Education Research in African Contexts

Traditions and New Beginnings for Knowledge and Impact

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CHAPTER 15
Beyond saviour research: A critical synthesis of the CERM-ESA project celebration

Michael Anthony Samuel

This chapter critiques the staging of Africa as a space in need of a saviours. Indeed, the saviours have already risen in the hearts and minds, and commitments of projects which move beyond the promotion of econometric markets, disguised elitist agendas or expansionist imitations of strategies crafted elsewhere. As a critical synthesis of the project of the anthology as a whole, this chapter attempts to open up questions about *how* research projects in the field of education research come to be designed, *by whom*, and with *what intentions*. The focus of these questions directs an analysis towards *whose interests* are being served by the agenda of the research being undertaken. *Who* are the ultimate beneficiaries of the research design we conduct? The chapter emphasises that the terrain of educational research is embedded within contestations and possibilities of collaborative efforts across many interlocuting partners both at the systemic macro-level and at the micro- and meso-level of personalised and localised classroom institutional spaces within different levels of the education system: primary, secondary and higher education. Hence the chapter is organized to reflect two overarching, interrelated sections.

The first (Part A) locates the review of the anthology *Education Research in African Contexts: Traditions and New Beginnings for Knowledge and Impact* within a broader **macro-systemic continental space** where the motivation for an upscaling of the production of African research is presented. The broad African Union's *Agenda 2063* provides the overarching idealism of research development expectations. This present chapter demonstrates how the ten-year CERM-ESA project offers pragmatic commentary on how the African Union (AU) agenda is indeed already being enacted, showing what has been achieved and what still needs to be done for continental transformation. A parallel to the CERM-ESA project is another prospective continental project: the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) agenda foregrounding its commitment to African research development. Both these initiatives (AU and ARUA) are seen as sounding boards to juxtapose the unique features of the CERM-ESA project showing why and how the promotion of educational research is a complex and messy terrain, requiring many levels of theoretical and practical interventions.

The second part of the chapter (Part B) deals with **meso and micro-research space**, inside the CERM-ESA programmes and institutional research studies produced. It begins by reflecting on the CERM-ESA initiative on its decade anniversary by critically reviewing two sub-sections of the anthology's broad focused research studies: on researching the *higher education space* (B1), and on researching the *school and society space* (B2)

A: Macro-systemic policy reform: A space for educational research

Agenda 2063: An African Union initiative

"The Africa we want" is a slogan underpinning the ambitious Agenda 2063 of the African Union (AU). This intra-continental masterplan aims to activate, over 50 years from 2013 to 2063, a vision to cultivate a unified, thriving, and harmonious Africa, shaped by its own people and playing a significant role on the global stage. Amongst its strategies is the need to activate social, developmental and economic policies that are people-centred, promote gender equity and youth empowerment, and re-examine African responses to increasing globalisation and the ICT revolution. Education is considered one of the key commodities to galvanise the potential to realize this agenda. Agenda 2063 marked the Golden Jubilee celebration of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) which was first established in 1963. Whereas the original OAU agenda campaigned attainment of political independence and critiques of regime injustices like the South African apartheid system, the new AU strategy reprioritizes inclusive social and economic growth and development, integrating partnerships across continental and regional structures within a climate of democratic governance, peace and security. One of the key challenges noted in the AU's first ten-year implementation plan (FTYIP) review of Agenda 2063 is the creation of appropriate and robust systems for monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of these strategies. Institutionalized evidence-based reporting provides a research foundation from which progress can be monitored successfully, key milestones reviewed, and outcomes of projects defined and shared. This sets the benchmarks for prospective future-oriented research.

Progress on Agenda 2063 is reportedly robustly supported ideologically, but concerns are repeatedly raised about the lack of human, physical and institutional infrastructure to enact the vision in many contexts within the African continent. It is somewhat disappointing that these high-level systemic reporting protocols often remain in the realm of policy spaces in the national and continental arena, and seldom inform directly the agenda of research within higher education academic spaces. Paradoxically, it is the higher education research systems that are expected to provide the resources to engage in such monitoring and evaluation research designs. The AU target is to produce 100,000 PhDs over 10 years to address how higher education can contribute to social and economic development. What collaborations

could be fostered between the varied levels of the socio-political and academic realms to foster shared, mutually reinforcing agendas?

Collaborative doctoral programmes: An African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) initiative

The African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) has chosen to move beyond the talk and take the necessary actions to redress the low levels of research productivity outputs. As secretary general of the ARUA, Aryeetey (2024) argues that their strategy of revolutionising doctoral training in Africa is motivated by the worrisome data which show that Africa produces less than 3% of the global generation of knowledge, that fewer than 50% of academic staff at most African universities have a PhD, and that many African universities do not offer more than just undergraduate programmes. Their template is to harness the existing doctoral programmes of 15 African universities (considered ARUA Centres of Excellence) to offer harmonised doctoral degrees to promote inter-disciplinary networking and mobility across partnership institutions. The strategic plan of ARUA is to provide enhanced research support and training, build research management capabilities and advocate the value of doctoral education. Exploration for joint-badged degrees is being explored.

At face value, the ARUA agenda seems laudable, that is until one delves deeper into the pragmatics of realizing these ideals in practice. First, the model is overambitious in its belief that its small contribution of 1,000 PhDs over ten years would make a significant dent against the systemic foundational infrastructure that characterises the widespread and diverse under-resourced African university system.[1] However, the ARUA agenda is not necessarily focused on providing a systemic engagement with the inequities across the whole African higher education system (as is perhaps the AU agenda). Instead, it prefers to work with only the already privileged institutions within the African context. It could be argued that the agenda is indirectly elitist since it protects and expands the worldview of the already privileged. Second, the ARUA agenda needs to declare more overtly who the partner institutions are, especially those international partnerships from outside of Africa being brought to activate the agendas of reconstruction of the doctoral education system. Whilst initial seed funding for ARUA is drawn from the Kresge Foundation and Carnegie Corporation of New York, the partner institutions themselves are expected to sustain the long-term funding. Will African universities be able to afford to invest in trans-national agendas especially as financial budget cuts are endemic challenges within the national contexts?

1 The pilot inter-institutional doctoral programme will be launched in January 2026.

Beyond saviour research

Fredua-Kwarteng (2023), a Canadian policy researcher, cautions against policy staging in which Africa is positioned as "in need of development from outside". Samuel and Mariaye (2023, p. 3) argue that "the agenda of external deficit framings of the African context could be also understood as creating a marketplace of spaces where 'saviours' from the outside world might intervene to rescue the African context". Sometimes, and fuelled by the ARUA logic, the 'saviours' are the privileged African institutions themselves. Often the intervention is already pre-packaged with an *a priori* solution which needs to find an expanded market.

Many of the partnership universities (both the powerful and the perceived as disempowered, and the local, continental and global partners too) publicly kowtow to the declared organizers: the involvement in the project is a guaranteed source of income and market possibilities for a 'foray into Africa'. For the relatively under-resourced institutions, any involvement in large-scale continental programmes is likely to be simply another valued source of financial injection into already cash-strapped university coffers. Recipient universities tend to be complicit in this saviour research agenda, seemingly clutching at straws rather than powerfully contributing to systemic and sustainable development. Ironically, creating economic markets for higher education exploration and importation across Africa is considered 'developmental'. A new knowledge colonialism (albeit an internal continental one) is at play.

African higher education specificities and complexities: A non-homogenous terrain

Finally, a critique of the above macro-systemic agendas does not realistically acknowledge the lack of higher education infrastructural and supervisory resources that are needed to activate the agenda of expanding postgraduate education on the African continent. For example, Odhiambo (2024), reflecting on the University Statistics Report (2017-2018) released by the Commission of University Education (CUE) in Kenya, laments the trials that both students and supervisors have to endure:

> *Kenya is one of several countries in the region that is struggling to meet its research demand. Fewer than 1,000 professors are expected to meet the needs of more than half a million students across the country's 68 universities. This means the professor-student ratio is 1:500.* (Odhiambo, 2024)

This reflective report elaborates on the lived experiences of the pragmatic challenges of a doctoral student from Ghana who is studying in Kenya. The report highlights Odhiambo's negotiations of cultural crossing over between West and East African contexts, revealing the complexities of 'putting one's life on hold' to achieve the targeted doctorate. Moreover, it underscores that Africa is not a homogenous edu-terrain wherein models can be easily transposed from one context to another. The psychological and emotional support required to endure studies abroad is exacerbated

by the limited supervisory academic guidance afforded.[2] The experiences of doctoral students not receiving examination reports for over a year are explained in the report as related to the lack of finances within institutions to pay for external examiners. These pragmatic realities underscore critical sensitivity beyond the political and econometric rhetoric when designing and proposing macro-systemic postgraduate educational reform for the African continent.

B: Meso-/micro-research reform: A space for educational research

Reflections on the ten-year implementation: The Centre for Educational Research Methodologies and Management in East and South Africa (CERM-ESA) initiative

The opportunity to reflect on the CERM-ESA initiative serves as a foil to examine the prospects of both the AU and the ARUA agendas. It serves to examine how macro-systemic plans need to be translated operationally and conceptually at local meso- and micro-levels. Within literary narrative traditions, the foil is often a cameo character who comments or provides the audience with the means to make more noticeable the foibles and merits of the lead character/s. For example, the court jester in Shakespearean dramas (such as the Fool in *King Lear*, or the gravediggers in *Hamlet*) does not merely provide comic relief to the audience; instead, the fool is no fool at all but serves as a poignant commentator, a friend and speaker of truths to the audience. It is the fool who overtly communicates the themes of the play directly commentating on actions, even when they are derided by the general congregation of actors.

This synthesis chapter serves to offer a critical reflection on the celebratory agenda of the CERM-ESA project. Besides commentating on the actions of others, it looks inwardly. Like the AU project, the CERM-ESA project too, in its first ten-year implementation of the plan, chose to document the key milestones of the project, surveying the evidence of the outcome of its efforts. The anthology, within which this present chapter is located, outlines the bricolage of perspectives on undertaking postgraduate educational research within the East and South African context in collaboration with a partner institution from the German context.

B1: Researching the higher education space

The agenda of creating the platforms involved working across funders, project leaders, policymakers, government officials, higher education institutions, academics and teachers, and with schooling systems in an ongoing iterative relationship of building trust, collegiality and respect for local contexts. Shared open-access online resources by collaborating research experts were created to provide a database

2 Odhiambo (2024) hints that this prevails due the over-intensification of the work responsibilities of supervisors under pressure to support their assigned supervisees.

of resources to support partnership institutions to activate the research agenda. These projects continue to the present day. Doctoral and master's research studies were commissioned to draw students and supervisors from across the African and German partner collaborators. Japheth, Chang'ach, Kurgat and Chemutai Barasa (2024) (Chapter 1) explore how these co-supervision and peer mentorship programmes promoted an exchange of diverse knowledge and practical skills with mutual reciprocal learning for all partners. Historical situatedness was emphasised by challenging a simplistic importation of models from one context into another. A respect for localised knowledge-making was promoted with the Capacity Building Programme for Lecturers and Supervisors (CABLES). This included the exchange of interpersonal skills for pedagogical approaches for schoolteachers exploring the activation of emotional relationships with students. The supervision models included highlighting interpersonal skills, as well as diversification of educational expertise in the range of quantitative and qualitative methodologies in promoting education research.

Researching university-community partnerships around research: Case study research

Chapter 1 argues that a *triadic relationship* was being developed through the CERM-ESA initiative: between the promotion of education *research*, the broader *schooling context* and the *local cultural context*. This became the architecture for the book which foregrounds the context of the higher education space, the social collaborations between school and the broader society embedded in unique cultural interpretations of education.

Methodologically, Chapter 1 accents the dominance of *case study research* which permeates the book's research topics selected by the chapter authors. Such small-scale research studies are characteristic of educational studies that rely on relatively diminished budgets. Novice researchers, like most masters and doctoral students, whose studies are reported on in this anthology, rely on the limited access to the fields within which they operate, constrained by exigencies of time and monetary resources; also, many such researchers have other working responsibilities that constrain long-term fieldwork studies. Snapshot insights of the field and the phenomena are likely to characterise their study designs. However, this should not detract from the overall goals of case study research. Unlike large-scale quantitative research, or longitudinal studies which trace the evolutions of a phenomenon across time and space, or aim to provide predictable outcomes for large systems, the aim of case study research is not to be generalised and create universal claims to truth. Instead, small case study research aims to be generative: to activate provocative, insightful questions about the phenomenon they study. Generativity rather than generalisability is the goal of case study research.

Nevertheless, the case study researcher ought to provide thick descriptions of the contextual spaces they explore. Multiple methods and sources of data should

be the goal of the research design to ensure a rich *triangulated trustworthy dataset* (Peels & Bouter, 2023). Perhaps there is an overreliance in the case studies within this anthology on self-reported evaluations of project interventions. A small range of methods of data production (even when they are relatively provocative or innovative) are adopted. Additionally, it is surely likely that research participants who have been offered an innovative intervention (whatever the source or the content) are likely to report a high degree of satisfaction with the product, especially when their daily diet is relatively under-nourished intellectually. They are also likely to agree on project implementation targets met, especially when they (the respondents to evaluation survey questionnaires or focus group discussions) are considered beneficiaries of funding and intellectual resources provided courtesy of the evaluators/researchers.

On a broader – rather than study – methodological design micro-level focus, and true to the overarching goals of the project collaborative effort, most of the chapters in this anthology draw on a *writing collaboration* between authors from varying contexts, and across diverse countries and student-supervisory contexts. The act of writing the chapters, and the construction of a shared anthology itself is exemplary of the capacity-building and promotion of education research dissemination and communication, sadly lacking on the African continent. Previous studies from the African context decry the abusive unethical conduct of supervisors who exploit publications drawing on their students' works (Aidonojie et al., 2022; Muthanna & Alduais, 2021). The writing and publication collaborations reflect the goals of respectful interchange and exchange of expertise and resources, celebrated in the anthology.

Ronoh and Webb (2024) in Chapter 2 expand the triad between educational research, schooling and the broader society. By focusing on teacher educators' views of *relevant indigenous knowledge* (IK) for inclusion in the school curriculum, the researchers adopt what they consider to be a culturally appropriate form of a modified focus group discussion, referred to as the *Imbizo*/*Baraza* method. The data production in a South African and a Kenyan teacher education context was conducted in the participants' home languages. Short local contentious historical stories provided a stimulus to facilitate dialogue probing participants' views on the type, place and position of IK to be incorporated into the school curriculum. While participants positively reported on the *Imbizo*/*Baraza* data production strategy, the researchers commented on the limitations created by the distortion of cultural nuances and expressions when translating education research data, findings and analysis into a second language like English. A further question may be asked whether the two data production sites tend to commodify IK as a static essentialist form of knowledge and whether the perspective of IK promoted a touristic notion of culture as an exotic nostalgic remembering of past historical conceptions of the society that no longer exists in a 'pure' form. In promoting a prospective agenda for cultural studies, one should embrace the notions that all cultures evolve in relation

to varied external and internal combative and contested forces. Romanticising IK stereotypes a bounded singular African knowledge system that is past, rather than present and future-oriented. This conceptualising of the enduring effect of a past-oriented view of knowledge and culture recurs in other studies (see discussion later).

Two further studies under the sub-grouping of studies within the space of the higher education context deal with the matter of the relationship between *knowledge produced* within the university research space, and how it finds expression in the lives and worlds of the societies surrounding them, with their attendant *cultural values, beliefs and practices*. First, Ssekamatte, Speck, and Siebenhüner (2024) in Chapter 4 document the *training and research interventions* related to climate change and sustainability at a selected university in Uganda. Their participants were staff and students within the university who reported on their wide range of climate change science initiatives, mitigation and policy research projects in various sectors and ecosystems, including weather-related predictions and modelling for different sectors within the country. The descriptive case study revealed that faculty and students actively engaged in research relevant to local communities: including on agriculture (crop and animal livestock) farming in dry arid regions, and climate resilience in the cattle corridor revealing strategies for livestock farmers to adapt to scarcity of water and pasture.

Second, Mandela, Ssekamatte, and Kyalo Wambua (2024) in Chapter 5 extend the *university-community partnership* to include matters related to the gender injustices prevalent in and the management of climate change research interventions. The study participants in this chapter were students, university staff and community leaders. This chapter represents a strong presentation of a theoretical feminist lens to examine why women's experiences and practices of managing climate change were not fully embraced in conservative patriarchal community contexts. Women often have no say on environmental issues, land ownership and decision-making. The cultural rather than the scientific interpretations of mitigating climate change are emphasised in this study.

These above studies may be critiqued for not expanding the research design strategies to broaden the sample size and diversity to include a range of other stakeholders such as policymakers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other universities to offer a comparative perspective of different communities and institutional responses to the same topic. Future research should trace the long-term effect of the sensitization efforts undertaken by the researchers, and review over time the local evolving adaption strategies adopted in the researched sites. The influence of these studies on the activation of system-wide policy development arising from the small-scale research case studies would potentially be beneficial. This would move the research agenda away from exotic exceptional celebratory discourses into the terrain of critical engagements on a systemic level of both the macro and micro-cultural systems that impede change.

Researching student experiences

Two studies in the section on higher education terrain involve the focus on *students' experiences*: the first (Chapter 3) deals with *student resilience* in an engineering degree in South Africa (Mapaling, Webb & du Plooy, 2024) and the second (Chapter 5) deals with *student–supervisor relationships* in an African doctoral studies programme (Rugut, 2024).

Chapter 3 represents one of two chapters in the anthology which foregrounds *quantitative* research approaches (see discussion on Chapter 7 later). The authors, however, declare that the chapter itself is a sub-report of a larger mixed-method study, which identifies the interplay between quantitative and qualitative data gathered. The study claims to explore the factors affecting the *psychological well-being* of students. It chooses to look at the impact of "academic success workshops" conducted by the institution to support students navigate their academic journeys, whilst also probing perceptions of students related to the online learning emergency strategy that was introduced during COVID-19. The study reports on the multifaceted nature of resilience and the mental health of students, especially at the senior stages of the undergraduate degree. Only self-reported data is generated, largely from those who choose the institutional support strategies and do not drop out of university.[3] The study underestimates how its participant sample, at the time of data production, represents those who have already crafted ways of surviving the transition from schooling into a university environment, as well as adapted to academic literacy discourses of engineering faculties. They ought to be more resilient and represent already successful academic candidates. Nevertheless, the study highlights the need to address reducing depression, anger and sleep problems, as well as promote perseverance strategies and reflective self-help-seeking strategies. The study would be advised to expand the exploration of the wider institutional context outside of Engineering for comparative perspectives of other fields or disciplines and their students. Specific gender trends should be explored comparatively for deeper theorization. The broader university-wide environment space, its institutional ethos and turbulence influencing unrest, disruptions and contestations may also be examined to understand what enables or constrains academic and personal resilience. An interdisciplinary lens of gender, psychological and sociological analyses is needed.

Chapter 6 draws on a wide literature review of past studies challenging the quality of *supervisory-student partnerships* and their influence on the completion rates of doctoral students. The literature constitutes a mix of studies from both Western contexts and research focused on African universities; it also shares both positive and negative experiences of doctoral students with their supervisors. The literature highlights fulfilling relationships as characterised by inspiration, bonding,

3 Perhaps the qualitative dimension of the study, not reported in this chapter, attends to matters of the critique offered below.

and effective scaffolding provided by supervisors, while unfulfilling relationships lead to disengagement, neglect and sometimes bullying or imposition of unrealistic demands by supervisors. The latter produces feelings of discontent and frustration that influence not only the academic and professional development of doctoral students but also their personal growth and well-being. Communication and support were regarded as foundational for fostering productive student–supervisor relationships. Methodologically, the study employs drawing as a data collection tool to capture visually the nuanced experiences of participants, offering deep insights into the complexities of these relationships within the African academic context. The drawing enabled the revelation of conscious and unconscious issues and experiences, potentially bringing to light hidden or unknown perceptions or views.

While the study endorsed the extant literature cited, it tends to remain at the level of describing the relationships only on personal, psychological dimensions linked to the unique identities of the academics and their students. There are some instances of acknowledgement of the intense work environment of higher education where supervisors are often overwhelmed with administrative and teaching responsibilities or having too many students to supervise. This meso-systemic institutional, contextual analysis of the higher education system offers the possibility of expanding beyond descriptive data to engage in explanatory evaluations of the nature of the specific quality of relationships activated. Another examination of the dominance of hierarchical patterns of doctoral supervisory relationships linked to cultural expectations of deference required in patriarchal societies, or as a product of respect for seniority or perceived authority status, could have provided more theoretical analysis. The spaces for crafting relationships across varied fields of doctoral study also could be linked to reinforcing signature disciplinary practices, such as negotiation of the managed, surveilled team use of laboratory spaces in the natural sciences, or more exploratory individual fieldwork studies in social sciences.

The small sample of this chapter's study, however, opens methodological innovations to generate further research into theoretical and explanatory studies about other university student–supervisor patterns. It is acknowledged that future studies should harness the perspectives of supervisors which could provide a more balanced view, revealing their challenges, expectations and perceptions of areas for improvement in the supervision practices and their need for further training. Perhaps the study could have been enhanced by offering more insight into how university policies could be used to mediate and monitor conflict resolution mechanisms. Both the meso-systemic institutional contexts and the micro-personal contexts co-affect each other.

Reflections: Research *in* higher education and research *of* higher education

The above studies are perhaps characterised by a reporting of research studies within the higher education space. This research *in* higher education is varied, focusing

on elements of curriculum programmes offering, support structures for students, and analysis of partnerships produced in the research space between supervisor and students, or between researchers and the wider community. It infers that the authors are interested in assessing the impact of their work on the broader cultural sphere within higher education, and within the communities.

However, a missing gap in this section of the anthology is the research *of* the higher education system in more overt ways. For example, the studies are driven not primarily by an examination of the senior governance and management systems that characterise African higher education as part of a broader systemic national, regional, continental and global level. No direct studies examine in-depth the financial management of African universities, nor specifically the policy development opportunities and challenges. Financial analysis is limited to only the requests for extended support for localised programmatic offerings and practices. Additionally, little analysis is afforded to examining academic and professional services staff development initiatives to address higher education's resource potential. The effect is to celebrate the incompleteness of staff who are seen as in need of some rescue/saviour intervention (see earlier discussion in the introduction to this chapter). The systemic critique of the present resources of staff is not fully explored. Human, physical and financial resource planning is not foregrounded. The studies only refer tangentially to the administrative, management, and human resources of leadership. Perhaps future studies would benefit from expanding higher education studies not just in parochial, technical and operational terms, but also on institutional and national systems levels as an emerging field of study. The contribution to theorizing African higher education studies as a field of study would be most resourceful.

B2: Researching the school and society space

The second section of the anthology focuses on research (by higher education researchers: the supervisors and the supervised) conducted within the schooling space. The studies aim to explore the relationship between schools, their curriculum and management structures, and the broader cultural context of the social environments within which the study is conducted. Two broad groups of *quantitative* confirmatory research designs and *qualitative* exploratory research alternatives are the focus of this section.

Quantitative ways of knowing: Using replication study methodological approaches

Chapter 7 by Nakiyaga, Serem, Namubiru Ssentamu and Boit (2024) constitutes the second study in this anthology using a *quantitative* methodological study design (see the analysis of Chapter 3 above). The study design is inspired by positivist empirical research traditions that aim to pursue what is considered to be a universalist truth,

that can be generalised across varying contexts. This study represents an anomaly to the other study designs of the anthology.

The study seems aimed to validate the already established findings of a Nigerian study by Ayeni and Ibukun (2013) in which a conceptual model for school-based management operations and quality assurance was promulgated. The researchers of Chapter 7 used the framework of this school-based management model (SBMM) to look at how the Ugandan schools' adoption of the stakeholder theory of governance could influence the involvement of participants when dealing with enhancing learners' academic achievement. The findings reinforce and confirm the ones established by the Nigerian study: learner achievement is underpinned by major challenges facing effective operation of SBMCs. The five factors influencing the efficacy of the SBMC were identified as the low capacity of key members of the SBMCs; poor attendance of members at meetings due to lack of incentives and financial support from the government; lack of cooperation from the schools; and Parents Teacher Association resistance to the SBMC initiatives. These collectively resulted in ineffective school management and a low level of student academic achievement. The study may be considered to have come to the same conclusion that SBMCs matter and that the involvement of stakeholders is important to activate learner achievement. The study reinforces the need for inclusive, responsive and effective educational environments that bring varied stakeholders in developing school improvement planning, budgeting and coordinating of academic activities.

Qualitative ways of knowing: Using innovative methods of data generation

The next set of chapters in this sub-section consciously chose to create alternative pathways to dominant research methods for data production. Chapters 9, 10, 11 and 12 constitute a strong case for using participatory visual methodologies (PVM) to produce different data differently. All these studies are located within the Kenyan context where the external influence of supervisors and co-supervisors from contexts in South Africa and Germany could be noted. PVM as a creative methodological approach formed part of the repertoire of new methodologies offered during the CABLES programme and constituted part of the Research Schools adopted during the CERM-ESA project duration. This constitutes another form of borrowing which is motivated not by replication (as in Chapter 7) but by *disruption of the conventionalised ways of doing data production* in the field. The studies foreground doing research *with* participants rather than *on* participants. Moreover, the research success relies on the relational, dialogical, iterative and emotional rapport that the researchers establish *with* their participants. Both the researcher and the researched are regarded as co-producers (generators) of the insights being developed without fear of the 'corruption of the field' since the embodied interactive presence of both interlocutors is granted respectful acknowledgement.