach in his account of the development of racial inequalities in South Africa.

Professor Magubane's commitment to Afrocentric knowledge production

Afrocentricity is a philosophical and theoretical paradigm whose expositions are linked to the works of Molefi Kete Asante (1990). Afrocentricity emphasises the placement of Africa at the centre of analysis of African history and culture, including the African experience. The argument for Afrocentricity is that Africans have been dislocated to the periphery of human thought and experience by presenting them as objects and spectators in a European frame of reference, instead of presenting them as important agents and actors in their own history. Mazama (2003) identified seven criteria for the establishment of an Afrocentric methodology. Of the seven, I discuss two which are evident and most celebrated in Magubane's work. According to Mazama in an Afrocentric methodology i) the African experience guides and inform inquiry and ii) immersion in the subject is necessary.

Centring of the African experience as the basis of Magubane's intellectual work

The neglect of the experiences of black people is one element that Magubane criticised in the liberal Eurocentric analysis of African history and he addresses this neglect in his first book - *The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa* (1979). In this book and other works, Magubane sought to reconceptualise racism from an African-centred standpoint and rejected the liberal analysis which blamed the African condition on the African as an inferior race hence their role in serving the superior race, subjecting them to exploitation. His theorisation of racism in South Africa emphasized the primacy of African thinking and in the process transformed the way in which generations of intellectuals and activists interpret Africa's past, its present and its future.

Professor Magubane did not merely provide a historical account of racism and associated inequalities in South Africa, instead he also interrogated questions around what it meant to be an African. For this reason, his writings provided a conceptualisation of racism from an African-centred standpoint and in doing so he was able to bring out the biases inherent in literature on the race question. Contrary to the 'civilisation mission' which is often portrayed in most literature, he illustrated the capitalist basis of colonisation and resultant racial exploitation and social inequalities. The other weakness which permeates literature on the development of racism in South Africa is that it is muted in as far as centring the voices of the oppressed in their narratives. It is as if the oppressed are docile, weak and unimaginative as the voices of the oppressors loom large in these studies. But we know that Africans (my definition includes the Khoi and San) resisted subjugation by white invaders and settlers during the first point of contact and their voices and view points about their daily experiences form part of important studies about different forms of resistance waged by Africans. Magubane's account of the development of racism and racial inequalities in South Africa attempts to highlight the empowering nature of such an approach which is about the emancipation of the African voices.

¹ Magubane, B. '2000. 'Whose memory- Whose history: The Illusion of Liberal and Radical Historical Debates.' *Collective Memory and Present-Day Politics in South Africa and the Nordic Countries*. Conference of Historians, Africanists and Development Researchers, Copenhagen 22-23 August.

Cultural immersion is an important approach in understanding a people's history. The liberal and radical historical accounts on South Africa are fraught with distortions, biases and misrepresentations of the African experience. Magubane accused them of smuggling into their work assumptions of Western superiority, of denying Africans their cultural specificity, and of understanding colonial order as given and eternal. Magubane's approach combines a theoretical and analytical exploration of apartheid, imperialism and colonialism through case studies of South Africa. Magubane's analysis of race and class is predicated on the belief that all human actions, beliefs and ideologies are purposeful and have material basis. For this reason, Magubane made an effort to familiarise himself with the history and myths of the people he studied, thus enabling him to locate his research from an African point of view.

A commitment to methodological rigour – the relevance of Magubane's historical materialist approach

Magubane's writing on the South African situation are most celebrated for their methodological rigour and analytic acuity. In this section, I focus more on his historical materialist approach in the analysis of social phenomenon, particularly in societies under colonial rule. Magubane made a case for the historical materialist approach by arguing that "to know our present and to shape our future calls for a meaningful understanding of the past - a past which always shapes us in varying degrees and influences our view of who we are" (Magubane, 2007:15). The use of the historical materialist perspective is evident in his three books; *The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa* (1979), *The Making of a Racist State: British Imperialism and the Union of South Africa* (1996) and *Race and the Construction of the Dispensable Other* (2007).

For Professor Magubane, present social phenomena cannot be adequately comprehended if we do not understand the historical specificity and the period in which they emerge. For this reason, his theorisation and analysis of racism in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa is historically grounded and situated. Magubane conceptualises racial inequalities in South Africa as historical products of colonialism, imperialism and the development of capitalism. The role played by these, therefore form the pivots around which the problems of race and class are analysed. Eurocentric accounts of colonisation are devoid of history and as such they present colonisation as a 'civilisation mission'. As a result, the non-European societies are regarded as inferior and the history of non-European societies is seen simply in terms, or as part of the 'expansion of Europe' and its civilizing influence. In the racist discourse, Eurocentrism is indicated by the justification of the exploitation of Africans and their segregation on the basis of race and assumed racial superiority of the White men.

In the *Political Economy of Race and Class*, Magubane provides a historical analysis of the events that resulted in the development of capitalism as well as racist ideas in South Africa. Magubane's use of the historical materialist perspective enabled him to expose the dialectical link between the economic, political and ideological motives that have structured capitalist relations in South Africa. Key events in the development of racism can be summarised as 1) the settlement of the Dutch in the 17th century and by the English in the 19th century; 2) the subsequent conquest and incorporation of the African kingdoms into the evolving settler society - first into agriculture and then into mining; 3) the national struggles of the Africans, both before and after conquest; 4) the discovery of diamonds in 1867 and gold in 1886, and the role of the gold industry in the capitalist monetary system; 5) the organization of agriculture which resulted in the depopulation of the countryside and the creation of the 'poor whites' 6) the growth of the urban-based industry and the competition which ensued between the black and white proletariat; 7) Britain's granting of political power to the white settlers in 1910; and 9) the role assigned to South Africa in the imperialist division of labour. The interaction of these historical events impacted on capitalism as well as the exploitative relations of production along racial lines. By locating the development of racism in the economic structure of world imperialism, Magubane (1979) proves to the reader that racism was integral to the structure created by capitalism and imperialism

The historical materialist approach adopted in this book is not only relevant for an enquiry into South Africa's past but is especially pertinent for a realistic assessment of social and economic inequalities which continue to exist in South Africa. It helps explain the existence of inequalities even after the end of apartheid and is therefore a counterpoint to the liberal position which conceptualised racial inequalities as a consequence of institutionalised racism, implicitly assuming that that removal of racial capitalism was sufficient to produce equality of opportunity and resources. The liberal analysis has since been rejected for the reason that, even at the end of apartheid, when cross national data became available, South Africa recorded one of the highest levels of inequality in the world (Natrass, 2006:3). The historical technique used by Professor Magubane enables one to derive lessons from past experiences that speak to the concerns of the present. Although their concerns remain grounded in the histories examined and cannot be transposed literally to other contexts, historical and comparative studies in Magubane's works yield more meaningful advice concerning

contemporary choices and possibilities than studies that aim for the universal truths but cannot grasp critical historical details.

The historical materialist perspective also stands out in *Race and the Construction of the Dispensable Other* (2007) in which he provides a discussion of scientific racism. In this book he shows the relationship between patterns of racism and patterns of thinking, i.e., racial ideologies and how they were historically used to rationalise and sustain exploitative and unjust systems. Magubane gave an account of the treatment of the Khoisan by the Dutch when they first occupied the Cape in 1662. He argued that the attitudes of the Dutch were based on Western philosophies about the indigenous people. Here one can see the role of ideas in the construction of the other. One of the settlers Van Riebeeck regarded the Khoisan with utter contempt and described them as being outside the pale of humanity, barbaric and also as dangerous savages who could not be trusted (Magubane, 2007:183). It was in this period that the identification by race and class was established, hence a proletariat (black) distinguished by lack of skills, and lack of political power. Under slavery race and class were identical, and race expressed class relationships (Magubane, 2007). The abolition of slavery, meant the abolition of formal slavery but its extension to the world as institutionalised racism. By locating contemporary racism in its historical roots, Magubane was able to show that racism continues to plague modern societies due to enduring ideologies about superior and inferior races.

6. CONCLUSION :

This paper has discussed Professor Magubane's contributions to knowledge production, particularly his methodological rigour and commitment to Afrocentrism. In doing so, his scholarship has been located within wider intellectual debates on the race question in South Africa. The theoretical implications of Professor Magubane's works for our understanding of race, class and inequality in South Africa are vast and complex. If there is one underlying, unifying thread in Professor Magubane's scholarship, it is his relentless fight to have the African as the key focus of our analysis in history writing. His general theoretical and methodological outlook was defined by his belief that theoretical paradigms and modes of social analysis should be contextualised, that we should avoid generalising or replicating from one context to another without coming to grips with the specificities defined by our own history and culture. To his credit, Professor Magubane managed to transcend academic dependency and this is reflected by the fact that he works are a direct critique of the biases inherent in the race literature. Furthermore, his works do not ascribe to the notion of the captive mind which for Alatas dominates African scholarship.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS :

African scholars continue to produce knowledge that displace Eurocentric theories that informs many fields of study. Beyond just making the knowledge available, African scholars should also make efforts to engage with local research once it is made available to the public. In South Africa, to be more specific, the problem is not necessarily the unavailability of research output, rather it is a combination of a poor reading culture and a preference for Western output which has resulted in the dependence on western research in terms of areas of studies, and methods of analysis and it has also resulted in a regurgitation of ideas without due consideration of their application to the South African context. There is therefore a need to engage with local literature, and avoid the adoption of western paradigms and the consequent erasure of works from the South.

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