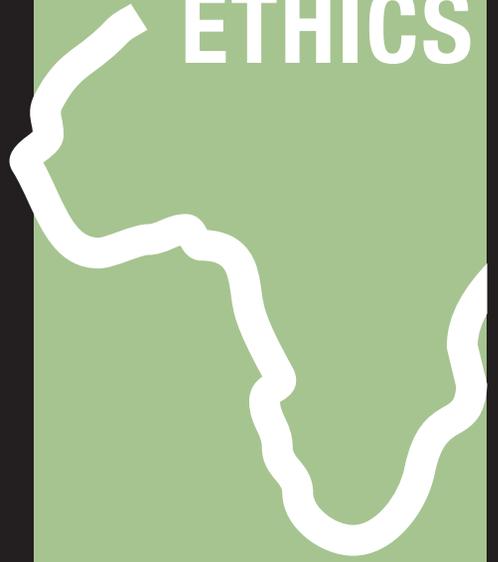


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Integrity and vulnerability as building blocks of perceived moral character and leader profile attractiveness

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Abstract

Integrity is often regarded as cardinal to moral character and a desirable leadership attribute. However, integrity that is not moderated through an adjunctive virtue such as vulnerability can produce leaders who are stubborn or self-righteous. Through a vignette experiment, the contribution of integrity and vulnerability towards the perception of moral character and the attractiveness of a leader's behavioural profile were explored. Results confirm that integrity contributes even more strongly to both perceived moral character and attractiveness of a leader's behavioural profile when combined with vulnerability. The findings provide new insights into integrity and vulnerability as adjunctive virtues and building blocks of perceived moral character and ethical leadership attractiveness.

1. Introduction

Corruption is a global concern, with several studies uncovering leaders' influence on organisational corruption (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Sankar (2003) claims that there is a global crisis of moral character in leadership and that moral failures can, at least partly, be attributed to the absence of integrity and moral character. It appears that leaders are often appointed or selected on the basis of their track record of results (Walumbwa et al., 2008), charisma and functional management competencies (Sankar, 2003), at the possible cost of sacrificing integrity and moral character (Leavy, 2016). McKenna and Campbell (2011) assert that although charisma and competencies are important, they do not guarantee a morally upstanding leader.

Leadership authors have increasingly emphasised the importance of integrity and moral character as essential aspects of

effective leadership (Newstead, Dawkins, Macklin & Martin, 2019). Leaders with moral character (having the knowledge, will and courage to consistently act morally) (Lickona, 1991) are regarded as critical to the success of organisations (McKenna & Campbell, 2011). Therefore, when it comes to leadership selection and development, it is important that moral character and integrity receive emphasis (Leavy, 2016).

Individuals, in general, care about morality (De Klerk, 2017b; 2017a). It is, therefore, likely that employers and subordinates would prefer leaders who show evidence of moral character and integrity. Integrity (i.e. acting consistently according to a set of moral values) is an essential facet of moral character (Palanski & Yammarino, 2009). Yet, leader integrity and moral character have received insufficient empirical attention in empirical scientific research (Wang & Hackett, 2016). However, integrity that is not moderated by virtuous character traits can produce leaders who are self-righteous, inflexible and stubborn. McKenna and Campbell (2011) emphasise the inherent tensions that exist between different values and character traits, also between integrity and vulnerability. They position integrity and vulnerability as opposite but complementary character traits and postulate that a healthy dose of vulnerability has the potential to moderate stubborn integrity. Vulnerability should not necessarily be seen as a state of weakness (Ito & Bligh, 2016; McKenna & Campbell, 2011). Vulnerability in this context refers to self-awareness, with the courage, strength and humility to accept one's fallibility (Brendel, 2014; Hoekstra, Bell & Peterson, 2008; Seppala, 2014). An awareness of one's own propensity to err can unlock the courage and humility to be open-minded to ideas, to accept uncertainty and to recognise mistakes and limitations as part of the human condition (Brecher, 2017).

The role of leader vulnerability has received limited attention in mainstream empirical research (Lopez, 2018). Vulnerability tends to be absent in lists that describe preferable leader traits (Newstead et al., 2019). It follows that the role of vulnerability in promoting moral character or integrity as an adjunctive virtue also received limited research. Nevertheless, vulnerability has been correlated with leadership characteristics such as emotional connection with followers and building trust (Lopez, 2018). Although research on the benefits of an awareness of one's own vulnerability is steadily increasing, the attractiveness of vulnerability as part of a leader's behavioural profile remains largely unknown (Ito & Bligh, 2016).

The objective of this article is to explore the contribution of integrity and vulnerability to the perceived moral character and the attractiveness of a leader's behavioural profile. The constructs of integrity and vulnerability are explored, and propositions are developed about their relationship with perceived moral character and the attractiveness of a leader's behavioural profile. A 2x2 factorial vignette survey provided the data to explore the propositions. This design enabled the researchers to isolate the independent variables (i.e. integrity and vulnerability) and control how they could influence the perceptions of moral character and the attractiveness of a leader's behavioural profile (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014; Steiner, Atzmüller & Su, 2016). Statistical analyses used in this study include analysis of variance (Anova) and two-way Anova. Conclusions and practical implications are discussed.

2. Literature study

2.1 Leadership and the virtues of moral character

The importance of noble character to leadership excellence is consistently emphasised (Byrne, Crossan & Seijts, 2018; Quick & Goolsby, 2013; Seijts, Crossan & Carleton, 2017), even though there is no consensus on a unified definition of character (Crossan, Byrne, Seijts, Reno, Monzani & Gandz, 2012). Character is a set disposition to behave in one way or another, or to lead one particular kind of life (MacIntyre, 1981). Character encapsulates what a person values and believes in, their ethics and disposition to live an exemplary life (Gini & Green, 2014). Crossan et al. (2017) and Horowitz (2001) describe character as a complex and fairly stable combination of traits, values and virtues, but which continues to develop throughout one's life. Sarros and Cooper (2006) describe character according to three dimensions, namely: universalism (tolerance and concern for the welfare of others); transformation (values-driven inspiration); and benevolence (selflessness and integrity). Character traits matter, not only because they determine the behaviour of leaders, but indirectly also because they influence the behaviour of subordinates (Liborius, 2014).

Character and morality are inextricably linked, with the term 'moral' relating to principles of right and wrong (Riggio, Zhu, Reina & Maroosis, 2010; Sankar, 2003). A leader with a strong character is undivided in his or her fundamental beliefs (shows integrity) and acts with the intention of achieving a morally appropriate outcome (Liborius, 2014). A preferred character is often described by referring to virtues such as integrity, humility and trust (Liborius, 2017; Newstead et al., 2019). Many definitions of character tend to converge on the idea of doing what is morally right (McKenna & Campbell, 2011), and the capability of doing what is right despite external pressures to do otherwise (Lickona, 1991). When a leader's character is anchored in moral values and virtues, it provides a moral compass for his or her actions (Becker, 2009; Sankar, 2003). Virtuous character traits such as honesty, consideration of others and self-transcendence are routinely linked with moral character (Newstead et al., 2019).

Lickona (1991) describes moral character according to three dimensions, namely: cognitive (knowing what the right thing is to do); affective (concern about doing the right thing); and action (acting with competence and a will to do the right thing). Attributions of moral character are largely perception-based (Peng & Wei, 2018). For this article, 'moral character' is defined as the knowledge, will and courage to act morally (Lickona, 1991), for the greater good (Sarros & Cooper, 2006).

2.2 Integrity as a critical moral character trait

The notion that integrity is essential for moral and effective leadership is widely held (Crossan et al., 2012; Erakovich & Kolthoff, 2016; Gentry, Cullen, Sosik, Chun, Leupold & Tonidandel, 2013; Palanski & Yammarino, 2011). Transformational leadership (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999), ethical leadership (Brown & Treviño, 2006), spiritual leadership (Fry, 2003) and authentic leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Walumbwa et al., 2008) all include integrity as a core element of effective leadership.

Simons (2002) refers to integrity as the perceived alignment between a person's words and actions, whereas McKenna and Campbell (2011: 3) refer to integrity as the trait that renders a person "undivided in his or her fundamental beliefs and attitudes, presenting those values to everyone". Tullberg (2012) and Koehn (2005) note that integrity is often described as internal consistency. The stability and reliability of consistency present a reality of a coherent and morally responsible self (Dobel, 1988). Integrity "requires 'sticking to one's principles', moral or otherwise, in the face of temptation" (McFall, 1987:7). Koehn (2005) also emphasises that integrity is also about compliance with moral norms or expectations. Integrity is a complex concept that is closely aligned with, and inseparable to moral standards (McFall, 1987). In addition to consistency and commitment to one's values and principles, integrity is also about moral trustworthiness, self-knowledge, and an absence of self-deception (Dolovitch, 2002). Definitions of integrity seem to converge on the idea of "consistently acting on moral values across situations" (Bauman, 2013:419).

Integrity is often presented as an essential feature of moral character (Audi & Murphy, 2006; Sarros & Cooper, 2006). Integrity and moral character represent subjective moral judgements as they cannot be seen, but have to be inferred from observed behaviours (Moorman, Darnold & Priesemuth, 2013). Attributions of moral character and integrity are thus largely perception-based (McCann & Holt, 2013; Peng & Wei, 2018). For this article, 'integrity' was operationalised as not compromising on the values of honesty, respect, fairness, and trust, notwithstanding adversity, and trustworthiness (Bauman, 2013; Erakovich & Kolthoff, 2016; Moorman, Darnold & Priesemuth, 2013). From these discussions, the first research proposition is constructed:

Proposition 1: Perceived integrity is an important leadership trait regarding perceived moral character.

2.3 Integrity and the adjunctive virtuous trait of vulnerability

Virtues tend to function together, and character is shaped by a set of virtuous traits (Palanski & Yammarino, 2007; Riggio et al., 2010). Audi and Murphy (2006) and Palanski and Yammarino (2007) differentiate between substantive and adjunctive traits. Substantive traits like honesty and integrity tend to be morally good in themselves. Adjunctive traits are not inherently morally bad or good, but are complementary traits to promote moral worthiness.

Although integrity may be a vital component of moral character, it does not define moral character exhaustively or exclusively (Audi & Murphy, 2006). There is a shadow side to unrestrained integrity. It has been found that integrity shows an inverted U-shaped effect on followers in that unrestrained integrity is often perceived as being arrogant and insulting (Stouten, Van Dijke, Mayer, De Cremer & Euwema, 2013). As noted by Kohlberg (1971:13): "What is one man's integrity is another man's stubbornness." Similarly, Crossan et al. (2012:4) argue that "an excess of integrity can lead to self-righteousness and total inflexibility". Self-righteousness is about exaggerated ideations of one's moral development (Bicknell, 2010) and insensitive dogmatism of absolute justice (Avnon, 2014).

Self-righteousness thus relates to exaggerated ideations of integrity. Indeed, Tullberg (2012) notes the risk of self-righteousness that may stem from excessive integrity, and Radzik (2012) advises about the risk of moral-extremism to be charged with being self-righteous. Koehn (2005:26) cautions against over-reliance on consistency when describing integrity that is not balanced by morality, as one can be “consistently wicked”. He also alerts us to the risk of inflexibility of the compliance aspect of integrity and emphasises that integrity is about compliance with what is right. Shaw (2013:415) advises that if integrity were merely about consistently sticking to beliefs, “we would have no way to distinguish integrity from stubbornness”. He reasons that true integrity requires one to be sufficiently vulnerable to subject one’s beliefs to critical scrutiny. Breakey (2016) forewarns about the danger of integrity-extremism if one does not question whether one’s values are moral and appropriate. Dolovitch (2002:1650) argues that “someone who is simply unwilling to expose his views to criticism is vulnerable to serious self-deception or can rightly be accused of a narrowmindedness, stubbornness or fanaticism”. Stubbornness and inflexibility retain consistency and commitments when not appropriate (Webber, 2015). Rather than being stubborn, Dolovitch (2002:1649) reasons that a person of integrity should demonstrate “deliberative flexibility”.

Unrestrained integrity can potentially resemble a form of leader narcissism, a form of leadership in which traits such as humility and vulnerability are de facto absent (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006; Sosik, Chun & Zhu, 2014). Unmoderated integrity feeds on all-too-common leadership paradigms that centre on the leader “being all decisive, powerful, masculine, driven, self-assured, fearless, ruthless, risk-taking” (Hoekstra et al., 2008:79). An example of moral extremism is the infamous Iran-Contra affair, in which self-righteous beliefs lead Oliver North and others to go beyond the confines of their authority to engage in highly questionable policies (Dobel, 1988). In contrast, Brendel (2014) emphasises the importance of vulnerability and the importance of both weaknesses and strengths to ensure virtuous character strength. It follows that morality and integrity that are not moderated by adjunctive traits, such as vulnerability or humility, can produce inflexible, stubborn and self-righteous leaders with an inability to receive feedback.

McKenna and Campbell (2011) emphasise the inherent, but healthy tensions that exist between different character traits, including integrity and vulnerability. Although a trait such as integrity can be viewed as ideal to a certain extent, McKenna and Campbell (2011) argue that it is possible that a virtuous trait becomes too strong and when it exists in excess and may hamper leader performance. For this reason, it is suggested that as far as leadership character is concerned, integrity should always be in healthy tension with vulnerability (McKenna & Campbell, 2011). For similar reasons, Tullberg (2012:93) argues that “integrity can be seen as an adjunctive virtue and not as a substantive virtue”. Correspondingly, McKenna and Campbell (2011) propose that vulnerability can be regarded as an adjunctive trait to integrity, which can potentially moderate exaggerated or stubborn integrity. A reasonable argument can thus be made that integrity will tend to function optimally as an adjunctive trait together with related, balancing traits that will promote perceived moral character and integrity (Palanski & Yammarino, 2007).

Consensus on an exact definition of ‘vulnerability’ is still lacking (Zagorac, 2017). However, vulnerability should not necessarily be seen as a state of weakness (Ito & Bligh, 2016; McKenna & Campbell, 2011), and vulnerability is not about being soft-hearted or weak (Brown, 2013; Lopez, 2018). Indeed, leader vulnerability has been strongly related to courage, which has been found to be a key factor in allowing leaders to lead with vulnerability (Lopez, 2018). Giving expression to vulnerability in the business world requires courage and strength of character (Lopez, 2018). Ito and Bligh (2016:67) reason that vulnerability can play a vital role in “enhancing a leader’s resilience, and can be framed as a positive quality, even a strength”. Vulnerability is about self-awareness, with the courage, strength and humility to accept one’s fallibility (Brendel, 2014; Hoekstra et al., 2008; Seppala, 2014). To be vulnerable means that one is willing to expose one’s uncertainties, to take emotional risks and to display openness to critical feedback (Bartz & Bartz, 2017). Preconditions to demonstrate vulnerability include aspects such as “humility, self-awareness, and the courage to acknowledge imperfections” (Ito & Bligh, 2016:68). Vulnerability is about being open to ideas other than one’s own, accepting uncertain states and risk, having self-awareness and the ability to recognise one’s faults and limitations (Bartz & Bartz, 2017; Brecher, 2017; Riggio et al., 2010). Indeed, Hoekstra et al. (2008:80) calls for leaders to “abandon the pursuit for unattainable perfection”, but to be open to others’ opinions and to admit fallibility.

Being vulnerable as a leader involves being transparent and open to emotional exposure in one’s relationship with others (Lopez, 2018). Ito and Bligh (2016) reason that a leader’s ability to share vulnerability is an effective way to build deep relationships with followers and to promote the experience of charisma. It is thus not surprising that Lopez (2018) describes prominent charismatic leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr, Nelson Mandela, Gandhi and Mother Teresa. They were sufficiently vulnerable to make use of exposing emotional vulnerability as a way of connecting with others. Nevertheless, the risks that emotional exposure presents to a leader emphasises the courage required to demonstrate vulnerability (Nienaber, Hofeditz & Romeike, 2015).

Although empirical research on leader vulnerability is scant, available studies on leadership vulnerability and character tend to confirm the importance of vulnerability for integrity and character strength (Demirci, Ekşi, Ekşi & Kaya, 2019; Lopez, 2018). Leader vulnerability has been correlated with positive leadership characteristics such as charisma, emotional connection with followers, building trust and establishing psychological safety (Lopez, 2018; Mane, 2019; Meyer, Le Fevre & Robinson, 2017). Demirci et al. (2019) found that several aspects of character strength correlate significantly with vulnerability. Meyer et al. (2017) found that perceived leader vulnerability signals leaders’ truthfulness and integrity. In addition, a host of authors conceptually posit the importance of vulnerability for integrity and character strength (Bartz & Bartz, 2017; Bharanitharan, Chen, Bahmannia, & Lowe, 2019; Bloom, 2020; Brendel, 2014; Brown, 2013; Byrne et al., 2018; Glanz, 2007; Goering, Crawford, Cockburn, & Colbert, 2016; Hoekstra et al., 2008; Lapidot, Kark, & Shamir, 2007; Lopez, 2018; Nienaber et al., 2015; Simmons, 2014). Leavy (2016) asserts that leaders with moral character show sufficient vulnerability for accurate self-awareness compared to self-focused or egocentric leaders who tend to overrate their

own moral stature. For this study, 'vulnerability' was operationalised as self-awareness (Walumbwa et al., 2008); being honest and open to ideas other than one's own (Meyer et al., 2017), accepting uncertain states and recognising one's own limitations (Brecher, 2017; Riggio et al., 2010); and risking to trust others (Meyer et al., 2017; Nienaber et al., 2015).

Vulnerability in isolation is not inherently moral. Vulnerability without adjunctive character traits, such as integrity, can produce leaders who are inconsistent, directionless and without principles (Audi & Murphy, 2006). As an adjunctive virtuous trait to integrity, vulnerability can conceivably temper potential stubbornness and inflexibility. It can thus be argued that, when integrity exists in a healthy tension with vulnerability as a moderating trait (McKenna & Campbell, 2011; Palanski & Yammarino, 2007), it is likely to promote perceptions of moral character and integrity. It can then be reasoned that vulnerability has a symbiotic relationship with integrity. Integrity is likely to unlock the value of vulnerability to promote moral character (Meyer et al., 2017), whereas vulnerability is likely to moderate integrity from transmuted into stubbornness. From these discussions, the next propositions follow:

Proposition 2: Vulnerability is an important character trait to promote perceptions of a leader's moral character; not necessarily in isolation, but rather as an adjunctive trait.

Proposition 3: The combination of integrity and vulnerability promotes the perception of moral character more strongly in a leader's behavioural profile than with these traits in isolation.

Perceptions of leaders' behavioural integrity have a positive influence on the trust and engagement of subordinates (Demirtas, 2013; Moorman et al., 2013; Neubert, Carlson, Kacmar, Roberts, & Chonko, 2009). The relationship between vulnerability and trust (Meyer et al., 2017; Nienaber et al., 2015) testifies to the potential attractiveness of the balance between healthy vulnerability and integrity in leaders. With healthy vulnerability representing a character strength (Brendel, 2014; Seppala, 2014), the combination of integrity and vulnerability is asserted to be virtuous in a leader's behavioural profile. Therefore, the next proposition reads:

Proposition 4: Leaders with behavioural profiles that contain both integrity and vulnerability will present profiles that are more attractive than those who do not.

In most contexts, perceptions of moral character and integrity make important contributions to the impression that one person forms of another (Goodwin, Piazza & Rozin, 2013). People tend to have a reasonably high moral conscience that enables them to have a fairly good idea of what constitutes moral behaviour (De Klerk, 2017a; 2017b). Cohen, Panter, Turan, Morse and Kim (2014) found that individuals with higher levels of moral character can be identified. Furthermore, Leavy (2016) and Riggio et al. (2010) reason that virtuous persons can accurately judge the traits of self and others. Helzer et al. (2014), too, found that individuals can identify and distinguish moral character. It is thus reasonable to argue that employees can distinguish between behavioural profiles that do or do not embody integrity, vulnerability and moral character. Accordingly, the last proposition reads:

Proposition 5: Individuals will be able to recognise and distinguish behavioural profiles that embody moral character, high integrity and vulnerability, especially when these traits exist in combination, whereas profiles that suggest the absence of these traits will be less recognisable.

The ability of individuals to distinguish with high discernment regarding certain specific traits were controlled in the study, as explained in the research methods section under the discussion of ‘manipulation checks’.

3. Research method

3.1 Research design

For this study, a factorial vignette experiment design was used (Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010). In vignette experiments, participants are presented with realistic, but hypothetical ‘cases’ or situations to enhance realism, yet allowing researchers to manipulate and control independent variables (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014; Steiner, Atzmüller & Su, 2016). Vignettes are short ‘case’ descriptions representing hypothetical circumstances or situations, to which the respondent is invited to respond (Benedetti, Jackson & Luo, 2018; Oll, Hahn, Reimsbach & Kotzian, 2018). Because vignettes represent real-life situations, they increase the validity and generalisability of results (Oll et al., 2018; Von Davier, Shin, Khorramdel & Stankov, 2018).

Data were gathered by means of a 2x2 factorial survey consisting of four vignettes that represented the four different leadership profiles. Vignette experimental designs have high internal validity because of the ability of the researcher to manipulate independent variables and observe the resulting effect on situations (Oll et al., 2018; Von Davier et al., 2018). The vignettes of different leadership profiles were developed by manipulating independent variables, namely ‘perceived integrity’ and ‘perceived vulnerability’, to represent high and low levels for a fictitious leader called Jack.

A 2x2 experimental design enables the study of the effects of two independent variables on the dependent variables (Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010). In this study, the two independent variables were integrity and vulnerability, whereas the two dependent variables were perceived moral character and leader profile attractiveness. The four (2x2) combinations of the independent variables are indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Factorial design matrix

| | | Integrity | |
|---------------|------|---|--|
| | | Low | High |
| Vulnerability | Low | Low integrity and low vulnerability (LILV) | High integrity and low vulnerability (HILV) |
| | High | Low integrity and high vulnerability (LIHV) | High integrity and high vulnerability (HIHV) |

Respondents received only one questionnaire with one of the vignettes each. They thus reflected on only one of the profiles, with follow-up items to explore respondents' perceptions of their perspectives on perceived integrity, vulnerability, moral character and leader behavioural profile attractiveness perceived for that profile. As data collection occurred only once throughout this design, the chance of changes to, or loss of, respondents that are usually associated with a pre-test-post-test experimental design, was non-existent (Schlechter, Hung & Bussin, 2014). Contrary to the often-unnatural conditions of a laboratory experiment, the respondents had the freedom to complete the questionnaire in their real work environment without being exposed to unfamiliar stimuli. This enhanced the realism of the study (Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010).

3.2 Data collection instruments

3.2.1 Vignettes

The vignettes were developed to represent observable acts of integrity and vulnerability, based on the descriptions and conceptualisations discussed in the literature study and on relevance to the context of the sample organisation. To control for external variance, all profiles were developed to contain equal functional capability and likeability (charisma), as far as possible, in a brief profile description, with only vulnerability and integrity being manipulated (high versus low for each of the 2x2 possibilities).

The manipulation of integrity related mainly to aspects included in the definitions of integrity, such as consistent adherence (or non-adherence) to fundamental beliefs and a clear set of values (for example, safety and respect) (Bauman, 2013; McKenna & Campbell, 2011). Aspects included in the manipulations of vulnerability included being open to ideas other than one's own, emotional self-awareness and the ability to recognise one's faults and limitations (Brecher, 2017; Riggio et al., 2010; Walumbwa et al., 2008). In order to enhance the realism and validity of the vignettes, they were constructed in an iterative process between the researchers in which the vignettes were independently reviewed and criticised by each researcher, and adapted until consensus was reached. The vignettes were kept as brief as possible, without compromising internal validity (Steiner et al., 2016), to promote clarity, attentive reading and consideration, and an increased response rate. The four leadership profiles are indicated in Table 2. Each profile commenced with the statement: "Jack is a mid-level manager in a global organisation. Senior management requires a leader for special projects and is considering Jack".

Table 2: Leadership profiles

| Low integrity, low vulnerability (LILV) | High integrity, low vulnerability (HILV) |
|--|--|
| Jack stated that he values safety above maximising profit. However, based on his track record, he sometimes would take safety shortcuts to increase profits in line with the company's primary aim. Even though Jack says that he will complete agreed-on tasks, he sometimes leaves tasks incomplete. | Jack stated that he values safety above maximising profit. He refuses to compromise his commitment even when it means making less profit owing to extra safety measures. Jack mostly completes agreed-on tasks when he says he will. |

| Low integrity, low vulnerability (LILV) | High integrity, low vulnerability (HILV) |
|--|--|
| When his team approaches him with ideas and challenges, he tends to change his view depending on the person/s to whom he is talking. Jack prefers to do tasks himself and rarely acknowledges failures. | When his team approaches him with ideas and challenges, he generally is consistent with his view regardless of the person/s to whom he is talking. Jack tends to do tasks himself and rarely acknowledges failures. |
| Once a decision is made, he will follow it diligently regardless of whether a better option is presented. | Once a decision is made, he will follow it diligently regardless of whether a better option is presented. |
| Jack is not acutely aware of his strengths and weaknesses and sees sharing emotions and feelings as a sign of weakness. | Jack is not acutely aware of his strengths and weaknesses and sees sharing emotions and feelings as a sign of weakness. |
| Low integrity, high vulnerability (LIHV) | High integrity, high vulnerability (HIHV) |
| Jack stated that he values safety above maximising profit. However, based on his track record, he would take safety shortcuts to increase profits in line with the company's primary aim. Even though Jack says that he will complete agreed-on tasks, he often leaves tasks incomplete. | Jack stated that he values safety above maximising profit. He refuses to compromise his commitment even when it means making less profit owing to extra safety measures. Jack always completes agreed-on tasks when he says he will. |
| When his team approaches him with ideas and challenges, he changes his view depending on the person/s to whom he is talking. Jack is keen to share tasks and often acknowledges failures. | When his team approaches him with ideas and challenges, he is consistent with his view regardless of the person/s to whom he is talking. Jack is keen to share tasks and often acknowledges failures. |
| Once a decision is made, he is comfortable with changing direction if a better option is presented. | Once a decision is made, he is comfortable with changing direction if a better option is presented. |
| Jack is aware of his strengths and weaknesses and is comfortable with sharing emotions and feelings. | Jack is aware of his strengths and weaknesses and is comfortable with sharing emotions and feelings. |

3.2.2 Manipulation checks

To evaluate the effectiveness of the manipulation of the independent variables, each of the leadership profiles was accompanied by the same questionnaire. The questionnaire was used to measure how respondents perceived Jack's integrity, moral character and the attractiveness of his behavioural profile as a leader for the specific profile that they received. Perceived integrity was measured by deriving five items from the studies of Moorman et al. (2013), Bauman (2013) and Erakovich and Kolthoff (2016). These studies converged on the idea that leadership integrity will not compromise the values of honesty, respect, fairness, and trust, notwithstanding adversity, and a person with integrity will thus demonstrate trustworthiness. Perceived vulnerability was measured by deriving five items based on the studies of Walumbwa et al. (2008), Brecher (2017) and Riggio et al. (2010), and centred around self-awareness (Walumbwa et al., 2008); being honest and open to ideas other than one's own (Meyer, Le Fevre & Robinson, 2017); accepting uncertain states and recognising one's own limitations (Brecher, 2017; Riggio et al., 2010); and risking to trust others (Meyer et al., 2017; Nienaber et al., 2015). The items included in the survey questionnaire are indicated in Table 4.

3.2.3 Independent variable data collection instruments

Perceived moral character was measured by two related items, i.e. the attributed perception of moral character (Peng & Wei, 2018) and benefitting the greater good (Cohen et al., 2014; Helzer et al., 2014; Riggio et al., 2010; Sarros & Cooper, 2006).

The attractiveness of each behavioural profile was investigated through three items, i.e. Jack being perceived as a good leader, willingness to work for Jack, and selecting Jack as a leader (Brecher, 2017; Riggio et al., 2010; Walumbwa et al., 2008). The items included in the survey questionnaire are indicated in Table 4.

3.2.4 Sampling and sample description

The study was conducted with 162 middle to senior-level leaders of a global engineering firm. Purposive sampling was used to obtain similar numbers of responses from a wide geographical spread of respondents and respondents from three different managerial levels to advance heterogeneity in response-behaviour (Steiner et al., 2016). Moreover, all selected respondents have been subjected to various forms of self-awareness training before the study. This was done to control somewhat for external variance as these participants were conceivably reasonable accurate judges of vulnerability and character. As participants were presented with situations in the vignettes that were familiar to them, the risk of artificial responses was largely avoided (Steiner et al., 2016). The survey was distributed through SunSurveys, a survey software tool – similar to SurveyMonkey – that provides anonymised data to the researcher. A link to the survey with a description of the purpose and details of the research was sent to the entire research sample. By clicking on the link provided, respondents gave informed consent to participate in the research. Ethical clearance for conducting the research was obtained from the University of Stellenbosch Research Ethics Committee.

A total of 125 respondents completed the survey (77% response rate). Respondents represented a broad range of geographical locations, i.e. Australia and New Zealand (n=52; 42%), sub-Saharan Africa (n=51; 41%), Asia (n=14; 11%), and Middle East and North Africa (n=8; 6%). Most respondents were male (n=91; 72.8% and n=34; 27.2% female respondents). The age of the respondents ranged from 30 years to 61years, with an average age of 44.

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive results

Three of the profiles (HILV, HIHV, LIHV) received 31 responses each, while one profile (LILV) received 32 responses. The descriptive statistics of these responses are indicated in Table 3.

Table 3: Responses per leadership profile

| Profile | N | Mean | STD |
|-----------------------------------|----|------|------|
| High integrity low vulnerability | 31 | 2.49 | 0.68 |
| High integrity high vulnerability | 31 | 4.22 | 0.44 |
| Low integrity high vulnerability | 31 | 2.69 | 0.40 |
| Low integrity low vulnerability | 32 | 1.87 | 0.46 |

(N = number of participants; STD = Standard deviation)

Although the differences of the means were not subjected to analysis of variance (Anova) as this was not within the scope of the study, the respective means appear to be aligned with the two-way Anova results reported in Figures 1 and 2.

4.2 Internal consistency of the measures

Table 4 indicates the items used to measure these variables, as well as their respective internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's alpha).

Table 4: Items, variables and internal consistencies

| Variables and Items | | Alpha if deleted |
|---|--|------------------|
| Integrity – Cronbach's alpha=.93 | | |
| 1. | A leader with these character traits is trustworthy. | .91 |
| 2. | This leader is honest, even in the face of adversity. | .90 |
| 3. | A leader with this profile is fair in difficult instances. | .92 |
| 4. | This leader delivers on promises. | .92 |
| 5. | This leader is not afraid to stand up for what he or she believes in. | .93 |
| Vulnerability – Cronbach's alpha=.90 | | |
| 6. | A leader with these character traits is open to change. | .85 |
| 7. | This leader is someone who is willing to accept uncertain states. | .89 |
| 8. | A leader with this profile is aware of his or her strengths and limitations. | .91 |
| 9. | A leader with this profile easily trusts people. | .89 |
| 10. | This leader is comfortable with delegating work and trusting people. | .86 |
| Leader Profile Attractiveness – Cronbach's alpha=.91 | | |
| 11. | I think a leader with this profile will be a good manager. | .88 |
| 12. | I will select a person with these character traits as a leader. | .86 |
| 13. | I will work for a person with these character traits. | .85 |

With all Cronbach's alpha values ≥ 0.9 for the measurement of all constructs, the measurement of the constructs with these items was deemed reliable for this study as it showed high internal consistency. The internal consistency for perceived moral character could not be calculated because only two items were included in the questionnaire.

4.3 Integrity and vulnerability as distinguishable traits

The statistical significance of the variance in the means between high and low of vulnerability and integrity respectively, and in isolation, was assessed through Anova (Table 5).

Table 5: Analyses of the variance in means of vulnerability and integrity

| Effect | Level of integrity | Level of vulnerability | Mean (STD) | P-value |
|---------------|--------------------|------------------------|-------------|---------|
| Integrity | Low | - | 1.82 (0.53) | 0.000 |
| | High | - | 3.83 (0.94) | |
| Vulnerability | - | Low | 2.73 (1.04) | 0.456 |
| | - | High | 2.88 (1.24) | |

The Anova results in Table 5 confirm a statistically significant difference in the means of low levels of integrity compared to high levels of integrity ($F(1, 123) = 218.93, p = 0.0000$). When considering Proposition 5, this study thus found that higher levels of integrity is a distinguishable character virtue in leadership profiles. In contrast, the Anova results confirm there is no statistical difference in the means of low levels of vulnerability compared to high levels of vulnerability ($F(1, 123) = 0.556, p = 0.456$). From this, one can conclude that the perceived attractiveness of the leader profiles with low levels of vulnerability does not show a significant statistical difference compared to the profiles with high levels of vulnerability in isolation. This study thus did not find evidence that higher levels of vulnerability is a distinguishable character trait on its own in leadership behavioural profiles (Proposition 5).

4.4 Perceived moral character

The significance of the combined effect of vulnerability and integrity on the perception of moral character for the four leader profiles was assessed through two-way Anova of each of the means. The interactions were compared through Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD) post hoc multiple comparisons. A 2 (integrity) x 2 (vulnerability) Anova revealed a significant interaction between integrity and vulnerability ($F(1, 121) = 13.77, p = 0.0003$). Figure 2 illustrates the interaction of integrity and vulnerability on the perception of moral character for the four leader profile vignettes.

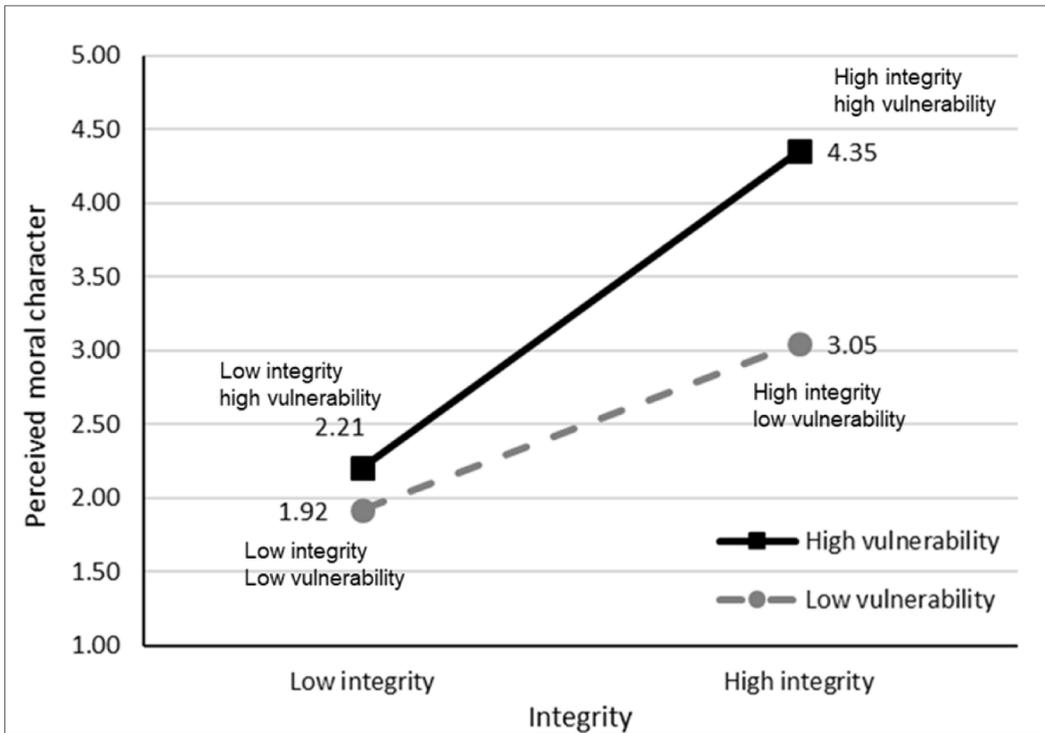


Figure 1: Perceived moral character

It is evident from Figure 1 that high-integrity leaders were perceived to have a stronger moral character (HILV: $M=3.05$, and HIHV: $M=4.35$) than a low integrity leader, notwithstanding the level of vulnerability (LILV: $M=1.92$ and LIHV: $M=2.21$). These results provided support for Proposition 1: Integrity is an important trait of perceived moral character.

However, vulnerability was seen to have a significant role in the perception of moral character. Perceptions of moral character measured the highest for the profile with high levels of both integrity and vulnerability (HIHV). Indeed, the presence of vulnerability increased the perception of moral character. Even when integrity was low (LIHV: $M=2.21$), the perception of moral character was significantly higher than when vulnerability was low (LILV: $M=1.92$). This provided support for Proposition 3: The combination of integrity and vulnerability increases the perception of moral character. However, with LIHV having a significantly lower mean than HILV, the results provided support for Proposition 2: Perceived vulnerability is an important trait of moral character, but as an adjunctive trait and not in isolation.

4.5 Leader profile attractiveness

The significance of the combined effect of vulnerability and integrity on leader profile attractiveness for the respective four leader profiles was assessed through two-way Anova of each of the means. The interactions were compared through Fisher's Least Significant

Difference (LSD) post hoc multiple comparisons. A 2 (integrity) x 2 (vulnerability) Anova revealed a significant interaction between integrity and vulnerability ($F(1, 121)=27.38, p=0.0000$). The analysis confirmed that the variances of the means statistically differed significantly. Figure 2 illustrates how the interaction of integrity and vulnerability affected the participants' profile attractiveness.

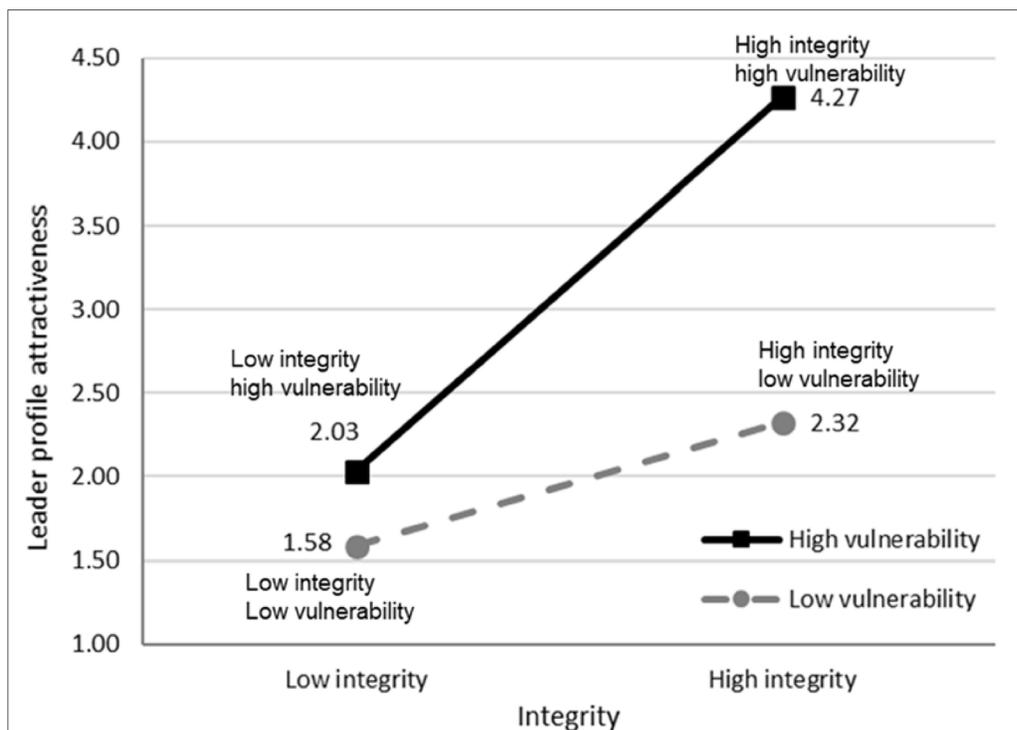


Figure 2: Leader profile attractiveness

Similar to perceived moral character, it is evident from Figure 2 that high-integrity leaders' behavioural profiles were more attractive (HILV: $M=2.32$, and HIHV: $M=4.27$) than low-integrity leaders, notwithstanding the level of vulnerability (LILV: $M=1.58$ and LIHV: $M=2.03$). These results provide support for Proposition 4: The presence of perceived integrity in a leader's profile is an attractive character trait.

However, similar to the results depicted in Figure 1, it is clear that vulnerability also had a significant role in the perception of profile attractiveness. The highest measurement for the attractiveness of a leaders' profile was achieved by the profile with high levels of both integrity and vulnerability (HIHV). Indeed, the presence of vulnerability increased the attractiveness of a leaders' behavioural profile. Even when integrity was low (LIHV: $M=2.03$), the profile was significantly more attractive than when vulnerability was low (LILV: $M=1.58$). This provides support for Proposition 3: The combination of integrity and vulnerability adds to the attractiveness of the leadership profile.

Similarly to perceived moral character, vulnerability was not an attractive leadership trait in isolation. This can be seen in the low-integrity profile having a significantly

lower mean than the high-integrity profile when vulnerability is low in both cases (LIHV versus HILV). The results provide support for Proposition 2: Perceived vulnerability is an important trait of moral character, but as an adjunctive trait and not in isolation.

4.6 Descriptive perspectives on 2x2 vignettes

Part of the explanation of the aforementioned results can probably be found in the descriptive perspectives on the leadership profiles. Respondents were asked eight questions about how they would view each of the four different profiles. Statistical differences on the data points were assessed through Anova, together with the Kruskal-Wallis test to confirm the Anova results ($p < 0.5$). The means of the responses on these items on each of the four leader profiles are illustrated in Figure 3.

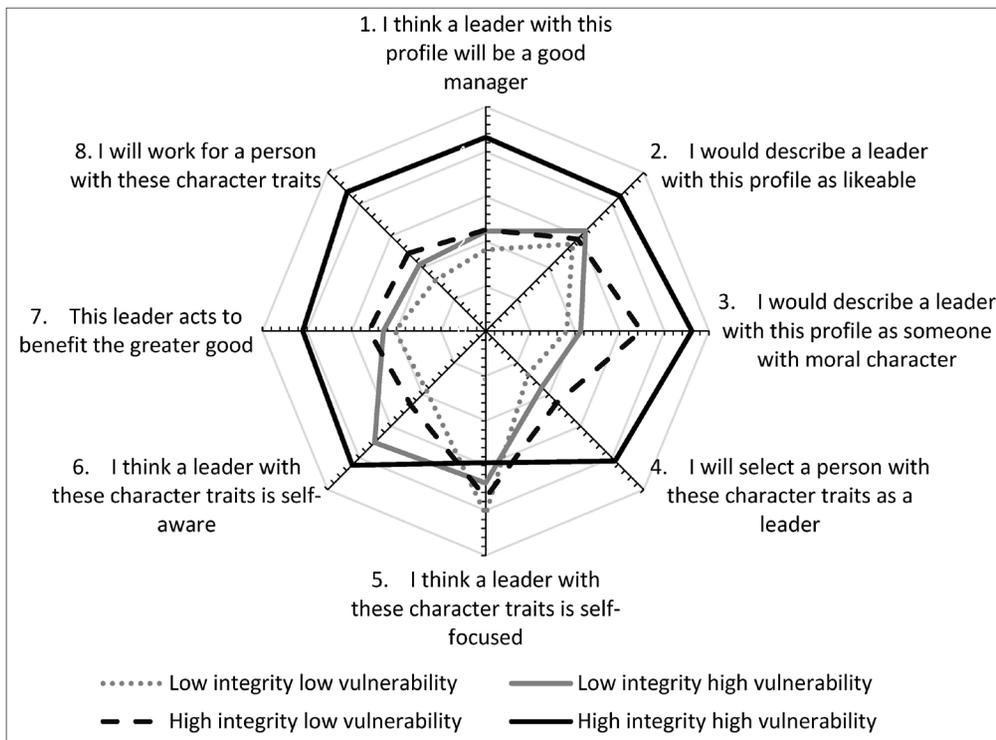


Figure 3: A descriptive comparison of profile perceptions

From Figure 3 it can be seen that the high-integrity, high-vulnerability leader scores highest by a significant margin on all items ($p < 0.01$), except on being self-focused (item 5), where this leader, once again significantly, scores the lowest ($p < 0.001$). This confirms the view that being self-focused stands opposed to self-awareness, which derives from vulnerability and self-focused leaders' tendency to overrate their morality (Leavy, 2016). These results provide further indirect support for Propositions 1, 3 and 4. However, for item 5, the low-integrity, low-vulnerability leader scores significantly higher than both high-vulnerability leader profiles ($p < 0.001$). It appears that the presence of vulnerability

reduces the perceptions of self-focus, which arguably explains much of the strength and balance that vulnerability brings to the preferred leadership profiles. These results provide further support for Proposition 2. These results strengthen the argument that vulnerability unlocks the value of integrity and that integrity unlocks the value of vulnerability.

5. Discussion and conclusions

Results confirm that leader profiles that include integrity are distinguishable from profiles where integrity is lacking. The results demonstrate the significance of perceived integrity for the perceived moral character of a leader. The results also demonstrate that integrity is not only an important part of moral character, but also promotes the attractiveness of a leader's profile. It was shown that in the absence of integrity, vulnerability could not easily be distinguished. The results further confirm that when vulnerability is not combined with integrity, it is not a significant contributor to perceived moral character or attractiveness of a leader's profile. One can speculate that some might interpret vulnerability in the absence of integrity as a weakness in a leader's profile.

This study demonstrates that vulnerability makes an important contribution to perceived moral character and attractiveness of a leader's profile in combination with integrity. It was found that the combination of integrity and vulnerability in a leader's profile yielded the perception of the strongest moral character and greatest profile attractiveness. Integrity and vulnerability can thus be considered as adjunctive traits regarding moral character and leader profile attractiveness. This study thus supports Audi and Murphy's (2006) proposition that each of the traits is vital, but that they are stronger when combined.

The findings that integrity and vulnerability have a positive impact not only on moral character, but also on the attractiveness of a leader's profile significantly contribute to the field of ethical leadership. The findings demonstrate that individuals actually want such leaders and prefer them above those who lack integrity and vulnerability. This provides empirical evidence to recalibrate assumptions about the importance of leadership integrity, which is often accepted or contested in organisations, but without empirical grounds. These results have notable implications regarding leadership selection and development. With moral character requiring both integrity and vulnerability, organisations that are serious about building ethical businesses should frame these traits in combination as a critical selection criterion when appointing leaders. In companies that promote moral character and develop integrity, adjunctive traits such as vulnerability should be promoted and developed as having equal weight.

This study makes an important theoretical contribution to the body of knowledge on moral character and leader integrity, and therefore indirectly to ethical businesses and organisations. Although vulnerability as an attractive character trait in leaders has received some attention in research, no studies could be found that explored the influence

of integrity and vulnerability on perceived moral character and the attractiveness of a leader's behavioural profile. This study, however, succeeds in demonstrating the potential important interaction between a generally recognised trait and an adjunctive one.

As with any research, this study has some limitations. Although participants were spread across various geographical locations (Africa, Australasia, the Middle East, and Asia), the sample size was relatively small and represented only one international company. Although much care was taken with the writing of the vignettes to represent the respective constructs reliably, vignettes tend to be overly simple and subjective, and are therefore prone to misinterpretation by the respondents leading to invalid responses. 'Jack' does not represent a gender-neutral person, and gender-related preconditioning and expectations of respondents could have had an effect on the responses. Because participants only viewed one vignette to control for social desirability bias, they did not experience the full suite of manipulations. It is thus possible that they responded in a demand-driven manner, which could have limited causal inferences and led to sweeping responses (Orne, 2009). One should thus take care not to make unequivocal generalisations from the findings.

The researchers suggest that the findings from this research be explored in future studies. Future research might include similar factorial vignette experiments, perhaps with larger samples and across various companies and industries, and with differently worded vignettes. Future studies are encouraged to have vignettes subjected to scrutiny by experts or a pilot study to enhance validity and realism (Steiner et al., 2016), and more robustly developed measures for moral character, integrity and vulnerability. Research that considers different adjunctive traits and different combinations of such traits will add much value to our understanding of moral character and ethical leadership. Future research that uses and further develops vignette experiments will contribute to the development of vignettes as an effective quasi-experimental methodology.

Moral character is a critical ingredient in leaders to ensure a healthy and ethical society. Although many leaders may be competent and have strong character traits, such as courage, they may yet lack a moral compass. Combining vulnerability with the much better-known construct of integrity as a complementary trait of moral character has the potential not only to unlock moral character, but also to increase the attractiveness of the leader's profile. Therefore, in the selection and development of leaders for the future, the importance of integrity and vulnerability in combination needs to be considered to improve organisations' chances of being led by individuals with moral character.

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Risk and asymmetry in development ethics

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Abstract

Risk is implicit in economic development. How should economic development and business transactions in developing countries ethically balance risk and likely benefit? This article explores some of the shortcomings of expected utility theory when it comes to assessing the moral significance and distributive impact of risk. It argues in favour of two moral constraints on risky decisions in developing contexts. The Participation Principle requires that those affected by the risky outcomes of a decision participate in that decision. The Vulnerability Veto requires risk aversion in losses to the most vulnerable. The importance of autonomy supports these principles in asymmetric relations between well-resourced economic institutions and the inhabitants of developing economies.

1. Introduction

How should firms doing business in the developing world make decisions about the risks to which workers, consumers, and communities are exposed? How should agencies tasked with development projects such as dams and other infrastructure take environmental risks and other potential negative outcomes into account in their decisions? More generally, what moral constraints are there on risky decision-making by relatively well-resourced institutions operating in developmental contexts?

By 'risky decision' I mean any decision between alternatives that involve some probability of a negative outcome. An outcome is negative if it is worse than some baseline – that could be the status quo, but it could also be the desired outcome. By this definition, almost any decision is risky and so the question of how to take risk into account is of general importance.

Risk is particularly important in less economically developed contexts. Research in development economics suggests that short-run exogenous shocks may impose persistent effects on those who are vulnerable to poverty (Dercon, 2010; 2004), potentially trapping them in chronic poverty (e.g. Carter & Lybbert, 2012; Giesbert & Schindler, 2012; Barrett & McPeak, 2006). The rural poor also have suboptimal access to ex-ante means of risk management (Dercon, 2002; Dercon & Krishnan, 2003; Morduch, 2004). These sorts of concerns typically arise with respect to the effects of climate and health disasters and other shocks. But even aside from these, we may reasonably be concerned about how risk is distributed when relatively well-resourced or economically sophisticated actors do business with vulnerable members of a developing economy. As an example, consider concerns about the dangers of a multinational corporation hiring workers who may be exposed to the physical health risks of sweatshop manufacturing (Arnold, 2009; Arnold & Bowie, 2003), or the mental health of online content moderators (Block & Riesewitz, 2018; Riedl, Masullo & Whipple, 2020). Consider also debates about whether trade and industrialisation pose risks to the quality of the environment (Copeland & Taylor, 1994; Grossman & Krueger, 1995). These are just instances of a very general normative problem. Our challenge, then, is to develop a general moral framework for understanding how risk should be managed in the context of asymmetric economic relations.

I argue for two minimum moral standards governing risky decision-making in the developmental context. The Participation Principle recommends that those who are affected by the risky outcomes of a decision be empowered to participate in the decision. That is because individuals can have divergent attitudes towards risk, and an individual affected by a risky decision has an autonomy interest in that decision being responsive to her risk attitude. The ideal way of ensuring this responsiveness, and satisfying the autonomy interest, is by allowing the affected individual to participate in the decision.

The Vulnerability Veto applies where risky decisions cannot be made reliably responsive to the risk attitudes of those affected; it requires risk aversion in assessing losses to the most vulnerable. The motivation for the Veto is that the asymmetries involved in the developmental context can make it difficult for decisions to be properly responsive to the risk attitudes of those affected. In that case, there is some moral reason to make a risk-averse decision, though it is unclear what degree of risk aversion is optimal. Since sustained losses to the most vulnerable pose a further threat to their autonomy, at least this is clear: that risk aversion is required when assessing losses to them.

My argument stands at the intersection of philosophy and development economics. There is a burgeoning literature in development economics on how vulnerable individuals and communities are affected by risk and respond to it. This literature largely understands risks as negative exogenous shocks such as droughts or hurricanes (e.g. Clarke & Dercon, 2016, Fuentes-Nieva & Seck, 2010). In contrast, I follow the philosophical literature that understands risk as involved in all decision-making that explicitly or implicitly assigns probabilities to uncertain outcomes (e.g. Buchak, 2013). As such, the argument here is more general than those concerning exogenous shocks and is a precursor to an account of the proper ethical attitude towards disasters and other exogenous shocks. Another

contrast with the development ethics literature is that I focus on transactions involving risk, rather than risk management and risk coping strategies that vulnerable communities or developing states adopt. By attending to this transactional context, I focus on the asymmetries that are typical of interactions between businesses and development agencies on the one hand, and vulnerable individuals and communities on the other.

I present the philosophical background of my arguments in ‘Taking risk attitudes seriously’ and ‘Autonomy and responsiveness’. ‘Taking risk attitudes seriously’ sets out the case for thinking that moral theory should take risk attitudes into account by showing how the orthodox normative theory of decision-making under risk, expected utility theory, underdetermines the moral importance of risk. It is reasonable for individuals to have attitudes that are not risk-neutral, and the reasonableness of these attitudes means that we cannot assume that it is morally permissible to make decisions in a risk-neutral way.

Instead, the importance of autonomy requires that decisions be responsive to the risk attitudes of those affected, as I argue in ‘Autonomy and responsiveness’. By foregrounding autonomy, I work in the tradition of Amartya Sen’s *Development as Freedom* (1999), and more generally liberalism. However, as I explain in ‘Autonomy and responsiveness’, I adopt a relational conception of autonomy: I acknowledge that individuals exist in relationship to each other and that such relationships may enhance autonomy, even where they diminish certain aspects of individual control. This means that autonomy retains importance even in asymmetric relationships of the type that define developmental interventions.

‘Risk and choice displacement’ presents the argument for the Participation Principle and the Vulnerability Veto. The argument in the previous sections shows that an individual affected by a risky decision has an autonomy interest in that decision being responsive to her risk attitude. Nevertheless, there are difficulties for a decision maker who wishes to respond to the risk attitudes of the affected: (a) first, there are multiple ways to interpret preferences, and so risk attitude elicitation is unreliable; (b) second, risk attitudes vary across domains; and (c) third, some decisions are transformative, transforming the attitudes of those affected. For these reasons, the affected person should participate in the decision themselves.

However, there are asymmetries characteristic of developmental transactions and interventions that make it difficult to apply the Participation Principle. Where it is impracticable to enable participation, these asymmetries make it even more difficult for a decision maker to respond reliably to the risk attitudes of the affected. In such contexts, there is reason to be relatively risk-averse. One reason is that the decision maker has incentives to be relatively more risk-seeking than the affected, and the affected have incentives to communicate relatively less risk-averse attitudes than they have. Another reason for risk aversion is the evidence we have that those in developing contexts are vulnerable to persistent losses. Taken together, these concerns justify decisions that avoid risks of potentially persistent losses to the vulnerable.

In conclusion, I clarify that these principles differ substantively from the two most popular approaches to public decision-making about risk: the Precautionary Principle and Cost-Benefit Analysis. My account is an alternative to these views, consistent with the criticisms expressed by Sunstein (2005). More work remains to be done in elaborating this perspective, but it has immediate practical application.

2. Taking risk attitudes seriously

We want to know what moral constraints there are on those making decisions that expose members of a developing society to risk. A complete account will depend on our answers to two sets of questions about risk:

- What is the *moral significance of imposing risk on another*? We are familiar with decisions about whether to take on risk ourselves – we do this when deciding whether to undergo an operation, or sign up for disability insurance, or start a business. We also frequently make decisions about whether to expose others to risk, and to what degree. What is the moral significance of imposing the risk of a bad outcome on someone?
- What is the *distributive significance of risk*? We are familiar with theories of justice, such as Rawls's (1999), that tell us how certain goods should be distributed. These typically do not explicitly address the question of how risk should be distributed. Consider the unequal distribution of risks across developed and developing economies. Industrial processes that aid developed economies, such as mining minerals and building components for smartphones, take place in developing economies and impose a greater risk of the harms of industrial accidents on inhabitants of developing economies (De Souza Porto & De Freitas, 1996). Climate change threatens outcomes such as rising water, crop failure, and civil unrest, but the risk of these outcomes is systematically worse for developing than developed countries (Stern, 2006). When are different patterns of risk more just or less just? Furthermore, given that risk is unevenly distributed, what is the distributive significance of imposing additional risk on individuals in a developing economy?

We should dismiss the approach to answering these questions suggested by expected utility theory; the foundation of classical welfare economics that is used to measure the choice-worthiness of alternatives, and treats risk as a weight proportional to probability (Savage, 1954). The normative version of the theory says that a decision maker is rational only insofar as she chooses whichever alternative maximises her expected utility. The expected utility of the alternative is the weighted average of the possible changes the alternative makes to the decision maker's utility, with the weights being the probabilities of those changes. Formally, if an option a has possible utility outcomes $u_{1,\dots,n}$, and each outcome has probability $p_{1,\dots,n}$ with $\sum_i^n p_i = 1$, then the expected utility of a is $\sum_i^n u_i p_i$, and the decision maker should pick whichever option has the highest such expected utility.

Calculating expected utility in this way is risk-neutral in the sense that a bad outcome with a certain probability rationally has the same value for a person regardless of whether they are risk-averse or risk-seeking: its value is simply the probability-weighted utility of the outcome. For example, the theory tells us that any rational individual should be indifferent between an option that guarantees one unit of utility, and an option that has a 50% chance of providing two units of utility and a 50% chance of providing none. (There are ways in which expected utility theorists can accommodate certain risk attitudes, but these are inelegant and unilluminating. For extended discussion, see Buchak 2013:24-36.)

Expected utility theory suggests (but does not entail) the ‘superficial approach’: for any choice between risky alternatives, calculate the expected utility of each alternative and apply our traditional principles of morality and justice in making a choice between these alternatives. An immediate problem with applying such an approach to social policy is that it overlooks significant moral questions about how to aggregate and compare risks that fall on different people (Scanlon, 1998; Frick, 2015); I set these aside for another time. The superficial approach is fundamentally consequentialist, and its best-known instance is the widely recommended Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA)(Adler & Posner, 1999).

Consider how an application of the superficial approach might go; allow that it is sometimes morally permissible for an individual A to impose trivial costs on another B to save the life of C. Indeed, it seems morally permissible that

1. A kicks B’s front door down to save C from choking.

But now consider an action that risks a much worse outcome, such as

2. A blows B’s door down with explosives to save C, though doing so has a small probability of causing a fire that destroys B’s house.

If the probability is small enough, and if it is easier to blow the door down than to kick it down, then the expected utility of A’s risky action in 2 may well be the same as that of A’s non-risky act in 1. We can even suppose that the expected utilities of the outcomes for B are the same. In this case, the superficial approach says, the moral status of the risky action and the non-risky action are the same since their outcomes have the same expected value.

This result is implausible. Whatever we decide about the permissibility of 2, the fact that B’s whole house might have been destroyed seems to raise different moral considerations than the fact that B’s door will be destroyed. This point is easiest to see when we consider the possible world in which the house is destroyed, and what A would need to say to defend his decision. It would not be enough for A to say simply that 1 and 2 appeared equivalent to him (even though it may be enough to say that the house was of trivial value compared to C’s life). That is because B may care much more about the worst-case outcome than the probable outcome, and the worst-case outcome is much worse in 2 than in 1. We may think that it is irrational for B to hold that view but justifying one’s action to another means taking into account what they reasonably care about, rather than what their bloodlessly rational alter ego would care about.

Expected utility theory suggests a similarly superficial approach to the just distribution of risks. Suppose (despite its implausibility) that distributive justice requires strict wealth equality. If we are distributing 100 gold coins amongst a society of 50 individuals, we achieve perfect justice when each has two. Now we want to know how to apply this theory (or a more plausible one) to the distribution of outcomes that involve chances. Suppose we must choose between

3. giving each person in society two gold coins, and
4. giving half of the people two gold coins for sure, and to each of the others a lottery that pays the holder eight gold coins with a 50 per cent chance, and otherwise places the holder in debt to the tune of four gold coins.

Expected utility theory gives the lottery in situation 4 the same value as definitely having two gold coins, and so the superficial approach evaluates both situations 3 and 4 as perfectly just; again implausible. Suppose the lottery is run, and the outcome is that a very few members of society have eight gold coins each, half have two gold coins each, and the rest are in debt. The result is much more unequal than in 3, so intuitively the initial lottery offer that resulted in this inequality should not have the same distributive significance as 3.

The superficial approach goes wrong in many ways, some of which parallel fundamental flaws in normative expected utility theory. The flaw I focus on here is its risk-neutrality. Traditional expected utility theory holds that rationality requires risk-neutrality, but people are not always risk-neutral, and reasonably so. Moral justification should respond to what people reasonably care about.

Furthermore, economists and philosophers have begun to demonstrate that risk-neutrality is not a requirement of rationality, and have developed techniques and arguments that model rational decision-making by risk-seeking and risk-averse agents (Buchak, 2013; Wakker, 2010; Barbera, Hammond & Seidl, 2004:688-837). Recall that expected utility theory treats risk as a simple weighting of the utility of outcomes associated with some alternative. In contrast, it is possible to formulate non-expected utility theories that take a decision maker's risk attitudes into account by altering the risk-weighting of outcomes in response to the 'risk structure' of the alternative, for example, the breadth of possible outcomes; or how bad the worst outcome is, and how probable it is. Buchak (2013) describes these as 'global properties' of lotteries and shows that it is consistent with the axioms of rationality that individuals have risk attitudes sensitive to such properties.

The idea of caring about the risk structure of an alternative helps to show why it is at least reasonable to have an attitude like risk-aversion. The risk-averse person cares about how bad things might get, rather than what things will be like on average, and prefers a narrower spread of outcomes rather than a wider one. Similarly, the risk-seeking person focuses on how good things might get at the expense of accepting a wider range of possible outcomes. Consequently, one problem with the superficial approach to cases like 2 and 4 is that it does not take seriously how bad things are for the person whose

neighbourhood is potentially burned down, or for the person who is potentially left in debt. That is because expected utility flattens out the risk structure of these alternatives.

We see various degrees of non-neutral risk attitudes in everyday life:

- The fact that insurance is widespread attests to the fact the people are risk-averse in some aspects of their lives. The expected utility of an insurance contract is typically lower than the status quo of someone facing the risk of a disaster, but the insurance contract raises the holder's utility floor.
- The fact that gambling is widespread attests to the fact that people are risk-seeking in some aspects of their lives, since the expected utility of a casino bet is lower than the status quo, though of course, it offers a higher high.

Deviations from risk-neutrality are important in developing economies too. Economists have attempted to measure risk attitudes through both experiments and survey instruments (e.g. Binswanger, 1981; Lybbert et al., 2010; Falk et al., 2018), and continue to debate the determinants of these attitudes. Indeed, business ethicists concerned with international transactions have expressed concern that individuals in different countries might have different risk attitudes because of their different cultural frameworks (Donaldson, 1989:109-128). There is insufficient support for the claim that people in developing countries are relatively more risk-averse than in developed countries (Cardenas & Carpenter, 2008:352). Survey evidence suggests that, as in developed countries, prospect theory predicts the risk preferences of individuals in developing countries (Rieger et al., 2015); they are risk-seeking in losses and risk-averse in gains (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). Yet universally, people engage in practices of risk management. In the absence of formal insurance mechanisms, individuals in developing economies engage in informal means of risk management and coping, such as rotating savings and credit associations, burial societies, and informal risk-sharing networks (Dercon, 2002; Dercon & Krishnan, 2003). These patterns are enough to raise questions about whether risk attitudes place moral constraints on decision-making in developmental contexts.

3. Autonomy and responsiveness

I have been arguing that people have non-neutral risk attitudes, and so we cannot without further justification adopt the superficial approach, which ignores these attitudes. I now turn to the idea that autonomy is an important value in a developmental context, and that the value of autonomy recommends that risky decisions be responsive to the risk attitudes of those affected.

In defending the importance of autonomy, I am not making the implausible descriptive claim that people always act autonomously. Rather, it is a normative claim that people have an interest in autonomy. Indeed, the related idea of freedom has always played an important role in debates about inequality and distributive justice in development economics. When we review these debates, it turns out that freedom is best understood in terms of autonomy.

Measures of inequality and poverty implicitly rely on theories of distributive justice, and in particular, assumptions about the ‘currency’ of distributive justice (Sen, 1992). Claims about currency are claims about what we should seek to equalise. Economic theory traditionally focuses on preference satisfaction, or ‘utility’, as the measure of well-being. Typical economic measures of inequality are measures of income or wealth inequality. This measure makes sense insofar as money is one of the main resources by which preferences can be satisfied. Income distribution, therefore, measures the distribution of an important ability – the ability to buy what one wants and needs, whatever that may be. Rawls’s famous theory of justice generalises this move to abilities. It says that it is primary resources – including rights, liberties, opportunities, income, and wealth – which should be justly distributed (Rawls, 1999:79).

The shift from measuring a state of well-being, such as preference satisfaction, to measuring the ability to achieve states of well-being captures something important about justice. A focus on resources largely sets aside differences in well-being coming about because of how an individual chooses to use their resources. Contrast the situation of an individual who is poor because she was born in a flood-prone country, and that of an individual who is poor because she unwisely took a gamble by building her house on a shoreline that she knew was likely to experience rising sea-level. A theory that recommends equal distribution of resources does not pity the second individual much, since her poverty is due to what she chooses to do with her resources rather than her initial lack thereof. Freedom appears negatively in such a theory, as a force that removes certain facts from our view because they arose through an individual’s free choice.

It would, however, be simplistic to think that the shift to resources gives us a clean distinction between what is due to a choice, and what is due to circumstance. After all, different people have different abilities to transform resources into well-being. Compare giving the same quantity of food to an old monk, who needs little food to thrive, versus a pregnant mother, who needs more. Similarly, more energy will be needed in a very cold climate than a temperate one to achieve the same level of comfort. Call the ability of an individual with a given level of resources to achieve various states of well-being their ‘capability’. Distributive justice should compare the different capabilities of different individuals, rather than their different levels of well-being, since differences in capabilities are seldom a product of free choice. That is the lesson of Amartya Sen’s Capabilities Approach (Sen, 1992; 1999), whose influence can be seen in such measures as the UN Human Development Reports (Nussbaum, 2011).

The shift to capabilities gives freedom a positive role in distributive justice. Consider the difference between a person who is starving and a person who is fasting. The starving person wants to eat but has no food. The fasting person does not want to eat even if she has food. Simply attending to the fact that each is hungry fails to capture the important difference in their positions. The fasting person is free to eat if she chooses, whereas the starving person is not free in this respect. From a capability perspective, then, the fasting person may be much better off than the starving person even though they have the same state of well-being. So, in considering whether resources have been distributed justly, we

should consider not just what people end up having, but their capabilities. In so doing, we are comparing their freedom to achieve the states of well-being that are important to them.

By measuring the progress of a society in terms of its capabilities, as development scholars and practitioners increasingly do, we implicitly assume that freedom is one of the goals of development (Sen, 1999). We should be clear about the nature of this freedom. It is not freedom as independence from others, the negative state of not being interfered with by others. It is instead the positive state of being able to achieve well-being and to function as one wishes.

The idea of autonomy best captures this positive conception of freedom. Autonomy is the ability to author a life worth living. Being autonomous requires having a wide menu of appealing options, the ability to pursue those options, and the freedom to choose which option to pursue (Raz, 1986:374-376). The emphasis on positive ability is evident in this formulation. The negative conception of freedom is also implicit in the idea of autonomy since being interfered with by others can restrict one's menu of options or one's freedom of choice. Autonomy is, however, not limited to this negative idea, because not all restrictions narrow one's choices. Sometimes restrictions are required to make certain options available. The musician told which notes to play is given the new option of playing a symphony with others, and the driver prohibited from driving above the speed limit is given the option of driving on a safer road.

Autonomy is not an entirely individualistic value. Therefore, its importance should not be neglected by those who reject overly individualistic political theories. Much criticism of liberalism focuses on its alleged individualism. Certainly, it is a mistake to view human beings as self-sufficient individuals, whether liberalism is guilty of that or not. It is also a mistake to think that valuing autonomy forces us into this atomistic picture.

Consider the role that autonomy plays in our thinking about promising and contract; fundamental institutions of everyday morality, and central importance in the liberal tradition. Promising involves a promisor binding herself to a promisee to perform some future course of action. Insofar as one is morally conscientious, binding oneself – placing oneself under an obligation – is a matter of narrowing one's choices. So, on the face of it, promising diminishes the promisor's autonomy. The appeal of promising is that it is also an exercise of the promisor's autonomy. Most obviously, it enables the promisor to 'shape the normative landscape' (Owens, 2012), authoring his moral obligations according to his wishes. That a promisor might gain autonomy by apparently restricting it is only a 'pseudomystery [involving] restrictions undertaken just in order to increase one's options in the long run' (Fried, 2015:17). This phenomenon is no more puzzling (and no less important) than the fact that we can extend our communicative abilities by submitting to the rules of grammar.

That promises and contracts increase autonomy in this way is a direct result of their relational form. The options coming into being for the promisor are available because he has submitted to the authority of the promisee. Promises and contracts also form

the basis of the more complex arrangements and exchanges that relations of trust and reciprocity enable (Hume, 1978:520-521). For example, because of the reciprocal promises in an insurance contract, a shipowner is willing to transport cargo at sea, making it possible for a buyer and seller to establish a trade route between continents, and so for a manufacturer to find a cost-effective supply of the components of in-demand goods. More abstractly, promising allows the promisor to co-author joint arrangements in a way that extends the promisor's reach in the world; and that of third parties. Such joint arrangements – symphonies and soccer teams and start-ups – are crucial for living a meaningful life. They are the kinds of things that appear on an autonomous person's menu.

The lesson we should learn from the structure of promising is that 'autonomy is relational' (Anderson & Christman, 2001; Christman, 2004; Westlund, 2012). I mean two things by this. First, enhancing one's options and therefore, achieving autonomy often involves placing oneself in relations of dependence and vulnerability. That is the sort of relationships that promising creates, but there are other such asymmetric relationships – family and romantic and teacher/student relationships, for example. These relationships are in stark contrast to the supposedly individualistic picture of liberal autonomy. An atomised individual would be unable to achieve much in the world without the social leverage that relations of asymmetric control create.

Second, the things worth choosing that constitute the autonomous person's menu are themselves often relational. Even a scholar like myself, who chooses to spend much time alone, finds the work meaningful only insofar as I can argue and share my thoughts with others. Thus, the goal of the autonomous person is not to lead a fiercely independent life, but to join up with others in relations that are meaningful precisely because they constrain choice.

This relational conception of autonomy is still a conception of autonomy. Even though it acknowledges that asymmetric relations are both the source and the goal of autonomy, it retains the sense that individuals have an important interest in being the authors of their own lives. That is not the same as saying it is always important to have a choice or be in control. We do not always want or need to be in control. Sometimes that is because too much choice can be a burden (Schwartz, 2005), or because of the value of being receptive to accident and happenstance (Slote, 2013), or because it is better to hand over control of our options to someone who will exercise control thoughtfully and beneficially, as in the various relationships we have with professional advisors.

Nonetheless, one can retain one's sense of self-authorship in such circumstances if the fact that one is in a relation of asymmetric control is itself something one can choose, or where it is not if one's partner in such a relation exercises control in a way that is responsive to one's autonomy. That is, even in those circumstances in which one lacks control, one's interest in autonomy continues to exert some moral pressure on how those who do have control exercise it.¹

1 A similar proposal that Sen makes is that we sometimes value 'freedom without control' (Sen, 1982; 1994:64-69).

I turn now to the way the interest in autonomy, understood relationally, affects our thinking about risk. Paradigmatically, one's interest in autonomy is an interest in being able to make meaningful choices about how to live. We have seen that people have diverse attitudes towards risky alternatives, attitudes that diverge from the choices recommended by expected utility theory. Given that we can make sense of an individual's risk attitude in terms of what is most meaningful to him about the risk structure of an alternative, that individual has an autonomy interest in authoring her life according to her risk attitudes. That, in turn, supports the idea that decisions about risk should be responsive to the risk attitudes of those affected.

In this way, an individual's risk attitudes are much like her preferences or value judgements. Individuals' value judgements are part of how they make sense of the world and define a life that is meaningful for them. To the extent that autonomy outweighs other considerations, we should allow individuals to choose according to their value judgements; and when we choose for them, as the relational view concedes that we sometimes must, we should take their value judgements into account. Of course, the negative effects of an individual's choices on third parties or themselves may limit the importance of autonomy. However, in the first instance, to think that there is something valuable about autonomy is just to think that there is something valuable about giving some weight to a person's value judgements in a decision that affects her. So too, her risk attitudes are a way of making sense of her choices – of how much it matters that she faces the chance of a very bad outcome, or a very good outcome, or some range of outcomes. Therefore, insofar as autonomy is important, there is something valuable about taking her risk attitudes into account in matters that impose risk upon her.

Something similar goes for the distributive importance of an alternative. When we distribute goods amongst individuals, we think that the justice of that distribution has some connection to the value judgements of those individuals. If some individuals prefer music to art, and others prefer art to music, then we think a distribution is more just insofar as it allocates music to the former and art to the latter, or at least distributes equally the resources to choose equally between the two. So too, the fact that some individuals are risk-averse and some risk-seeking means that a distribution is more just insofar as it allocates gambles with a lower floor to the former and higher ceiling to the latter, holding the expected value of the gambles equal.

I have been arguing that a person's autonomy matters even where that person lacks choice and that we should therefore be responsive to such a person's risk attitudes. Consider again scenarios 1 through 4 from 'Taking risk attitudes seriously'. These may appear to necessarily undermine autonomy since they involve one person choosing for another. For example, in choosing between 1 and 2, A chooses for B whether to destroy B's door for sure or destroy B's house by chance. A may be put in this position unavoidably, unable to consult with B about which option to pick, say because A must act urgently, and B is not on the scene. Knowing how much B values his door and how much he values his house would help with forced choices like these since A could act on behalf of B by choosing in a way that is responsive to what B would prefer – doing so would be a way

of recognising the importance of B's autonomy. We constructed these examples in such a way that the utilities and probabilities produce the same expected disutility in each case. On the superficial approach, A faces a choice between two equivalent alternatives. Seeing things in this way is itself a further threat to B's autonomy. The problem is that B may be risk-averse and may therefore care much more about the possible destruction of his house than is captured by its expected disutility. So, in choosing between 1 and 2 on the basis of expected utility theory, A neglects B's risk preferences and so imposes on B a risky alternative that is not the one she would have chosen. That is an impairment of B's autonomy since it undermines the authorial control she has over her world. Something similar goes for the choice between 3 and 4. Some individuals may well prefer the lottery to the sure thing of two gold coins; some may disprefer it. In treating the alternatives as equivalent, we ignore these preferences and the autonomy of their holders.

In sum, the superficial approach to moral questions about risk that expected utility suggests flattens out the risk structure of risky alternatives and ignores the divergent risk attitudes of individuals affected by risk. That threatens their autonomy. Being able to act on one's risk attitudes is a way of choosing a meaningful life. So, we should think that the moral and distributive significance of a risky alternative rests not just on its expected utility, but also on its risk structure and the risk attitudes of whoever is affected by its outcomes. That falls short of a comprehensive normative theory of risk, but it supports a starting point: that a decision should be properly responsive to the risk attitudes of those upon whom it imposes risk.

4. Risk and choice displacement

We are concerned with developmental contexts in which a relatively well-resourced actor makes decisions that impose risk on the relatively poor: for example, when an agency decides to fund a dam, or when a business owner decides to hire low-skilled workers to work in a new factory.

A distinctive set of asymmetries marks these contexts. The well-resourced actor has great control, relative to the poor actor, over an outcome that is of great importance to the poor actor, relative to the well-resourced actor. For example, the business owner decides whether the factory has one emergency exit or two, and this decision greatly affects the workers' chances of survival if a fire breaks out. Alternatively, the agency decides whether to fund a dam that destroys certain traditional grazing land, and this has a good chance of undermining the way of life of a certain community, even though it also brings them the possibility of great benefits. In these cases, the donor or the business owner has more control over the decision, even though the outcome matters more to the rural farmer or worker. I will call this sort of cross-cutting asymmetry a context of 'choice displacement'. This displacement does not entail moral hazard, since we do not know what the incentive structure is. Choice displacement should pique our moral concern since it involves a decision that has shifted from the grasp of those to whom it matters most.

We should not assume in contexts of choice displacement that a decision maker has reliable access to the risk attitudes of those affected. That is because there will likely be strategic incentives to miscommunicate risk attitudes. For example, suppose a state health agency must decide how much from a limited budget to spend on transferable health resources in unlimited demand (say, a supply of antiviral medication), and it wants to take into account attitudes towards the risk of loss of health. If A is risk-seeking in health, and B is risk-avoidant, A can increase her utility by communicating a risk-avoidant attitude to the state and then selling B some of the health resources. Even if this behaviour arrives at an efficient allocation, there would still be a social loss on the plausible assumption that it would have been more efficient if the agency had allocated the resources based on the actual risk attitudes.

The incentive for recipients to appear relatively more risk-seeking than they are is an instance of the Samaritan's Dilemma (Buchanan, 1977; Gibson, Andersson, Ostrom & Shivakumar, 2005:38-40). The general case is one in which a donor faces a choice between helping and not helping, and a recipient faces a choice between putting some efforts into helping himself and not making any effort. The optimal solution may well be that the donor helps, and the recipient puts effort into helping, but the recipient has no incentive to make an effort. This situation is made worse if the donor is less likely to help where the recipient does make an effort. In our cases, if risk aversion is a way of averting catastrophe, then a recipient facing the possibility of donor aid may have little incentive to act in a risk-averse way. We need not assume that many developmental transactions exhibit some form of Samaritan's Dilemma. The possibility of being in such a situation is enough to undermine the reliability of communicated risk attitudes.

In general, reliable risk attitude communication is undermined precisely because asymmetries of control and importance mark the developmental context. It is the fact that the decision maker exercises great relative control over a matter that is of great relative importance to the beneficiary that gives the beneficiary reason to represent her risk attitudes as more aligned with those of the decision maker than they might be. This alignment is easiest to see in the case of a transaction, such as between a multinational corporation and a developing country worker. The worker in this situation has less bargaining power than the corporation, which may relocate its factory with relative ease. As a result, the worker is likely to misrepresent their risk attitudes so that the transaction is more appealing to the corporation – just as the wage term is likely to reflect the imbalance of bargaining power. The donor-beneficiary case, however, is potentially quite similar. An aid agency must choose amongst multiple projects in allocating its budget. Given this competition for its attention, a community in need of funds may well have relatively little bargaining power in setting the parameters of the project and may misrepresent its risk attitude to make its project seem more appealing.

A different concern arises from the fact that risky decisions may be transformative for those affected. A transformative choice is one which transforms the decision maker's attitudes, such as preferences or beliefs (Paul, 2014). A good example is having children: before having children, it is very difficult to know what having children will be like, and

thus one's preferences for having children cannot be conditioned on accurate beliefs about what it will be like. The act of having children reveals this experience and likely changes one's preferences and beliefs. Many experiences are like this: going to university, moving to the city, having a cochlear implant. Some such experiences may also change one's risk attitudes. The experience of winning a lottery may make one more risk-seeking; either because it affirms a prior risk-seeking act, or because the increase in wealth increases one's sense of safety. It is surely transformative in these ways and more if a person moves from farm work to factory work, or from rural life to city life, since her circumstances and experiences change, as do her social and environmental influences. In contexts of choice displacement, it is unsatisfying, and perhaps paternalistic, if a decision maker simply applies the pre-decisional risk attitudes of those whose attitudes might be transformed in these ways.

4.1 Participation Principle

The ideal solution to these concerns is to let those affected participate in decision-making. Thus, the Participation Principle:

- there is reason for S to participate in a decision to the extent that the decision imposes some risk on S, it is practicable for S to participate in the decision, and S's participation will make the decision properly responsive to her risk attitudes.

It is not for the present discussion to determine what counts as adequate participation. However, it should be noted that some of the concerns mentioned above may infect the participation procedure, where for example the parties are involved in repeated transactions, and the party with relative control over the terms of these transactions observes the choices of the party with less control. For example, if a commercial farmer hires workers seasonally and observes their choices about safety conditions, workers may display relatively risk-seeking attitudes out of a desire to outcompete other workers.

How should a decision maker choose in cases in which participation is impracticable, or unreliable? Here it is important to take note of whether those affected by the decision are vulnerable to poverty and need. Vulnerability and risk are intrinsically related, in ordinary language and quantitative economic measures (Hoddinot & Quisumbing, 2010; Kamanou & Morduch, 2007). Roughly, someone is vulnerable if a negative shock sends them below the threshold of welfare that defines poverty. Even when a negative shock does not eventuate, vulnerability is a threat to a person's autonomy, since it diminishes her capability set – the worthwhile ways of functioning she can choose (Fuentes-Nieva, 2010). It also limits choices; those vulnerable to risk may change their behaviour in ways that limit future prosperity (Morduch, 1995). Vulnerability is context-sensitive since shocks affect people differently. The question for a decision maker is whether people are vulnerable to the particular negative risks that the contemplated alternatives pose.

4.2 Vulnerability Veto

Given the persistent and outsized impact of negative risks on the vulnerable, decisions should be subjected to a Vulnerability Veto:

- an alternative that imposes some risk on the vulnerable should be rejected in favour of an alternative that imposes less risk on the vulnerable, all else being equal; a form of risk aversion.

When faced with two alternatives that have the same expected effect on well-being, the Vulnerability Veto requires choosing the alternative with the higher well-being floor. It is a *ceteris paribus* rule and does not require extreme risk avoidance. When faced with two alternatives with different floors, a decision maker may still choose the alternative with the lower well-being floor if its expected effect is greater, or if there is some other reason in its favour.

This choice leaves open important questions about how risks to the vulnerable are to be weighed against other good-making features of an alternative. Even before settling these issues, it provides important guidance to a decision maker. If the decision maker can keep the expected value of a transaction constant while raising the transaction's floor – perhaps by decreasing the transaction's ceiling – then they are required to do so. That is because there is good reason not to impose risk on the vulnerable unless they reliably choose to take on that risk.

Buchak (2017:631) recommends risk aversion to decision makers who cannot ascertain the risk attitudes of those affected by their decision. I will not engage with this general claim or its defence here, except to note that the Vulnerability Veto is compatible with Buchak's Principle but has narrower application. The Veto follows from Buchak's Principle insofar as the asymmetric context of development undermines the decision maker's ability to ascertain the risk attitudes of those affected, as I have argued above. In this case, Buchak's Principle requires risk aversion, just as the Vulnerability Veto does in losses.

Another general reason for risk aversion can be found in Oberdiek's (2017) claim that imposing risk on another sets back her autonomy, even when the risk does not eventuate. I will not discuss this argument either, except to distinguish it from my own. The autonomy-based justification for the Vulnerability Veto is based on the distinctive harm to autonomy that imposing risks on the vulnerable does. It is not based on a general claim that imposing risk on another is always an intrinsic threat to autonomy.

5. Towards a new framework

I have been arguing for moral constraints on decision-making that arise because of the asymmetric nature of developmental contexts. The Participation Principle recommends that those whom risky decisions affect be allowed to participate in decision-making. The Vulnerability Veto requires risk aversion in losses that potentially lie against the vulnerable. Together, these constraints foreground how risk affects the autonomy and

vulnerability of those affected. They are not a comprehensive moral view of how risk should be managed in developing economies, but they do provide the beginnings of a distinctive view.

This view can be contrasted with the two most popular approaches to risk: CBA, and the Precautionary Principle. Like expected utility theory, CBA is a theory of normative decision-making that aims to optimise the expected outcome of a decision. Unlike expected utility theory, it is concerned not with optimising the preference-satisfaction of an individual, but some measure of collective well-being, say, the financial benefit to the general public. But, like expected utility theory, CBA takes a risk-neutral approach when it uses the expected values of costs and benefits in its analysis (Boardman et al., 2018:269-298). So does the extrapolation of ‘value of a statistical life’ measures from marketplace rates used to compensate workplace and product risks (Sunstein, 2005:132) if these have different probabilities than the risks relevant to the CBA. But risk-neutrality is not an inherent part of CBA, since the evaluation of risks could in principle take into account the risk attitudes of those affected, and eliciting individuals’ willingness to pay to avoid the relevant risks is a way of doing so (Boardman et al., 2018:315-332). However, these CBA methods do not take seriously the need for those affected by risk to participate in decision-making. So, CBA does not avoid the concerns about accurately eliciting risk attitudes or the effects of transformative decisions on risk attitudes, as outlined above. Where possible, we should prefer to comply with the Participation Principle.

- There is much less clarity about what the Precautionary Principle is, other than a commitment to be “better safe than sorry” (Sunstein, 2005:13). A wide variety of epistemic and practical principles have been defended under this heading, and the Precautionary Principle has been criticised because it appears unable to mark a distinctive view that is not: (i) the trivial view that we should give some care to negative risk; (ii) the superfluous view that risks be weighed in just the way CBA recommends; or (iii) the incoherent view that we should avoid all risk.

Perhaps the most popular use of the Precautionary Principle is simply to signal that safety considerations, or the probability of certain sorts of loss, should be given some greater weight than they would by risk-neutral CBA (Geistfeld, 2001). The framework I present here is compatible with this view of precaution. But note, however, that the Vulnerability Veto is a much more specific principle, being constrained to circumstances of asymmetric control in which the vulnerable are exposed to loss.

Moreover, the Veto is secondary to the Participation Principle. Ideally, those affected by a risky decision, even if vulnerable, should be empowered to apply their own deliberation about the risks to the decision-making process. As a general framework, the Precautionary Principle does not give adequate protection to autonomy (see also Sunstein, 2005:204ff), though there may be particular circumstances in which setting aside the risk attitudes of those exposed to risk is justified. Interestingly, precautionary theorists have suggested considering the importance of autonomy by using deliberative forums to set thresholds above which risk is non-negligible and should be avoided (Wareham & Nardini, 2015). But this puts the idea of participation second to a radically risk-averse framework. The

view I defend here does the inverse. Participation is primary and allows participants to adopt any risk attitude. Risk aversion is recommended only where participation is impossible or unreliable.

This order of things is exactly right from the perspective of autonomy. We have an interest in choosing to live in ways we find meaningful. That interest is ideally satisfied when we get to choose for ourselves, and participation in collective decisions is one such way of choosing. There are, however, many cases in which it is impossible or undesirable to participate in decision-making, and in those cases, autonomy is threatened by a decision that unnecessarily increases the negative risks that overshadow the lives of the vulnerable.

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Using the Critical Management Studies tenet of denaturalisation as a vehicle to decolonise the management discourse in South Africa

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Abstract

It has been roughly five years since the #FeesMustFall student protests shook the foundations of higher education in South Africa. However, in the aftermath of these protests, students' demand for the decolonisation of the curriculum, despite initial energy, has seemingly lost momentum. Within the discipline of management and organisation studies, the situation is even more exacerbated, with efforts towards decolonisation being cosmetic at best. However, much criticism has been directed towards the notion of decolonisation for its lack of normative literature. This article suggests that Critical Management Studies (CMS) and, in particular, the CMS notion of denaturalisation, might provide a broad framework for achieving decolonisation. Furthermore, the work of contemporary philosopher Jacques Rancière is proposed as a pragmatic means to denaturalise management thinking to move closer to a truly decolonised management curriculum in South Africa.

1. Introduction

In 2015, students across South Africa protested against the state of higher education in the country. In what would later be known as the #FeesMustFall campaign, students demands centred around a call for state-subsidised higher education; alleviation of student debt; the insourcing of outsourced labourers; accelerated affirmative action measures amongst academic staff; and the so-called “decolonisation of the curriculum” (Knight & Goldman, 2016). From an academic point of view, the call for decolonised education is of particular interest. For the vast majority of students, higher education in

South Africa was still very much 'colonial', and still reflected a very Western-centric way of thinking, with little or no regard for African knowledge and indigenous knowledge systems.

This call for decolonised education forced South African higher education institutions to do some introspection in terms of the knowledge that it was creating and disseminating to students. Indeed, in the years after the #FeesMustFall protests, decolonisation became part of the institutional agenda at many universities in South Africa. The institutional expectation was that decolonisation would be driven at faculty and departmental level and the call for decolonised and transformed curricula heeded.

It is now almost five years since the #FeesMustFall movement made the demand for a more transformed higher education system, and yet the tempo thereof seems to be painstakingly slow; even to the point where very little real progress towards a decolonised curriculum has been made.

This article postulates that a contributing factor in the slow pace and superficial progress made in the decolonisation project is that academics differ on what is meant by decolonisation. In many instances, there is a total misconception, even no conception, as to what decolonisation is; exacerbating efforts to promote and work towards a decolonised curriculum.

The article further suggests that the critical management studies (CMS) tenet of denaturalisation can be used as a tool to work towards a decolonised curriculum. The argument is presented that decolonisation, at its core, represents a contextualised and somewhat politicised version of postcolonial discourse. As post-colonialism is a recognised area of application in organisation theory and CMS (Jack & Westwood, 2006; Johnson & Duberley, 2003), it would be a logical extension to suggest that decolonisation can be seen as a form of critical enquiry, and can therefore benefit from a concept borne out of critical inquiry.

The article is structured, as follows, to elucidate the arguments suggested above: Firstly, an overview is presented of the discourse around decolonisation since 2015. From this overview, challenges associated with decolonisation in the South African context will be highlighted. Thereafter, the discussion will hone into the unique challenges to decolonisation in the discourse of management. After that, a link between decolonisation and post-colonialism will be established; followed by a discussion focussed on denaturalisation and how it can be employed as a tool for striving for a decolonised management education curriculum.

2. The discourse surrounding decolonisation post-#FeesMustFall

Although student protests calling for a reconsideration of South African higher education are not a new occurrence in South Africa (Fomunyam, 2017a), the #FeesMustFall protests of 2015 and 2016 saw an unprecedented revival of students airing their dissatisfaction

with the slow pace of transformation in South African higher education. These protests represent the most important student uprising since 1976 (Muswede, 2017).

The #FeesMustFall student protests that started in October 2015 and continued well into 2016 saw the resurgence of calls for decolonised education at South African higher education institutions. The student organisations made it blatantly clear that society demanded an immediate and radical rethink of the South African education system (Rahлага, 2015). Furthermore, the majority of the South African population, due to the legacy effects of both colonial rule and apartheid, have always felt estranged from the very education system that was supposed to benefit them (Nkomo, 2011).

Fundamentally, the call for decolonised education centres around the point that since moving into a democratic, all-inclusive political dispensation in 1994, colonial and apartheid legacies are perpetuated in many areas of South African society (Nwadeyi, 2016). These protests, and their precursors over time, represent a revolt against structural disenfranchisement that a large part of the South African populace experienced and embody a need for fair and equal access to opportunities that have the potential to improve their lives (Disemelo, 2015).

Decolonisation embodies more than merely replacing the apartheid era and the colonial era symbols and increasing the number of black academics and local texts in the curriculum (Prinsloo, 2016). The essence of decolonisation involves a rebuff of the centrality of the 'West' in the African understanding of itself and Africa's place in the world, with the aim of re-centring around Africa, both intellectually and culturally (Mbembe, 2015; Ngugi wa Thiong'o, 2004). Frantz Fanon, a scholar, widely embraced by the #FeesMustFall movement, envisages decolonisation as a process of remaking, which is often violent to create new humanity (Fanon, 1963). Thus, decolonisation requires that one reconceptualises the purpose of the university in the African context. We need to reinvent, from an African perspective, what a university is all about and whom it is for (Collini, 2012; Mbembe, 2015; Prinsloo, 2016). To achieve this, it is, therefore, crucial to understand the effect of the 'traditional South African university' (being a 'Western' university) and the knowledge it generates in the African context. Crucial here is considering how this generated knowledge influences and sanctions thinking and behaviour towards 'others' (referring to those groupings of society not catered for in 'Western' thinking) (Pillay, 2015). This situation embodies the very disenfranchisement that the #FeesMustFall movement was rebelling against.

The dominantly Western, Eurocentric canon that pervades academia in South Africa, therefore, needs to be interrogated, and the involvement of this Euro-centricity in side-lining the epistemic traditions endemic to Africa needs to be understood. If this Eurocentric pervasiveness in South African academia is downplayed, the struggle that African epistemic traditions need to endure to obtain any form of legitimacy and voice equity, will never fully be appreciated and recognised. Therefore it is important to explore how the legacy effects of both colonialism and apartheid continue to influence and shape not only South African society in general, but in particular practices, values, and agendas in South African universities (Langdon, 2013; Prinsloo, 2016)

In terms of the resurgent call for decolonisation, this revolt is an appeal to end white, Western, Global 'North' supremacy that is prevalent in South African higher education (Fomunyam, 2017a; Garuba, 2015; Zembaylas, 2018), and to promote indigenous knowledge and (South) African epistemologies, experiences and thought in the curricula in higher education institutions in South Africa (Heleta, 2016). It would seem as though this Western supremacy is exclusionist towards epistemologies and knowledge systems that are not Western, white, or from the Global North, and treats these as inferior (Mgqwashu, 2016). Thus, decolonisation is a call for the recognition that South African universities are centred in Africa and should therefore be Afrocentric. In so doing, South African universities should recognise, give voice to, and promote African epistemologies and knowledge systems that promote African interests. This recognition will contribute to greater inclusivity in a country where the majority of people feel alienated in the classroom (Le Grange, 2016). However, it needs to be recognised that the debates and discussions entered into about decolonisation represent an uncomfortable space, and they are difficult for those who take part in them (Le Grange, 2016; Prinsloo, 2016).

Literature consulted on the issue of decolonisation from 2015 onwards (in other words, after the #FeesMustFall protests started), suggests that the pace of decolonisation efforts is slow (Heleta, 2016). However, transformative efforts in higher education in South Africa, in general, has been very slow (Fomunyam, 2017; Muswede, 2017; Zembaylas, 2018). Reasons purported for the 'snail's pace' of transformation in this sector include a lack of resources made available by the government for transformation, differing institutional understandings, and differing levels of willingness to transform. This slow pace of transformation exacerbates the situation even further and leaves South African higher education in a very tense state.

3. Decolonisation and the South African management discourse

Decolonisation efforts in the management sciences have, in my view, been exceedingly slow. However, I believe that the lack of pace of decolonisation in the management sciences is no surprise, as business and management represent a very colonially ubiquitous domain. The pervasiveness of the capitalist doctrine in business, organisation and management studies is so immense that it leaves virtually no room for the conceptualisation of anything that represents a divergence from it. Management as an academic discipline can also be seen as a continuation of the colonial project (Jack & Westwood, 2006). As a field of enquiry, mainstream management discourse strives for universality and supports the unity of science notion, and in so doing, marginalises non-Western traditions (Goldman, 2016b). This situation has to be seen as part of the larger project of Western capitalism. As with any ideology, structures, institutions and mechanisms are created to perpetuate and entrench the ideology. In the case of business management as an academic discipline, the capitalist ideology created business schools, management courses and business faculties to promote and perpetuate the ideology of

capitalism. It can, therefore, be opined that all South African management scholars can be seen as proponents of the Western, capitalist doctrine, to a lesser or greater degree (Maserumule, 2015).

Given the pervasiveness of this Western capitalist doctrine, the probability that people that have been schooled in this tradition will be susceptible to alternate conceptions of business and management is slim. This situation seems to be even more pronounced in South Africa, as the apartheid legacy attempted to follow in the wake of the colonial legacy by upholding many of the values that colonialism advocated (Heleta, 2016). However, decolonisation as a scholarly project requires that business and management academics be open to notions of business and management that fall outside that purported by the mainstream (i.e. capitalist inspired) thinking. Coupled with institutional expectations that decolonisation be driven at faculty and department level (i.e., by academics), the paradox here is quite obvious: Decolonisation of business management is driven by academics whom themselves struggle to abstract alternative notions of business and management.

The logical consequence of the paradox outlined in the previous paragraph is that management academics' reactions to heed the call for a decolonisation of the discourse will be varied. These reactions vary from a total misconception about what decolonisation is and what it entails, to a flawed understanding of the concept; 'making light' of the decolonisation project; superficiality in addressing decolonisation; or a total refusal to explore the possibilities decolonisation presents.

I am certain that not all management scholars are in the position I was in, to be exposed to the liberal arts in the form of philosophy, and therefore most management scholars, in my experience, do not venture further than the parameters of the management body of knowledge. This situation reminds strongly of the notion of the 'business school mentality' that Goldman, Nienaber and Pretorius (2015) purport. This 'business school mentality' implies that management as an academic discipline is preoccupied with equipping people with the requisite skills for the working world, rather than placing emphasis on shaping well-rounded people for a career in management. Thus, the emphasis is on vocational, competency-based training at the expense of 'liberal' education focusing on cognitive development and the promotion of critical thinking skills, which enable problem-solving and innovation (Mentz, Kotze & van der Merwe, 2008). This emphasis on vocationalism weakens an appreciation for the epistemic foundation of management amongst management scholars (Goldman et al., 2015).

The question of vocationalism is not new to the management education discourse, dating back to the critique of the notion of vocationalism in business schools in the late 1950s (Gordon & Howell, 1959; Pierson, 1959). Despite systemic and individual efforts to address this in the 1960s, very little seems to have been done since to address this issue (Wren & Bedeian, 2009). As a result, management education emphasises skill and celebrates the experiences of successful businesspeople and under emphasises the theoretical and epistemological foundations of the discipline. This thinking leaves no scope for re-examining the modus operandi of seemingly successful business practices.

The outcome of this situation is that issues such as power imbalances, distributive justice, workplace fairness, emancipation and oppression, ethics, and epistemology profoundly lack in mainstream management discourse (Goldman et al., 2015).

Against this backdrop, it is understandable that management academics will face challenges in their understanding of decolonisation as well as their reaction to decolonisation. In my experience, management scholars conceive of, and react to, decolonisation in one of two ways:

- They incorporate more local examples and local case studies into their teaching and learning activities.
- They prescribe local content (i.e. textbooks, journal articles, and conference proceedings) for syllabi.

While these steps are viewed as a point of departure, it is debatable whether they represent efforts at decolonisation at all. Although it can be argued that such efforts represent the incorporation of local knowledge into syllabi, it can also be argued that these steps denote nothing more than ‘candy coating’, avoiding the real issues associated with decolonisation (Garuba, 2015), and ‘ticking the boxes’ to satisfy heads of departments and deans of faculty. These efforts do not critically question and challenge the fundamental ontological and epistemic assumptions that management education is premised upon, it is merely perpetuating the prevalent ontological and epistemic assumptions underlying the mainstream (or ‘colonised’) management discourse and education. Heleta (2016) mentions that this approach is followed at South African universities in the majority of academic disciplines. True decolonisation demands that scholars understand the underlying ontological and epistemological assumptions that the management discourse is based on, that one critically examines and challenges these assumptions. If it is found that these assumptions do not fit the South African context, these assumptions need to be rejected, and scholars should seek to replace them with more relevant assumptions.

Sceptics might be quick to ask what should be done if ‘colonised’ assumptions do not fit our context, but there is nothing more relevant to replace them with. Such a reaction could be seen as an unwillingness to actively seek marginalised points of view and indigenous knowledge and promote these to a point where they enjoy legitimacy in the management discourse. The marginalisation and subjugation of local knowledge systems and epistemologies, coupled with relatively low literacy rates in Africa means that indigenous knowledge is mainly contained in an oral tradition, with very little documented in a formal body of knowledge. This situation should not be forwarded as an excuse to perpetuate current academic norms, values, and practices. It should rather be seen as presenting real opportunity to shape alternative points of view and knowledge systems.

Instead, the ‘nothing to replace it with’ argument should be seen as a call to action; the perfect opportunity for scholars to start documenting what has, up to now, largely been undocumented wisdom encapsulated in an oral tradition. What is being presented here is the opportunity for management scholars to actively seek the uniquely African

snippets, contributions, stories, and experiences that, over time, could inspire a body of knowledge representing African management thinking and discourse.

At the same time, it should also be stressed that the 'nothing to replace it with' argument, as well as decolonisation efforts in themselves, cannot, and should not, attempt to discard or vilify the mainstream (and per implication 'colonised') body of management knowledge. From a critical scholarship point of view, one cannot be critical of something if one does not have an understanding of what this 'something' is. If one recognises that decolonisation is a critical endeavour in itself, it is, therefore, necessary to know and understand the mainstream, colonised doctrine before one can attempt to challenge the underlying ontological and epistemic assumptions of the mainstream. Successful and meaningful decolonisation, therefore, requires us to embrace the mainstream, colonised conception of the discipline of management, and not to reject it in totality.

Within the management discourse, it is imperative that scholars embark on efforts to understand the underlying ontological and epistemological assumptions that the management discourse is based on, and that they start challenging these assumptions to further the decolonised agenda. The question, however, is how can this be done in the discipline of management? In this regard, CMS and the CMS tenet of denaturalisation offer some respite, in my view.

4. Critical management studies and decolonisation

As I have already alluded to, the decolonisation debate (in the context of management) fits perfectly into the critical management studies (CMS) discourse. At this juncture, it might be prudent to elaborate a little on this connection.

CMS, an emergent project within the broader management discourse, views management as a persuasive discourse emanating from the ideological tenets of capitalism (Sułkowski, 2019). Management, as a discourse, attempts to maintain the capitalist status quo through dominance and exploitation. CMS aims to subvert this status quo through interrogation of the seemingly objective and accepted aspects of organisational functioning, such as organisational hierarchy, managerial practices, organisational power relations, and organisational conduct (Alvesson & Willmott, 2003). Thus, CMS is highly sceptical of mainstream management thinking, as well as the epistemological foundations thereof (Goldman, 2016b). It wants to demonstrate how management practice and research has been fixated on organisational performance at the expense of societal welfare, and what the implications of this fixation are (Adler, Forbes & Willmott, 2007; Prasad & Mills, 2011). CMS rejects the political and historical neutrality that pervades mainstream management thinking and accepts a value-laden reality (Goldman, 2016a). As such, CMS creates scope for alternative epistemologies that are concerned with novel methodologies of knowledge production.

CMS thus views the mainstream management as an instrument of domination, inequality, and subjugation, which serves to enforce and maintain the doctrine of

capitalism. However, the CMS project is not merely concerned with exposing these notions of inequality and domination. As a movement which has gained momentum in (especially) Europe (Prasad & Mills, 2011), it seeks to promote the search for a better organisational future. Thus, the notion of emancipation is of prime importance to CMS, for without action for an emancipatory purpose, CMS will be meaningless (Bridgman & Stephens, 2008).

The fit, between decolonisation and CMS, is evident from the following points:

- South Africa decolonisation stems from a basic dissatisfaction with the slow pace of change that has characterised South African higher education since 1994. CMS similarly reflects a basic dissatisfaction with mainstream management thinking and how it perpetuates injustices associated with capitalism. Thus, both decolonisation and CMS embody dissatisfaction with a prevalent and pervasive status quo; perceived to be flawed and perpetuating injustices.
- Decolonisation represents a revolt against the centrality of the 'West' in the African understanding of the world and Africa's place in the world. CMS, in turn, revolts against the oppression and inequality that management enact under the auspices of the capitalist ideology. Thus, both CMS and decolonisation represent a revolt against the current status quo, which at times, is bound to cause unease and discomfort, as it demands radicalisation of both thought and action.
- Decolonisation envisions a future 'ideal' state, where Africa is at the centre of the African understanding of the world. In this sense, there is an emancipatory angle to decolonisation, as it strives to create conditions for the attainment of certain freedoms; echoing the CMS ideal of a search for a better organisational future. Furthermore, both CMS and decolonisation recognise that this emancipation will entail struggle, in one form or another, against the dominant status quo in its quest for emancipation. Thus, emancipation is a central theme in both CMS and decolonisation.
- The decolonisation discourse criticises Eurocentric epistemic processes as being discriminatory and marginalising the epistemic traditions favoured in the African context. In much the same way, CMS rejects knowledge claims based purely on the application of the scientific method at the expense of the values that underlie them. Thus, both CMS and decolonisation question the legitimacy of dominant epistemologies and methodologies of knowledge creation and promote the utilisation of different approaches to knowledge creation in the creation of more legitimate knowledge.
- Decolonisation requires that academics question and interrogate the basic assumptions that their respective disciplines are based upon and question the legitimacy of these assumptions in the (South) African context. If these assumptions are found wanting, they need to be replaced by more legitimate assumptions. In the CMS context, the basic assumptions of capitalism are constantly interrogated, and their legitimacy constantly questioned. Thus, CMS and decolonisation are not normative discourses. They do not seek to establish 'rules' to conform with, but rather they seek to explore possibilities of what is possible and attainable.

From the preceding discussion, it can be seen that there is a definite fit between decolonisation and CMS. Table 1 provides a summary of this fit between decolonisation and CMS.

Table 1: Dimensions of overlap between decolonisation and CMS

| Dimension | Decolonisation | CMS |
|---|--|--|
| Dissatisfaction with the perpetuation of injustice. | Dissatisfied with the slow pace of transformation in South African higher education. | Dissatisfied with the perpetuation of exploitative practices associated with capitalism. |
| Revolt against prevalent status quo. | Revolt against the centrality of the 'West'. | Revolt against managerialist subjugation. |
| Envisioning emancipation. | Africa is central to its understanding of the world. | Better organisational future. |
| Questioning dominant epistemologies. | Eurocentric epistemologies are discriminatory and marginalising. | Epistemologies of capitalism are too reliant on scientific method at the expense of underlying values. |
| Non-normative discourse. | Questions the underlying assumptions of the curriculum, not methods of teaching. | Questions the underlying assumptions of capitalism, not methods of organisational efficiency. |

From Table 1, one can deduce that in terms of certain dimensions, CMS is decolonisation. As CMS stands in opposition to capitalism, a product and continuation of European imperialist expansionism and colonialism (Banerjee & Linstead, 2001; Linstead, Marechal & Griffin, 2014), it represents a decolonised position as such. Similarly, decolonisation is part of the critical discourse, stemming from a subjugated populace's dissatisfaction against a dominant and unjust status quo with the end goal of creating a new, egalitarian order. Furthermore, the dimensions identified in the discussion above and contained in Table 1 can also be seen as the dimensions that need to be addressed to decolonise the management discourse in South Africa.

Having established this connection between CMS and decolonisation, it would be logical to ask how CMS could assist in striving for decolonised education in South Africa? To answer this question, we first need to turn to the three central tenets of CMS, namely anti-performativity, reflexivity, and denaturalisation (Fournier & Grey, 2000).

The first tenet of CMS, 'anti-performativity' suggests that business management knowledge should not be used exclusively to further a managerialist agenda. Mainstream management views knowledge as a tool to pursue the effectiveness of managerial practice. The anti-performative stance questions this and suggests that management knowledge should rather be used to address issues of inequality, dominance, and oppression in the organisational context to create a better form of organisation (Butler & Spoelstra, 2014; Fournier & Grey, 2000). The issue of anti-performativity is contested in the CMS discourse, with divergent views on the topic. The second of these tenets, 'reflexivity' recognises the values which direct CMS research agendas, as well as the epistemic principles that guide this research. CMS scholars reflect more on the assumptions and routines of knowledge creation and understand how culture, history and context influence knowledge, and what the consequences thereof are (Butler & Spoelstra, 2014; Goldman, 2016b). The final tenet,

‘denaturalisation’, suggests that CMS scholars do not accept management knowledge at face value. Instead, they seek out the embedded institutionalised notions within permeate the mainstream discourse and questions the legitimacy of the assumptions they are based on (Fournier & Grey, 2000; Goldman, 2016a).

It is the tenet of denaturalisation that we now turn our attention to, as I believe that this principle has vast application, and relevance, in the decolonisation debate.

5. Unpacking ‘denaturalisation’

This CMS tenet reflects the scepticism towards the mainstream management discourse that is ingrained in the CMS project as a critical endeavour. Denaturalisation urges scholars not to accept knowledge at face value, but rather to challenge the ideological foundations thereof and to expose any anomalies that might arise. Meticulous denaturalisation has the potential to unearth and promote alternative points of view that the pervasive, mainstream management discourse hitherto marginalised or stifled (Butler & Spoelstra, 2014).

Denaturalisation, therefore, represents an innate stance of ‘not taking anything for granted’, and constantly questions principles of the object under investigation. In a certain sense, denaturalisation demands of critical scholars to ‘re-problematise’ phenomena, thereby exposing the inherent ontological and epistemic orientations, interests, values, and motivations that gave rise to the contemporary conceptions of these very phenomena (Jack & Westwood, 2006). This thorough scrutiny that denaturalisation demands also has the potential to uncover the underlying historical, cultural and ideological contexts of these phenomena. In a sense, denaturalisation is a mechanism to ‘upset the apple cart’ of the image of coherence that exists in the mainstream conception of business and management. This upset is established by identifying claims and incidences that casts uncertainty over this perceived coherence (Prasad & Mills, 2011). On an epistemological level, denaturalisation casts light on how some business and management discourses and methodologies are favoured and enjoy privilege while others are marginalised or relegated to the periphery (Grey & Willmott, 2005; Prasad & Mills, 2011),

The connection between denaturalisation and decolonisation should be apparent. Denaturalisation offers a lens through which management scholars can re-problematise the basic assumptions of the colonised, mainstream management discourse and epistemologies of knowledge creation. It offers the opportunity to engage with these concepts critically and propose new assumptions if the current assumptions have no claims to legitimacy in the African context. Then, denaturalisation is proposed as a vehicle to achieve decolonisation in the academic discipline of management.

However, the same problem is encountered when viewing denaturalisation as is encountered when one confronts the issue of decolonisation. Although literature purports many points of view on, and references to, what decolonisation and denaturalisation entail, virtually nothing exists regarding normative suggestions on how to decolonise or denaturalise. Especially as far as decolonisation is concerned, this presents a major

stumbling block in the journey towards decolonised education in South Africa, as the practical implications are still unclear as far as pedagogy and research are concerned (Govender, Heyneke, Mntambo & Goldman, 2018).

Thus, in the absence of any normative debate or practical advice on either decolonisation or denaturalisation, the work of French philosopher Jacques Rancière might provide some clarity on the question of 'how'. As indicated, this article proposes that denaturalisation be employed as a vehicle in the pursuit of decolonisation in management discourse. Therefore, the work of Rancière will be engaged to suggest a more pragmatic view to denaturalisation.

Jacques Rancière is best known for his work on ideology and working-class identity, although the idea of emancipation pervades his work (Huault, Perret & Spicer, 2014). It is his ideas on emancipation that will be engaged with here, as I believe that Rancière's conception of emancipation resounds with the notion of denaturalisation. One might ask how ideas on emancipation will inform pragmatism towards denaturalisation, but this becomes clear if one equates the notion of being denaturalised to the notion of attaining freedom. Freedom can be perceived as a particular capacity or 'state of being'. It is thus an end in itself, which involves acts and processes of 'making free'. Thus, if being free (i.e. freedom) is the result, the end state, then the activities and processes associated with seeking freedom denote the realm of emancipation (Blauner, 1964). Hence, if freedom is the end, then emancipation is the means to that end. The link between freedom and emancipation should also be apparent. In the context of denaturalisation, being denaturalised, or developing denaturalised management knowledge, would entail acts and processes of denaturalisation. Denaturalisation is, therefore, how denaturalised management knowledge is sought. Thus, the result is being denaturalised (possessing denaturalised knowledge); the 'state of being'; the freedom attained. Denaturalisation is the emancipatory means by which this freedom is achieved. This line of reasoning leads one to conclude that 'being denaturalised' is freedom, while 'denaturalisation' is emancipation.

In Rancière's conception of emancipation, three ideas stand out, achieving equality, creating dissensus, and reshaping the 'distribution of the sensible' (Huault et al., 2014). These will briefly be expounded upon.

5.1 Achieving equality

For Rancière, any form of social inquiry needs to start with a basic acceptance of the notion of equality amongst humans, as opposed to inequality between them (Huault et al., 2014). This viewpoint does not imply that he ignores or downplays the inequalities and exploitative forces that characterise organisational life. Rather, he asserts that these are forces that create inequality and that if these forces are not present, equality exists amongst people. Equality is, therefore, something that needs to be asserted within society. Rancière is adamant that equality is not an ideal consigned to the future, but an imperative, a founding premise, that needs to be actualised in the present (Badiou, 2006).

Where inequality is prevalent, emancipation thus involves enforcing the idea of equality as something that is not utopian but innate (Rancière, 1987). As opposed to most emancipation-oriented organisation studies, premised in inequality between people in the organisational context, Rancière rejects the notion that their hierarchical position determines people's potential and that they are thus diminished to structural positions and roles (Huault et al., 2014). In other words, Rancière is at loggerheads with the notion of voluntary servitude, where the dominated workers are estranged from the management elite, does not know what is oppressing them or why, and therefore resigns to his fate (Costas & Fleming, 2009). Rancière believes that the dominated are very aware of their subjugation, and that emancipation does not start with having this exploitation being revealed to them (Rancière, 2006). Instead, Rancière suggests that the dominated need to attain a vision of themselves beyond the domination they find themselves in, which can only be achieved by foregoing certain necessities that keep them 'in their place' (Huault et al., 2014).

For Rancière, emancipation does not come about through actions of the 'enlightened scholar' that sensitises the dominated to their subjugation and mediates a vision of a better future state (Alvesson & Willmott, 1992; Huault et al., 2014). Rather, it comes from trusting the intellectual capability of the dominated. It, therefore, involves learning to become equal in an unequal world (Rancière, 2009a).

5.2 Creating dissensus

Rancière further suggests that the politics of emancipation are not based on collective opinions of consensus, but rather occur with an expression of dissensus (Rancière, 1995). He challenges the argument that emancipation comes about through the notion of 'collective deliberation', which contests that emancipation is the result of finding common ground, thus involving negotiation and agreement (Dryzek, 2002). Rancière takes a distinct turn away from the 'collective deliberation' principle and argues that emancipatory politics do not involve reaching consensus, but rather that it involves a distinct breaking of consensus (Rancière, 2009b). In his conception of emancipatory politics, Rancière purports that achieving consensus results in nothing more than pacification, which represses emancipation. Rather, emancipation requires challenges to the consensus that dominant groupings define; challenges that these groupings perceive as acts of conflict (Rancière, 1998).

The idea of creating consensus can be seen as a movement towards a zone of comfort, where the creation of consensus implies that people are sheltered from discomfort. In stark contrast, the idea of breaking consensus, and thus creating dissensus, involves moving out of one's comfort zone. For Rancière, dissensus involves deliberately experiencing discomfort and lament. It is, according to Rancière, in this process of struggle where the moment and experience of emancipation is encountered (Huault et al., 2014).

5.3 Reconfiguring the distribution of the sensible

A third point Rancière purports on emancipation is what he refers to as a ‘reconfiguration of the share of the sensible’ (Rancière, 2004; Rancière, 2009a). This reconfiguration implies turning to marginalised claims and discourses and interrogating these against what is understood to be sensible. In so doing, the parameters and substance of what can be perceived as sensible and conceptualised within the sensible are reconfigured. This reconfiguration comes about when assumed shared understandings of what is known and possible and conditions leading to shared understanding are contested and disrupted (Huault et al., 2014). To fully understand this notion, it is necessary to understand what Rancière means by ‘the sensible’ itself.

Rancière’s conception of what he terms ‘the sensible’, can best be understood if one thinks of ‘the sensible’ as a system. This system contains certain knowledge that legitimises our point of view about a particular aspect of reality and the possibilities associated with it. However, this system also contains norms and values that act as parameters for what the system deems legitimate. Furthermore, the system also consists of role players that subscribe to the norms and values of the system. Some of these role players are not very visible, but others are visible, and through their engagement with the system, they help define the norms and values of the system (Rancière, 2004).

Thus, to achieve emancipation, Rancière purports that what is needed is a reconfiguration of this system of the sensible. This reconfiguration would assume the guise of a fundamental shake-up of this system (Ruby, 2009), for example, occurring when issues previously deemed irrelevant to the sensible or marginalised by it, now become issues of importance, or when people that previously played no part in the sensible become prominent role players in the system and are now deemed to be of importance to the sensible. The net effect thereof is that the norms and values that define the parameters of the sensible are now altered to accommodate these new issues or people with their points of view (Huault et al., 2014).

However, the mere fact that once marginalised, or once irrelevant claims and people rise to importance within the sensible does not automatically mean that these will reconfigure, or claim a share of, the sensible. They do not, in other words, gain legitimacy just because they are there. They need to prove that they can contribute to what is known about, and what can be known about, the sensible (Calás & Smircich, 2006). In other words, they need to prove that their reconfiguration of the sensible is in the best interest of the sensible; that it will work to the betterment of the sensible. This reconfiguration would imply critical reflection and questioning of ingrained ideas that emancipatory struggles and strugglers hold; and the outcomes they wish to achieve to ascertain if these struggles can contribute to the sensible at all, and (if they can contribute) which ideas and proponents are best suited to do so (Huault et al., 2014).

This section has unpacked the CMS concept of denaturalisation and has honed in on the work of Jacques Rancière as a possible way to view denaturalisation. The ensuing

discussion will attempt to contextualise Rancière's work in terms of the concept of 'denaturalisation'; to provide pragmatic suggestions on how to pursue decolonisation within management scholarship and pedagogy.

6. From Rancière to decolonisation through denaturalisation

To apply the thoughts of Rancière to the notion of denaturalisation as a vehicle to decolonise management education in South Africa, one has to conceive Rancière's work in a somewhat novel way. Although Rancière's ideas on equality and emancipation apply to human beings as the subject of his work, the application to denaturalisation requires that one conceives this subject differently. Instead of human beings as the subject, I propose that knowledge claims should be seen as a specific dimension of the human subject for which equality is to be asserted and for which emancipation is sought.

By viewing knowledge claims as a dimension of the human subject upon which Rancière's thoughts are applicable, the discussion will proceed by imagining Rancière's three central emancipatory ideas as intellectual 'tools' to denaturalise management thinking. Before proceeding with the discussion, it is necessary to emphasise that 'knowledge claims' referred to in this discussion will imply management knowledge forthcoming from an intellectual process that is distinctly decolonised. Furthermore, the discussion views decolonisation as the desired end state; the freedom that is to be achieved through the emancipatory acts of denaturalisation. This view also implies that the end state might not be concrete, but rather an idealisation. In other words, the end state (in this case, decolonised management education) could be a state that can never be fully achieved, but rather one that scholars constantly strive for. An ideal that directs and necessitates constant reflection of the most salient tenets of the discourse as a whole.

In terms of Rancière's notion of achieving equality, scholars need to reflect upon and challenge their ontological assumptions. Scholars, as human subjects, cannot assert the equality of knowledge claims if they are not convinced of the legitimacy thereof. Scholars need to assume, and believe, that all knowledge claims are therefore innately equal and that inequality between different knowledge claims does not automatically exist because of the global origin of these claims or because of the epistemological foundations of such knowledge claims. Achieving equality, therefore, needs to begin in the belief systems of scholars themselves.

In the management discourse, for example, there is a long-standing debate raging in terms of the so-called 'paradigm wars' (Denzin, 2010), which represents a tension between positivist and social constructivist points of view. Although not as prevalent today, undertones of 'paradigmatic tension' still abound in management and organisation studies as a field of inquiry (Terrell, 2012). However, to denaturalise and achieve decolonisation, such tensions must be ceased. The constant bickering and posturing that takes place within the parameters of this 'paradigm war' is obstructionist and destructive to the progress of the scholarly project (Denzin, 2010). Although it is

recognised that scholars are schooled in different traditions, scholars must acknowledge different scholastic traditions and learn more about them. It is also recognised that a scholar cannot be expected to know everything as far as methodological research issues are concerned. However, every discipline has a mainstream, dominant view, with a couple of peripheral views surrounding it. Management as a discourse, for example, is predominantly a positivist field of enquiry, but social constructivism and critical theory (in the form of CMS), are peripheral traditions in management. The point is that irrespective of which tradition scholars were schooled in, they must acquire some level of knowledge concerning all three traditions to contribute meaningfully to the discourse. If one does not carry any or sufficient knowledge about traditions outside of those you were schooled in, one will view all claims through one lens only, and one will not be able to conceive of all knowledge claims as equal.

As knowledge claims represent a dimension of the human subject, in this case, the scholar, the scholar acts as a 'champion' to contest the equality (and therefore legitimacy) of knowledge claims. Rancière is insistent that emancipation is not dependent upon the actions of a champion in the form of an enlightened scholar, but rather comes about through faith in the intellectual capability of the dominated, as detailed earlier in this article. The situation is, however, different if one seeks emancipation for knowledge claims. The human subject – the scholar – can reason, and Rancière suggests that this capability needs to be utilised to learn to be equal in an unequal world. As knowledge claims are a dimension of the human subjects, these creators or proponents of knowledge claims need to take it upon themselves to assert the legitimacy of knowledge claims. This assertion is where the belief system of the individual scholar, outlined above, is of paramount importance. Scholars need to believe in the legitimacy of the knowledge claims they wish to assert equality upon, as the legitimacy they seek will not come automatically, but will have to be fought for. This struggle will have to take on the guise of active intellectual activism, where debates are entered into, and platforms are created to engage with these knowledge claims to assert this equality. If one acknowledges that emancipation involves struggle, then this is one of the struggles that knowledge claims, as a dimension of the human subject, will have to endure to assert their legitimacy.

In terms of translating Rancière's notion of creating dissensus to denaturalisation, this would require conscious and deliberate action on behalf of the scholar, as a champion of the knowledge claim, to openly challenge and disrupt mainstream, conventional thinking and create controversy. However, these actions should not be seen as being obstructionist and controversial just for the mere sake of being so. As denaturalisation and decolonisation's milieu is the realm of scholarship, the antagonist creating the dissensus should bear in mind that ultimately the end goal is to bring about a reconceptualisation of management as a discourse. Therefore, it is vital to realise that whatever dissensus is formed, the knowledge claim that is being championed must adhere to the principle of rigour. However, this is defined within the parameters of the epistemic tradition from where it hails. The human subject, the scholar, should stake his/her claim to be taken seriously by the rest of the scholarly community.

As alluded to, creating dissensus requires deliberate action on the part of the creator of the knowledge claim. Such action could take many different forms, but the overriding principle here should be constant engagement with the mainstream convention on various platforms. 'Platforms' would refer to, for example, academic conferences, scholarly journals, scholarly books, workshops, colloquia, and other instances where scholarly output and intellectual material is showcased. Only through constant and persistent engagement can dissensus be created; not only entailing engagement via existing platforms but should also be sought in platforms that do not currently exist. Existing platforms are usually bastions of the mainstream convention, and therefore represents quite an unequal playing field if one wants to champion a view that challenges convention. It is necessary when addressing this inequality, to create new platforms that will be more susceptible to unconventional ideas. Again, this would require great personal effort and struggle on the part of the scholar.

Actions that lead to the creation of dissensus will, over time, create a situation where the knowledge claim becomes a peripheral point of view. It is under these conditions that the knowledge claim is now ready to claim a share of the sensible, and thereby reconfigure the share of the sensible, which is the third notion central to Rancière's conception of emancipation. As Rancière suggests, the sensible can only be reconfigured if a fundamental 'shake up' occurs within it. He continues by purporting that it is in the realm of marginalised claims and discourses that such shake-ups originate, as very often, such marginalised claims and discourses enter the sensible to a point where the sensible, as a system, can no longer ignore them.

Thus, once enough dissensus has been created and the system of the sensible, which in the context of this discussion is the mainstream management discourse and the associated scholarly community, can no longer ignore such knowledge claims, the reconfiguration of the sensible can commence. It is vital that this reconfiguration is conscious and planned. As the sensible contains norms and values acting as parameters of what the system deems legitimate or not, any reconfiguration of the sensible must involve a sense of knowing which of these norms and values are to be impacted and redefined and how. Ultimately, this redefinition of key norms and values upon which the sensible rests will redefine the parameters of what is deemed legitimate.

Returning to the example of the 'paradigm wars', it is apparent that the interpretive or social constructivist paradigm, which employs predominantly qualitative methodologies, has grown in prominence over the past two decades. However, this has not always been the case. Qualitative scholars have had to struggle for quite some time for legitimacy. In recent times, however, it has been recognised that qualitative research cannot be ignored, and management journals adverse to qualitative work now increasingly publish qualitative work. Conferences are more open to qualitative work, and more and more masters' and doctoral students are attempting qualitative studies in South Africa. Even certain prominent South African management scholars, who were once fervent opponents of qualitative scholarship and saw no legitimacy in it, have started to dabble in the realm of the qualitative. Thus, dissensus has been created, and the sensible could

no longer ignore it and has subsequently embraced qualitative scholarship as equal to quantitative scholarship, thereby ensuring that qualitative scholarship has claimed a share of the sensible, and has reconfigured the sensible as a system.

However, this reconfiguration has occurred far too organically, in my opinion. Although the qualitative scholarship is burgeoning in South Africa, in many instances, there is insufficient understanding of the principles of the interpretive/social constructivist paradigm that is normally associated with qualitative methods. Thus, one finds a qualitative scholarship that is embarked upon from a quantitative and positivist frame of reference. The point is that not enough engagement has taken place between qualitative proponents and the system of the sensible in the form of debate through, inter alia, interpretive/social constructivist workshops, colloquia, and plenary sessions at conferences. Scholars have thus not consciously reshaped the boundaries of the sensible to include sufficient appreciation of the interpretivist/social constructivist paradigm. On the other hand, this situation might in itself lead to stimulating and emergent conceptions of what research could entail.

Table 2 below summarises the discussion presented above regarding how the end state of decolonisation in management education can be pursued by using the notion of denaturalisation. As discussed, in this sense, the three central notions of Rancierian emancipation philosophy are proposed as a guide to denaturalise.

Table 2: Denaturalising actions for decolonisation

| Assumptions | Asserting equality | Creating dissensus | Reconfiguring the sensible |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Knowledge claim is rigorous | Reflect upon and challenge own ontological assumptions | Deliberate action via targeted, existing platforms | Conscious, deliberate engagement with the sensible |
| Knowledge claim has decolonised value | Champion knowledge claims | Create platforms to showcase claims | Engage with underlying norms and values of the sensible |
| Engagement by the scholar | Intellectual activism | Persevere until claims cannot be ignored | Insistence on making a claim commonplace on platforms |
| Stance of the scholar | Antagonistic stance | Antagonistic stance | Cooperative stance |

Table 2 moves from two basic assumptions that: (1) knowledge claims that profess to be decolonised should possess sufficient rigour to be classified as scholarly knowledge; and (2) knowledge claims that profess to further the decolonisation agenda are decolonised claims.

Moving from these assumptions, Table 2 presents a quick reference of the most salient points expounded upon in the discussion above. One point to take cognisance of in Table 2 refers to the stance that the scholar should take as the subject of the emancipatory struggle of knowledge claims. In terms of asserting equality, and creating dissensus, scholars need to assume an antagonistic, uncompromising stance. Necessary, as the individual scholar, as the champion of these knowledge claims, needs to assure that the sensible as

a system reaches a point where these claims can no longer be ignored. If this stance is not assumed, the likelihood exists that the scholars' effort will diminish and eventually disappear as the sensible constantly pushes back through efforts to marginalise and ignore these claims. Only once the sensible as a system has acknowledged these claims, can the scholar as champion change their stance to be more cooperative, as the sensible gets reconfigured through engagement.

7. Conclusion

This article has shown that parallels exist between decolonisation as an intellectual project and CMS. From this, one can conclude that decolonisation is a form of critical scholarship and can potentially benefit from principles applied in other areas of critical inquiry. To this end, denaturalisation was proposed as a vehicle through which decolonisation can be sought. However, in the absence of a normative of pragmatic discourse on denaturalisation, Jacques Rancière's emancipation ideas can act as guiding principles to denaturalise mainstream management thinking with the eye on decolonising the discourse.

However, it needs to be acknowledged that denaturalising along the proposed lines to move towards a decolonised management curriculum is not a quick process, nor is it likely to occur in huge strides. On the contrary, when dealing with issues such as decolonisation, one has to acknowledge that this is likely to entail much effort with very little initial return, that it will take a long time before the system of the sensible is reconfigured sufficiently, and that 'progress' will imply very small incremental advancements. Conversely, decolonisation cannot be left to evolve organically, nor should it be left to other authorities (such as governments or university management committees) to determine what guise decolonisation in the management discourse in South Africa will assume. The onus is on the academics, the South African management scholars themselves to forge their destiny, and to be part of the conversation, irrespective of how uncomfortable, difficult, and time-consuming, it might be.

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Untrepreneurship: Undoing the myth of entrepreneurship as a development apparatus

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Abstract

The current theoretical framing of entrepreneurship includes several diverse phenomena under the same conceptual umbrella, yet the terms are often conflated and used interchangeably. Based on the assumption that anything included under this conceptual umbrella contributes to economic development and job creation, entrepreneurship has become appropriated as a development tool in the Global South, where poverty and unemployment are rife. This study introduces the term ‘entrepreneurship as a development apparatus’ (EDA) that is defined as the implementation of entrepreneurship support interventions (such as training, incubation and funding) in economically marginalised communities, based on the assumption that these interventions lead to economic development and job creation. EDA is then taken out from under the conceptual entrepreneurship umbrella, and placed in a post-development theory context, showing that insight can be gained when the critical debate on entrepreneurship is moved beyond the constraints of the mainstream entrepreneurship paradigm. Drawing from the development debate this article argues that the current theoretical entrepreneurship paradigm has proven unable to provide answers to the failure of EDA, and thus calls for the rejection of the entire notion of EDA as a form of entrepreneurship.

1. Introduction

The current theoretical framing of entrepreneurship includes several diverse phenomena under the same conceptual umbrella: from opportunity entrepreneurs to necessity entrepreneurs to survivalist entrepreneurs; from small to medium to micro-

enterprises; rural entrepreneurship, corporate entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship; to name but a few. In the process of establishing an inclusive definition, the term has come to mean both everything and nothing (Da Costa & Silva Saraiva, 2012:589). The terms 'entrepreneur' and 'entrepreneurship' have been misappropriated to the extent that they now include more or less all of humanity (Poole, 2018:41). 'Entrepreneur' is by no means a homogenous concept, but mainstream research continuously conceptualises it as a uniform phenomenon, and in doing so protects several mainstream assumptions from being questioned (Calás, Smircich & Bourne, 2009:553).

One such assumption is that entrepreneurship is a silver bullet for job creation and economic growth. This narrative has become normalised in the mainstream entrepreneurship discourse – both scholarly and public (Authors, 2020). Based on this assumption, development organisations and governments in the developing world have implemented numerous policies and interventions to stimulate the small- and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sector, believing that it is a catalyst for growth, job creation and poverty reduction (Poole, 2018:35). However, only a handful of these SMEs survive past the first three years of their existence and only show potential to contribute significantly to job creation and economic growth. In this way, entrepreneurship has become appropriated as a development apparatus, a phenomenon especially observed in the Global South. The term 'entrepreneurship as a development apparatus' (EDA) is introduced in this article, distinguishing this phenomenon from other phenomena included under the conceptual umbrella. EDA is defined as the implementation of entrepreneurship support interventions (such as training, incubation and funding) in economically marginalised communities, based on the assumption that these interventions lead to economic development and job creation. Governments and development institutions support EDA across the Global South.

Critical entrepreneurship scholars have for some time called for the reframing of entrepreneurship from a purely economic to a social change activity (i.e. Calás et al., 2009; Steyaert & Katz, 2004b), yet mainstream entrepreneurship theory fails to do so and continually imposes presupposed constructions onto an ambiguous social reality (Achtenhagen & Welter, 2007:198; Alvesson & Deetz, 2000:55; Alvesson & Willmott, 2003:23; Calás et al., 2009:553; Tedmanson, Verduyn, Essers & Gartner, 2012:532; Urban, 2010:42). As a consequence, even if the failure of EDA is recognised, research, examining the flawed implementation of entrepreneurship policies, programmes and interventions, remains limited. The structural roots and conceptual framing of everything included under the entrepreneurship umbrella are never questioned.

The theoretical physicist Albert Einstein noted that the answers to a problem cannot be sought within the very paradigm that created the problem (Esteva & Escobar, 2017:2569). This article suggests that the current, largely positivist theoretical grounding of mainstream entrepreneurship theory is inadequate to address the large-scale failure of EDA in the Global South. When entrepreneurship is appropriated as a development apparatus, it becomes imperative to reframe it conceptually in a development context. In not doing so, EDA remains exempted from the rich, ongoing discourse on development,

alternative development and post-development that may potentially inform the failure of entrepreneurship to live up to its promise of job creation and economic growth. It is proposed that when EDA is viewed from a post-development perspective, the answers to the problem become surprisingly obvious.

The contribution of this article is twofold. Firstly, it advances the nascent field of critical entrepreneurship studies by viewing mainstream entrepreneurship theory through a post-development theory lens. Secondly, it presents EDA as a complex, interdisciplinary field of study that begs to be researched beyond the constraints of mainstream entrepreneurship theory.

2. A short overview of development and development theory

In 1949, the then President of the United States of America, Harry Truman, said in his inaugural address:

More than half the people of the world are living in conditions approaching misery. Their food is inadequate. They are victims of disease. Their economic life is primitive and stagnant. Their poverty is a handicap and a threat both to them and to more prosperous areas. (Brigg, 2002:424)

This early mainstream vision of development is an extension of modernisation theory and paints a picture of an ‘undeveloped’ world in dire need of being rescued from an undesired, unpleasant state of misery and poverty (Matthews, 2005:97). The ‘development project’ is presented as the vehicle through which the ‘underdeveloped’ world would be rescued and elevated to a superior state of ‘development’. Modernisation theory constructs a binary, dichotomous world where the characteristics of “us, the developed (who have)” are contrasted with “them, the underdeveloped (who need)” (Esteva & Escobar, 2017:2564; Matthews, 2005:98). This view of development assumes the characteristics of the ‘developed’ world to be the ideal state to which the ‘underdeveloped’ world must aspire.

By the late 1970s, neo-liberalism begins to inform mainstream development theory. The key premise that distinguishes it from modernisation theory is that governments are considered a hindrance to economic growth and should therefore not interfere with development (Matthews, 2005:100). International organisations such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank thus begin implementing programmes to liberalise the economies of the ‘underdeveloped’ world and elevate them to a state of ‘development’. Both modernisation theory and the influence of neo-liberalism assume the qualities, characteristics, values and institutions of the ‘developed’ world to be universal and desired by the ‘underdeveloped’ world. The term Global South has emerged to refer to the spaces and peoples outside of North America and Western Europe that are associated with this undesired state of ‘underdevelopment’.

Africa's colonial history has led to the view that "the continent is essentially inadequate, a place of systemic failure in terms of its ability to engage with and partake in the modern world" (Andreasson, 2017:2635). With the end of colonialism, Africa is (presumed to be) hungry for answers on how to become more 'developed', and thus the modern development project is born. The colonial discourse strongly influences the development narrative (Wilson, 2017:2686), and the answers brought by 'development' are deeply rooted in the principles of neo-liberalism.

Matthews (2005:109) identifies three assumptions that are made across the different schools of development theory:

- The world consists of 'developed' and 'less developed' regions, which can be compared to one another in terms of their level of development;
- Western societies are 'developed', other societies less so; and
- In aiming to develop, the 'less[-]developed' regions must aim to transform their societies in such a way that they are more similar to the societies of the 'developed' regions in certain key aspects.

By the 1980s, the development community became disillusioned by 'development' and recognised the "foolishness of adopting a universal definition of the good life" (Esteva & Escobar, 2017:2561). The dark side of 'development' can no longer go unheeded: increased cultural homogenisation (specifically Westernisation); environmental destruction; the failure to deliver on promises such as poverty reduction, income inequity, economic growth and an increase in standards of living (Matthews, 2004:377). The realisation is that the mainstream view of 'development' cannot be regarded as a panacea for all people living in poverty (Andreasson, 2017:2644). Critics call for alternative approaches to development that draw from, amongst others, dependency theory, the human development approach and sustainable development (Matthews, 2005:101-108). These alternative approaches involve a more bottom-up, people-centred, participatory approach to development, the modernisation of endogenous traditions and a focus on human development indexes as a measure of development (Nederveen Pieterse, 1998:351). These alternative development approaches propose different means to reach a universally desired state of development, but the premise of 'development' in itself is not questioned and criticised. To a large extent, these alternative development criticisms have been co-opted in the mainstream development discourse and practice over the past decades (Nederveen Pieterse, 1998:344).

By the early 1990s, several scholars voiced concern that 'development' has not only failed but is doing more harm than good (Matthews, 2004:373) and that the so-called beneficiaries should rather be considered victims of development (Demaria & Kothari, 2017:2589). These scholars move beyond critiquing the different approaches to development to questioning the underlying premise, structure and motives of development (Nederveen Pieterse, 2000:176), specifically the structural roots in modernity, capitalism, state domination and patriarchy (Demaria & Kothari, 2017:2589). Post-development theory emerges and calls for the radical rejection of the entire development paradigm, theory

and practice (Demaria & Kothari, 2017:2593). Escobar (1995:215) summarises the main premises of post-development theory as follows:

- an interest not in development alternatives but in alternatives to development, thus a rejection of the entire paradigm;
- an interest in local culture and knowledge;
- a critical stance towards established scientific discourses;
- the defence and promotion of localised, pluralistic grassroots movements.

Since the publication of *The Development Dictionary* in 1992, more than one strand of post-development theory has emerged. Ziai (2004) identifies two strands: neo-populism and sceptical post-development. Neo-populism can also be seen as ‘anti-development’ that rejects the entire development paradigm while romanticising endogenous culture, tradition and community. The sceptical approach to post-development “recognises the political and economic power structures within which any fruitful debate on radical alternatives to the status quo must be located” (Andreasson, 2017:2635).

The critique against mainstream development theory is not limited to only one school of critique or even one strand of post-development critique. Post-development theory itself has also been widely discussed and critiqued (Ziai, 2004:1045). What can be learned from seven decades of debate in development theory is that a radical critique of mainstream development theory has advanced and enriched the field as a whole. Post-development theory thus provides a tool for radically deconstructing mainstream development theory, exposing the assumptions inherent in the development ideology (Harcourt, 2017:2715).

3. The entrepreneurship theory impasse

The normative capitalist ideology is built on the assumption that the entrepreneurial enterprise is the only possible model for generating wealth, income and employment in society (Da Costa & Silva Saraiva, 2012:609) and therefore “the more entrepreneurs the merrier” (Verduijn & Essers, 2013:614). The mainstream entrepreneurship ideology further drives the assumption that, given a chance, anyone can be a successful entrepreneur with an ever-expanding wealth of choice and economic security (Fairclough, 2013:16) and that entrepreneurship can be taught (Kuratko, 2005:580). Because of the perceived relationship between entrepreneurship and economic growth, and the perceived relationship between economic growth and development, entrepreneurial development policies and initiatives are also implemented to foster the entrepreneurial capabilities of societies in the ‘underdeveloped’ world (Kuada, 2015:148).

This interest of policymakers and politicians in ‘entrepreneurship’ as a panacea for reviving failing economies has led to ideological ambiguity in the term (Steyaert & Katz, 2004a:188). What is more, the concepts included under the entrepreneurship umbrella are applied without any consistency, expecting the same results in terms of economic growth and job creation from anything and everything labelled ‘entrepreneur’ (Poole, 2018:35). In a Global South context, for instance, the term is appropriated in referring

to a phenomenon like ‘corporate entrepreneurship’, and also to EDA, from necessity to opportunity entrepreneurs, from high-growth enterprises to survivalists, and everything in between. The current theoretical grounding of the entrepreneurship discourse fails to interrogate the assumption that all types of entrepreneurship are essentially the same, and that it can be expected to contribute equally to job creation and economic growth (Smit & Pretorius, 2021).

EDA is hailed as a panacea for job creation and economic growth globally, yet it fails to create any empowerment or upward mobility for the marginalised communities it aims to emancipate and does not contribute significantly to job creation (Honig, 2017:453; Naudé, 2011; Shane, 2009). The mainstream entrepreneurship narrative has normalised the assumption that entrepreneurship (in all its forms) is a positive economic activity that is necessarily a successful vehicle for economic growth and job creation. Any failure of entrepreneurship to deliver on this promise is viewed from a positivist, performative perspective. The very theoretical grounding and conceptualisation of the mainstream entrepreneurship ideology are never questioned. In other words, the assumption is that anything and everything included under the entrepreneurship umbrella is a desirable given, and research remains limited to studies that contribute to the improved effectiveness or that build a better model or understanding of the entrepreneurship phenomenon (Fournier & Grey, 2000:88). These uncritical, performative studies that aim to increase the perceived value of EDA as a catalyst for economic growth and job creation have become supportive of political hegemony and epistemic violence (Authors, 2020).

Internationally, a handful of scholars have become critical of the entrepreneurship ideology. These studies, inter alia, highlight how the homogenous conceptualisation of ‘the entrepreneur’ can lead to exploitation and ideological hegemony (i.e. Achtenhagen & Welter, 2007; Calás et al., 2009; Da Costa & Silva Saraiva, 2012; Jones & Murtola, 2012; Ogbor, 2000; Verduijn, Dey, Tedmanson & Essers, 2014) and that insights can be gained from reframing entrepreneurship as largely an economic activity with possible social outcomes, to entrepreneurship as a social activity with several possible outcomes (Calás et al., 2009:553). However, none of these critical studies acknowledges the EDA phenomenon, and it is thus not explicitly included in the rich, ongoing debate around development, alternative development and post-development.

This article argues that mainstream entrepreneurship theory – and EDA in particular – had entered the same theoretical impasse that mainstream development theory encountered in the 1980s when critical development theorists concluded that “no amount of improved implementation will be useful; rather we need to reconsider the ideas informing the Project” (Matthews, 2005:96). Post-development goes beyond merely proposing alternative development interventions by calling for the rejection of the entire notion of development (Demaria & Kothari, 2017:2593). Drawing from the development debate this article argues that the current theoretical entrepreneurship paradigm has proven to be unable to provide answers to the failure of EDA, and thus calls for the rejection of the entire notion of EDA as a form of entrepreneurship.

One critique against post-development theory is that it rejects the notion of development yet fails to put alternatives to development on the table (Ziai, 2017:2548). It can be argued, however, that even if post-development theory fails to construct alternatives to development, it does force a change in the mainstream development discourse by challenging the assumptions upon which the development ideology is built (Andreasson, 2017:2643). Post-development thus proves a flexible platform for critique within the broader development framework. Drawing from post-development theory, the aim of this article is not merely to provide a dualistic opposition to mainstream entrepreneurship theory, but opening a wider, dynamic, critical debate of EDA from a post-development perspective. By subjecting mainstream entrepreneurship theory to post-development theory critique, this study extends the nascent field of critical entrepreneurship studies. It furthermore calls for the rejection of the entire notion of EDA as a successful vehicle for job creation and economic growth. Even if the outcome of a critical debate resulting from this study does not lead to the outright rejection of EDA, it will at the very least contribute to the acceptance of EDA based on theoretical reasoning rather than the current ideological assumptions.

4. Aim and objective

By introducing EDA and subjecting entrepreneurship theory to the critique of post-development theory, this study aims to do the following:

- Reassess the ontological and epistemological assumptions inherent in mainstream entrepreneurship theory by drawing attention to EDA.
- Provide an alternative lens for critique against mainstream entrepreneurship theory.
- Extend the debate on entrepreneurship theory and praxis beyond the constraints of the mainstream entrepreneurship paradigm.

5. Applying post-development critique to entrepreneurship theory

In the following section, the main arguments of post-development theory are laid out in a simplified manner and applied to EDA. In doing so, the assumptions inherent in mainstream theory – and specifically EDA – are highlighted, showing that insight can be gained when the critical debate on entrepreneurship is moved beyond the constraints of the mainstream entrepreneurship paradigm.

5.1 Theoretical grounding and assumptions underlying mainstream development and mainstream entrepreneurship theory

Early development theory, an extension of modernisation theory, presents a dichotomous, unequal world: on the one hand, an ‘underdeveloped’ world in dire need to be rescued from an undesired, unpleasant state of misery and poverty, and on the other hand the

‘developed’ world that presents the ideal to which all societies must aspire (Matthews, 2005:97). Development is introduced as the vehicle through which the ‘underdeveloped’ world can be rescued and elevated to a superior state of ‘development’. Early mainstream development theorists share the consensus that ‘underdevelopment’ is the cause of global inequality and merely differ in their prescription of what development interventions would address the problem and how these interventions should be implemented (Demaria & Kothari, 2017:2592). The desirability of development and the assumptions underlying the construct are not called into question. Even before the introduction of post-development theory, one of the earliest critiques against mainstream development theory is that it is built on several taken-for-granted presumptions and that the prevailing positivist orthodoxy creates a crisis (Harriss, 2005:18). Development theory and practice are furthermore criticised for legitimising the imposition of its ideology by presenting development theory as ‘science’ (Nederveen Pieterse, 1998:360). This ‘science’ reduces the concept of development to “linear, unidirectional material and financial growth” (Demaria & Kothari, 2017:2593).

Post-development theory introduces the idea that the failure of the global development project is not to be sought in the policies, instruments or indicators that are implemented to bring about this linear, unidirectional growth. Rather, the possibility that the theoretical conceptualisation of development is inherently flawed has to be investigated. Post-development theorists have concluded that the solution to the development conundrum can no longer be sought in the paradigmatic frame that created it (Esteva & Escobar, 2017:2569). Transformative alternatives to the dominant paradigm have to be pursued (Demaria & Kothari, 2017:2589). Post-development theory is therefore not interested in more development alternatives, but rather in alternatives to development (Escobar, 1995:215).

Critical entrepreneurship scholars call for the ideological scrutiny of mainstream entrepreneurship theory (Ogbor, 2000:611). They have highlighted several unsubstantiated theoretical assumptions underlying the ideology of entrepreneurship (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000:55; Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013:129; Alvesson & Willmott, 2003:23; Bygrave, 2007:20; Urban, 2010:42). For instance, entrepreneurial diversity is backgrounded (Ogbor, 2000:629) and the terms for different phenomena included under the entrepreneurship umbrella are used interchangeably and inconsistently (Poole, 2018). As a result, the entrepreneurship ideology drives the assumption that all types of entrepreneurship are vehicles through which people can be lifted out of poverty (Authors, 2020). Mainstream entrepreneurship research also places an exaggerated emphasis on positivist ontologies and the associated quantitative methodologies (Bygrave, 2007:25). The field lacks methodological diversity and rigour (Neergaard & Ulhøi, 2007:1). By describing observed phenomena through mathematical means in a quantitative method, researchers assume that they have created knowledge (Van der Linde, 2016:38), and the knowledge is presented as indisputable science. This “fetishisation with positivism” (Ruggunan, 2016:112) may be producing research that is technically competent yet is becoming increasingly formulaic and dull (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013:130). The positivist paradigm not only fails to question the assumptions underlying established literature (Alvesson &

Sandberg, 2013:129; Bygrave, 2007:20) but it proves grossly inadequate to understand and explain the complexity of the entrepreneurial phenomenon (Ogbor, 2000:623). Despite regular calls for expanding the type of research designs and analytical approaches in entrepreneurship studies, qualitative studies remain underrepresented in mainstream journals globally (Neergaard & Ulhøi, 2007:1-2) and the Global South (Authors, 2020).

The repeated and abysmal failure of EDA impels scholars to recognise that the reigning paradigmatic dominance may not lead to the betterment of civil society, but merely to the maintenance of an academic institutional status quo (Goldman, 2016:5). The critique of EDA has to move beyond seeking alternative ways of implementing policies, instruments and indicators for bettering entrepreneurship. Answers cannot be found within the same paradigmatic frame that created the problem. Merely redefining entrepreneurship to include all types of social phenomena (such as necessity entrepreneurs or survivalist entrepreneurs) will not bring about the paradigmatic break needed to shed light on the failure of EDA to contribute significantly to job creation and economic development. Drawing from post-development theory, this study propositions that:

P1: The current conceptual frame of entrepreneurship is grossly inadequate to explain the complexity of the EDA phenomenon.

5.2 EDA as a Eurocentric construct

In mainstream development theory, it is assumed that societies can – and want to – break free from the perceived misery in the ‘underdeveloped’ world by adopting the more desirable characteristics of ‘the West’. It is presented as a science-based method for changing the ‘backward’ communities in the Global South to look more like the Western world. The qualities and characteristics of societies, particularly North America and Europe, are promoted as the qualities that societies in the underdeveloped world have to aspire to in order to become ‘developed’ (Matthews, 2005:97-100). The motto of development is “(playing on words of the Lord’s Prayer), ‘on Earth as it is in the West’” (Sachs, 2017:2561). Mainstream development is thus structurally rooted in “modernity, capitalism, state domination, patriarchy” (Demaria & Kothari, 2017:2596).

5.2.1 EDA as an overtly capitalist mechanism

The development model of a ‘better’ society is based on capitalist models from an industrial world. The capitalist dream promises “increasing prosperity without limits, an ever[-]expanding wealth of choice, possibility and opportunity, security and comfort in old age” for all, even marginalised groups (Fairclough, 2013:16). However, capitalism is leading to a widening gap between rich and poor and the promise of development to close the gap has been “rendered implausible” (Ziai, 2017:2548). From a critical perspective it has been concluded that capitalism is not the almighty and omnipresent monolith that it presents itself to be and that the current system needs to be repaired or replaced (Esteva & Escobar, 2017:2571; Fairclough, 2013:16).

The mainstream entrepreneurship discourse also lends overt ideological support to capitalism. As a mechanism of capitalism, entrepreneurship is hailed as a panacea

for economic emancipation for everyone, even the economically marginalised. Several critical entrepreneurship studies have shown how entrepreneurship has the power to exploit, destruct and oppress (i.e. Da Costa & Silva Saraiva, 2012; Jones & Murtola, 2012; Verduijn et al., 2014). These studies illustrate how research downplays this dark side of entrepreneurship when it, in fact, consistently and pervasively prevents emancipation from taking place (Verduijn et al., 2014). Jones and Murtola (2012) regard it as 'blind optimism' to assume that entrepreneurship will necessarily lead to the recognition and liberation of marginalised societies. They argue that entrepreneurship should rather be considered as an act of finding new ways to exploit these societies. However, studies that militate against the unequal, exploitative nature of capitalism are still the exception and entrepreneurship is increasingly romanticised and eulogised (Tedmanson et al., 2012:532).

The limitations of EDA as an overt capitalist mechanism have to be recognised, drawing from post-development theory. This study propositions that:

P2: EDA is and will remain unable to lift marginalised communities in the Global South out of poverty and close the gap between rich and poor.

5.2.2 Tainted with colonialism

The concept of development was conceived of in a Western context. From this perspective, Western society is held as the universal standard of development against which other, less-developed societies are measured. Programmes and projects are implemented to transform the 'underdeveloped' societies to look more like the universal standard – the Western society. In this manner 'development' merely reproduces the colonial ideology of European superiority (Harriss, 2005:17; Ziai, 2013:128). From a post-development perspective, development is criticised for colonising the minds, hearts and imaginations of the Global South, this time using 'modern science' to naturalise the idea of Westernisation (Nandy, 1997).

Ogbor (2000) critically examines entrepreneurship theory to determine which societal myths and ideologies are perpetuated in the conventional discourse. He has found that the predominant discourse in entrepreneurship research is reproducing the myth of 'the entrepreneur' as a white, dominant, rational, European/North American, male hero and that very few studies have challenged these ideological stereotypes underlying mainstream entrepreneurship theory.

From a post-development perspective, it is argued that EDA is overtly a colonial project. The idea of Westernisation, using the science of entrepreneurship theory, is naturalised and promoted through the promise of emancipation from poverty.

The rejection of the mainstream entrepreneurship ideology as a colonial construct, from a neo-populist post-development perspective, can be considered a cinch. However, rejecting entrepreneurship outright as an undesirable activity because of its Eurocentric nature does not shed sufficient light on the complexity of the phenomenon observed in practice. It is important to take cognisance of the critique against post-development theory in this regard. A counterargument to the post-development critique is that the

so-called ‘underdeveloped’ world seems to desire development and is keen to access the modern conveniences associated with development (Matthews, 2017). Some post-development theorists attribute this to the second form of colonialism – the colonisation of the mind (i.e. Nandy, 1997). They present a picture of “passive victims of development who had development imposed upon them” (Ziai in Matthews, 2017:8). However, Matthews makes a good argument that the people in the Global South are not merely “victims of mental colonisation who mindlessly copy everything they associate with the West” (Matthews, 2017:12). Rather, development is desired because the lifestyle of those in the industrialised West has come to be associated with dignity (Matthews, 2017:13). Previously marginalised groups associate the perceived privileges inherent in a state of ‘development’ with a sense of redress for past injustices (Matthews, 2017:11).

The mainstream discourse on entrepreneurship generally regards it as the cornerstone of economic growth, income and employment creation (Da Costa & Silva Saraiva, 2012:588). This discourse holds entrepreneurship as a mass phenomenon and creates the impression that, through entrepreneurship, anyone can realise themselves professionally (Da Costa & Silva Saraiva, 2012:605). EDA furthers this ideology by promoting entrepreneurship as a silver bullet for job creation and poverty alleviation in the Global South. Based on this narrative flowing from the mainstream entrepreneurship ideology, entrepreneurship is desired by marginalised communities in the Global South: not as a white, male, Eurocentric concept, but as a guaranteed ticket out of poverty, a silver bullet for economic emancipation, and a vehicle for the redress of past injustices. However, an overwhelming number of start-up enterprises in the Global South fail within the first three years of existence. EDA proves unable to deliver on the promise of redressing past injustices. This study propositions that:

P3: Through continuing to sell EDA as an instrument of emancipation to marginalised communities, the mainstream entrepreneurship narrative is making itself guilty of sowing seeds of discontent.

5.2.3 The (ignored) endogenous context

Mainstream development theory fails to take into account the endogenous context of the societies that are being ‘developed’ (Escobar, 1992). Development is a cultural, political, economic and historical process (Harcourt, 2017:2707), not merely a single, homogenous, linear push to modernity. This multi-dimensional character of development makes it impossible to assume that “analysis and answers can be derived ... from Western science” (Harriss, 2005:34). When entrepreneurship is appropriated as a development apparatus, answers cannot merely be sought in Western science and theory. However, the bulk of the empirical studies done on the link between entrepreneurship and economic development are conducted in Global North economies in North America and Europe, and the findings of these studies have proven of limited use for answering questions about economic development in the Global South (Naudé, 2011:37). Critical entrepreneurship scholars are questioning its utility even in the Global North. There is a particular lack of scientific debate on African entrepreneurship, and there is, in fact, very little research that confirms

that entrepreneurship does indeed lead to economic growth in an African context (Naudé & Havenga, 2005:101, 107). Mainstream entrepreneurship theory, similar to mainstream development theory, fails to take into account the needs, values and conditions of the so-called beneficiaries (Hamilton, 2019:8) or the politics and relations of power where these ideas are implemented (Ziai, 2013:129). Post-development theory has shown that social inequity has “rarely been dealt with successfully” in this top-down approach (Ziai, 2013:129).

From a post-development theory perspective, the failure to take into account the endogenous cultural, social, political and economic context of the societies where entrepreneurship is presented as an undisputed silver bullet for economic growth and job creation can no longer be accepted. This study argues that the failure to take into account the endogenous context has to be considered as (at least partially) causal of the failure of EDA. Answering the academic call for more research in an African context does not merely mean applying Western scientific models in an African context. Post-development theory argues that the alternative proposals to address poverty alleviation and human development should be sought on local soil, from traditionally marginalised, non-capitalist spaces (Demaria & Kothari, 2017:2593). Research in South Africa, including entrepreneurship research, should actively seek, promote and set into motion the endogenous, non-dominant modernities that have for too long been ignored and sidelined (Esteva & Escobar, 2017:2570). Post-development has introduced these indigenous alternatives as viable and credible alternatives to the mainstream, naturalised, taken-for-granted assumptions inherent in mainstream theory, even when these alternatives seem unrealistic and radical at the onset (Demaria & Kothari, 2017:2589). This study propositions that:

P4: Alternatives to EDA as a vehicle for job creation and economic growth have to be sought within the endogenous, non-dominant modernities.

5.3 Environmental destruction

In this regard, post-development has a simple critique against development theory: that attaining a middle-class lifestyle for the majority of the world population is not only impossible, but it is also undesirable (Matthews, 2005:109; Nederveen Pieterse, 1998:360). Increased financial means increased consumption, and the earth’s resources will not be able to sustain the consumption of a global middle class. Post-development has shown how “the politics of poverty reduction often comes at the price of increasing inequality and environmental degradation” (Sachs, 2017:2565).

Entrepreneurial success is measured in terms of growth and profitability (Zhao, Seibert & Lumpkin, 2010:384). A growing number of successful entrepreneurs would thus mean increased consumption that would place devastating pressure on a limited planet. In promoting entrepreneurship as a silver bullet for economic emancipation for a large number of the world population, EDA fails to consider the degrading impact that an

ever-growing, successful entrepreneurial force would have on the environment. From a post-development perspective, this study propositions that:

P5: The ideology that anyone and everyone could become a successful entrepreneur is not only based on fallacious assumptions, but the impact of this ideology on the environment would be devastating.

5.4 Legitimising the relevance of mainstream entrepreneurship theory

Development theory creates an expectation that taking on the qualities of the Global North will exterminate poverty and inequality. However, it becomes clear that development fails to deliver on this promise of elevating the majority of the world population to a Western standard of a middle-class lifestyle (Matthews, 2005:109; Nederveen Pieterse, 2000:175). By the 1980s, the failure of the development project was widely recognised by practitioners and scholars alike (Esteva & Prakash, 1998:280). Sachs (1992:1) declares development theory a “ruin in the intellectual landscape” and Esteva suggests it should be studied as archaeology, since “only an archaeological eye could explore the ruins left by development” (Esteva & Escobar, 2017:2652). However, the recognition of development’s failure did not result in development’s end, but rather in the reinvention of the field in the 1990s (Harriss, 2005:23). The initial goals for development are postponed indefinitely (Esteva & Prakash, 1998:282) and make way for a development project that is largely focused on meeting basic needs and survival rather than progress. In doing so, mainstream development theory can legitimise its relevance. To illustrate how the focus of development to this day remains on survival rather than progress, Sachs unpacks the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in 2015 and concludes that it would be more fitting to call the SDGs the SSGs – Sustainable Survival Goals (Sachs, 2017:2575-2576). He finds that the SDGs “try to secure a minimum for a dignified life universally” rather than promoting the expectation of progress and the extermination of poverty and inequality.

This pattern is repeated in mainstream entrepreneurship theory. One could not be blamed for expecting that the chronic failure of the entrepreneurship ideology to lead to significant economic emancipation or poverty alleviation would result in the end of decades of EDA. However, the recognition of EDA’s failure merely resulted in the extension of the conceptual boundaries of entrepreneurship. Once a theory that brought to mind images of Elon Musk or Patrice Motsepe, the entrepreneurship umbrella has been reinvented to include contradictory terms like ‘necessity entrepreneur’ or ‘survivalist entrepreneur’. This study propositions that:

P6: Including EDA under the broader entrepreneurship framework is an attempt to legitimise the field and fails to contribute to upward mobility for the so-called beneficiaries.

5.5 EDA is based on a fallacious assumption of needs

At the onset, development was measured by a country's gross national product or per capita income (Sachs, 2017:2577; Ziai, 2013:127), thus reducing the measure of 'development' to the income or commodities that people possess (Anand & Sen, 1994:1). Mainstream development is thus criticised:

as an economic rationality centred around accumulation, a capitalist logic of privileging activities earning money through the market (and disvaluing all other forms of social existence), and the idea of 'homo economicus' (whose needs for consumption are infinite). (Ziai, 2017:2547)

By imposing one universally defined picture of the 'good life' and excluding all others, development is criticised for being "radically inhospitable" (Esteva & Escobar, 2017:2561).

Mainstream development underestimates the diversity and complexity of the development construct (Nederveen Pieterse, 1998:347) and is criticised for ignoring the multi-dimensionality of life (Esteva & Escobar, 2017:2565). Challenges like misery, inequity, poverty and corruption persist even in the so-called 'developed' world – despite material well-being (Matthews, 2005:108). Similarly, many people in the Global South are fulfilled and happy – despite poverty. The qualities of the 'good life' are not universal, and the measures of a good living standard look different in each society (Ziai, 2013:128). This critique of mainstream development theory has, to some extent, been co-opted into the development discourse, as can be seen by the implementation of measures such as the Human Development Index (Ziai, 2013:127).

Although not a post-development theorist per se, the economist and Nobel laureate Amartya Sen's capability approach makes an important advance on this narrow, mainstream view of development (Hamilton, 2019:7) and it is worth taking note of his work in the context of EDA. According to the capability approach, the objective of development has to be "expanding the freedoms that people enjoy" (Sen, 2001:9), not merely their wealth and income. When this becomes the objective, development is implemented to expand the capacity and capability of citizens to determine what a good life would look like for them, and expanding their power to create it (Hamilton, 2019:9). Although wealth and income are a means in which people can expand their capabilities, it cannot be considered a direct measure of a good life (Anand & Sen, 1994:1).

Mainstream entrepreneurship theory imposes a universally developed image of a 'good entrepreneur' or a 'successful enterprise' onto an ambiguous social reality. Firm performance is measured in terms of indicators such as firm survival, growth and profitability (Zhao et al., 2010:384). The economic emphasis behind the entrepreneurship construct (as an overt capitalist mechanism) limits the measure of success to economic indicators. Research remains determined to reproduce performative studies that merely promote increased growth, growth intention and profitability – failing to conceptually frame entrepreneurship as a development activity prevents critical questions from being asked. One such question is: what assumptions is the mainstream entrepreneurship theory making when defining 'improvement' or 'growth'?

One assumption inherent in EDA is that people want to be entrepreneurs and that their entrepreneurial intention can be improved through interventions such as training and incubation. However, by including EDA in a conceptual framework that regards entrepreneurship as a purely economic activity, it fails to take into account the devastating psychological effects of the failure of EDA on the so-called beneficiaries. EDA is presented as a guaranteed solution to job creation when data shows that barely one in four beneficiaries will grow a business that survives past their first three years of existence. Scholars, practitioners and politicians alike have to consider that EDA neither expands the capacity and capability of citizens to determine what a good life would look like for them nor expands their power to create it. This article argues that EDA could be accused of limiting the so-called beneficiaries' freedoms and doing more harm than good.

It is not suggested that the project of improving the lives of people living in poverty and misery should be abandoned (Matthews, 2004:376). However, EDA has to recognise that the idea of what should be desired and is sufficient cannot be decided from an affluent, Western perspective (Ziai, 2017:2548). Presenting EDA as the blanket solution for economic growth and job creation is proving to be a fallacy. Future research should heed the call by post-development to "hospitably embrace the thousand different ways of thinking, being, living and experiencing the world that characterise reality" (Esteva & Escobar, 2017:2561). This study propositions that:

P7: EDA is limiting the freedoms of the very groups it is aiming to emancipate and is doing more harm than good.

5.6 The exploitative nature of EDA

Discourses are mechanisms for maintaining certain power relations within a society (Jäger & Maier, 2009:36); done by producing and reproducing discourses that become incorporated into a society's subjectivities. When a specific discourse becomes normalised, any critical consciousness is dissolved, and different agents in the social network become convinced that the social system is the way that it has always been and the way that it should be and that it cannot be transformed. This way keeps the subaltern classes voluntarily subordinate, uncritical and politically passive (Stoddart, 2007:206). The dominant discourse does not allow for other, oppositional discourses to take root, to ensure that it maintains hegemonic power (Brigg, 2002:427). When a discourse has been incorporated into a society's individual subjectivities, social inequality becomes accepted, and the discourse has reached its aim of producing hegemonic effects (Stoddart, 2007:208).

In this regard, the mainstream development discourse has proven extremely efficient in producing the view of a Third World that needs to be liberalised from a miserable, undesired state of 'underdevelopment' (Escobar, 1995:9). The colonialist ideals of what a 'good' society should look like (the Western image of 'developed'), as well as what interventions can lead to this desired state of development, are presented as scientific knowledge. This expert knowledge is produced by the dominant Western ideal of a 'good'

society and presented as universally applicable. The dominant development discourse ignores and subordinates competing conceptions of a 'good' society (Ziai, 2013:130), and dissolves any critical consciousness regarding development. Under the auspice of attaining a higher goal for the greater good, the development ideology legitimises the unsolicited intervention into the lives of 'less-developed' societies (Ziai, 2017:2548). Nevertheless, instead of leading to the emancipation of the 'underdeveloped' world, the development discourse has proven to be a tool used for hegemony, domination and control (Esteva & Escobar, 2017:2567). Development is thus criticised for its authoritarian and hegemonic nature (Harcourt, 2017:2709; Ziai, 2013:130).

This argument had proven to hold even after colonialism when states became mechanisms for exploitation after trusteeship was handed over to the national elites (Ziai, 2013:130). In the field of entrepreneurship, this is illustrated by a phenomenon that Honig (2017) calls compensatory entrepreneurship. He defines it as:

the political endorsement of entrepreneurial promotion activities, including training, incubation, and media dissemination, for the primary objective of maintaining political and/or economic control of one population over another.

By claiming that entrepreneurship guarantees economic emancipation and that anyone can be an entrepreneur, the mainstream narrative convinces the subaltern classes that their inability to capitalise on entrepreneurial development and support initiatives can only be blamed on their shortcomings or lack of motivation. The political elite is thus exempted from any responsibility towards the economic emancipation of the unemployed (Honig, 2018). In this manner, the entrepreneurship ideology becomes supportive of political hegemony and epistemic violence (Authors, 2020).

EDA not only fails to produce viable enterprises that contribute significantly to job creation and economic growth, but it is also used as a tool that justified the exploitation and continued marginalisation of the economically marginalised. From a post-development theory perspective, it is thus propositioned that:

P8: The further implementation of entrepreneurship development projects in the name of emancipation and liberation of the economically marginalised is not justified.

6. Conclusion

'Entrepreneur' is a heterogeneous concept, and the current theoretical framing of entrepreneurship includes several diverse phenomena under the same conceptual umbrella. However, this conceptual umbrella's boundaries have been drawn and redrawn to such an extent that it has come to include more or less all of humanity (Poole, 2018:41). What is more, mainstream research is continuously presenting 'entrepreneurship' as a homogenous concept (Calás et al., 2009:553).

The mainstream entrepreneurship discourse paints it as a silver bullet for job creation and poverty alleviation and fails to recognise the archaeological ruins left by entrepreneurship's failure to deliver on this promise. Based on this unproven discourse, development

organisations and governments in the Global South continuously implement numerous policies and interventions to stimulate the SME sector, also in economically marginalised communities, believing that it will be a catalyst for growth, job creation and poverty reduction. Although entrepreneurship has become appropriated as a development apparatus, it largely remains researched from a purely economic perspective (Steyaert & Katz, 2004a). This article argues that mainstream entrepreneurship theory had entered the same theoretical impasse that mainstream development theory encountered in the 1980s when post-development theorists concluded that “no amount of improved implementation will be useful; rather we need to reconsider the ideas informing the Project” (Matthews, 2005:96).

The phenomenon ‘entrepreneurship as a development apparatus’ (EDA) is introduced and subjected to the rich, ongoing debate on development, alternative development and post-development. Reframing entrepreneurship within a development framework provides new insights into the failure of EDA to live up to its promise of job creation and economic development. Specifically, post-development theory provides a tool for deconstructing mainstream entrepreneurship theory, exposing the development ideology and assumptions inherent in EDA. The aim is not to merely provide a dualistic opposition to mainstream entrepreneurship theory, but to open a wider, dynamic, critical debate of EDA. By subjecting mainstream entrepreneurship theory to post-development theory critique, this article extends on the nascent field of critical entrepreneurship studies by drawing several conclusions for further investigation. These include highlighting EDA’s colonialist roots, its potentially devastating effects on the environment, the use of EDA as a tool for exploitation, its inability to redress the injustices of the past and how EDA is used to legitimise the field of entrepreneurship.

Based on these conclusions, this study proposes that the implementation of entrepreneurship development projects in the name of emancipation and liberation of the economically marginalised can no longer be justified. However, this cannot be done when the naturalised belief is that EDA is a silver bullet for job creation and economic development. This article thus calls for the denaturalisation of the EDA narrative, similar to what post-development theorists call the ‘unmaking’ of development (Harcourt, 2017:2705). Drawing from post-development theory, it is clear that critique can influence mainstream theory and that academic discourses can change public opinions. Members of the scholarly community have to take up their responsibility as agents of social change to lead this process of unlearning the taken-for-granted assumptions and create a new narrative about EDA. The myth of ‘the entrepreneur’, created by mainstream entrepreneurship research, has to be undone by presenting new scientific knowledge.

A first step would be to unbundle the ever-growing conceptual framework of mainstream entrepreneurship. The current conceptual frame is proving grossly inadequate to explain the complexity of the EDA phenomenon. Continuously redefining entrepreneurship to include all types of social phenomena will not bring the paradigmatic break and new narrative needed to move beyond the failure of EDA. This article thus calls for the rejection of the entire notion of EDA as a form of entrepreneurship. Rather, the phenomenon has

to be reconceptualised as a complex, interdisciplinary field of study that is rigorously researched beyond the constraints of mainstream entrepreneurship theory.

The mainstream narrative regarding entrepreneurship has to be unlearned. The myth of 'the entrepreneur' has to be undone. The conceptual entrepreneurship frame has to be unbundled to determine which phenomena have to be included in the frame going forward, and which phenomena have to be untrepreneuried.

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