Doctoral Education in Context

Perspectives from Africa

Edited by
Jan Botha, Liezel Frick, Nompilo Tshuma

AFRICAN
MINDS

Published in 2024 by African Minds
4 Eccleston Place, Somerset West, 7130
Cape Town, South Africa
info@africanminds.org.za
www.africanminds.org.za

All contents of this document, unless specified otherwise, are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.



ISBNs:
978-1-0672535-3-0 Print
978-1-0672535-4-7 e-book
978-1-0672535-5-4 e-pub

Copies of this book are available for free download at www.africanminds.org.za

ORDERS
For orders from Africa:
African Minds
Email: info@africanminds.org.za

For orders from outside Africa:
African Books Collective
PO Box 721, Oxford OX1 9EN, UK
Email: orders@africanbookscollective.com

CHAPTER 2

Academic freedom in doctoral studies in Africa

Mohamed A. M. Khalil

The **Arab Republic of Egypt** is in the northeastern corner of Africa and southwestern Asia, with a population of 112.7 million (UNFPA). Egypt has 27 state universities, 20 national universities, and 3 technological universities (MOHESR). Egypt has a long history in doctoral studies, with the first doctoral degree awarded in 1914. In 2003 there were 22 248 PhD students enrolled at Egyptian universities, reaching 35 000 in 2009. During 2011-2016 a total of 37 519 doctoral candidates graduated at Egyptian universities (Cantini, 2020).

Mansoura University (MU) is the sixth Egyptian university, founded in 1972 under the name East Delta University, later changed to Mansoura University. Its campus occupies an area of approximately 300 acres southwest of Mansoura City. The university has 18 colleges, a total of 7 315 faculty members, 25 659 employees, and 181 963 students, among them 32 864 postgraduate students (MANS).

1. Introduction

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, defines academic freedom as "the right to teach, discuss, carry out research, publication, express scientific opinion freely and participate in academic bodies without any external constraints from the authorities" (UNESCO, 2017; UNESCO, 2008). When Albert Einstein was asked about the essential nature of academic freedom, his answer was quoted by the AAUP-UC as having been:

[B]y academic freedom, I understand the right to search for truth and to publish and teach what one holds to be true. This right also implies a duty: one

must not conceal any part of what one has recognized to be true. It is evident that any restriction of academic freedom acts in such a way as to hamper the dissemination of knowledge among people and thereby impedes rational judgment and action. (AAUP-UC, 2017)

2. Understanding academic freedom

The debate about academic freedom and rights in academic research has been discussed by many scholars like (Anderson, 1934; Emerson & Haber, 1963; Neave, 1998; Aarrevaara, 2010). They mostly agreed to define academic freedom as the ability of students, supervisors and institutions to express their academic opinions freely. Academic freedom is a driver of innovation, as it gives scholars and students the capacity to generate, debate and acquire knowledge, and thereby reflects societal conditions (Scholars at Risk, 2020). It is internationally accepted that academic freedom is the right to learn, teach, and express opinion freely from restrictions. According to Grimm and Saliba (2017, p. 47), academic freedom can be defined in a negative way to be "the absence of legal, physical, or structural interference by the state or non- state actors in a researcher's personal autonomy, independence and integrity". However, this absence of interference does not imply that academic freedom exists, as academic freedom is not absolute. It is integrated with the social, cultural, economic, and political conditions of the society.

Academic freedom continuously elicits debate among academics. While many universities and states around the world have committed to maintaining a high level of academic freedom, it remains under attack and is poorly understood in many places (Doğan, 2016; Kinzelbach et al., 2021).

Academic freedom is an important condition for quality and academic dignity. There are different types of academic freedom (Doğan, 2016). The first is the freedom guaranteed by the state and institutions to academics to produce science. The other type is the civil rights and freedom of academics as individuals. Therefore, academic freedom is a mix between scientific vision and moral issues, which are protected and guaranteed by academic institutions.

Many universities and research institutions state their principles and guidelines for academic freedom in doctoral studies in their programme rules. However, the level of freedom differs from place to place due to cultural, religious, political, or economic variations. The freedom in doctoral studies can be viewed through the perspectives of three role players: the candidate, the supervisor, and the institution. The following aspects of academic freedom will be discussed in this chapter:

- Scientific freedom: this includes the freedom to teach, learn, discuss, research, and publish the results.
- Administrative freedom: this includes the freedom to engage in the activities of academic bodies and the freedom to express academic opinions without external constraints.
- Economic freedom: this includes, on one hand, having equal opportunities to access funding and other supporting sources with clear criteria, and, on the other hand, freedom to act without constraints set by the funding providers.
- Political and social freedom: this includes the freedom to express an opinion about topics that may be sensitive from a political, cultural, or religious points of view.

Academic freedom in postgraduate studies is an important condition to achieve reliable outcomes. However, the academic freedom guaranteed for academics by the state, or the institution should be balanced with the freedom of individuals or the society in general. With the multicultural nature of many doctoral research programmes, academic freedom needs more attention when considered in different contexts and places. This requires more effort from supervisors to ensure academic freedom within available limits and constraints.

Recently the academic world witnessed cases where doctoral students, supervisors, and even institutions experienced limitations on academic freedom (Scholars at Risk, 2020). There is a growing body of literature on academic freedom; the concept, the principles, and how it helps to protect the values and functions of higher education (Finkin & Post, 2009; Fish, 2014; Downs, 2015). However, most of these studies discuss academic freedom in the context of western countries, where academic freedom is mostly well developed and protected by institutional legislation and constitutional rights. Recently in many countries that are moving toward more democratic regimes, academic freedom has come under discussion (Appiagyei-Atua et al., 2016). However, there is a need for more studies on academic freedom in the African context.

Informed by published literature, this chapter is a conceptual study that aims to shed light on the challenges that face the implementation of academic freedom in doctoral studies in Africa. In so doing, it tries to link this subject with the role of doctoral supervisors in enhancing the level of academic freedom within doctoral studies.

3. Historic overview of academic freedom

We may date back the struggle for academic freedom to the ancient Greek period when Socrates was accused of corrupting the youth of Athens. However, the modern debate begins in the twelfth century with the advent of universities. Universities in the Middle Ages were powerful, and they set their own rules, however, there were severe limits on research established by religious authorities (Stone, 2015).

Although they allowed for a variety of scholarly approaches, some of the early universities founded in North Africa and the Middle East, such as the University of Al-Azhar (est. in 972), were bound by religious and political oversight which limited the freedom of these institutions. Various modern universities had been established in North Africa by the beginning of the twentieth century, for example, the Egyptian University,[1] established in 1908, and the University of Algiers in Algeria, established in 1909 (Sherman, 1990). However, the academic growth of these institutions was negatively affected by European colonization because colonial regimes often restricted academic freedom (Dea, 2018).

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, academic freedom was reformed by Wilhelm von Humboldt with his concepts of *Lernfreiheit*, *Lehrfreiheid* and *Freiheit der Wissenschaft* (the freedom to teach and learn, and academic self-governance) which he discussed under the title of academic freedom (Smith, 2002). The **freedom to teach** refers to the freedom of professors to do research and publish their results without any constraints from political and religious authorities as well as the societal tradition, along with the freedom to choose the contents of the lectures and courses they teach. The **freedom to learn** refers to the freedom of students to freely participate in their choice of courses and study topics. Von Humboldt's third key term, **academic self-governance,** refers to the freedom of universities and research institutions to manage and control their internal affairs (Nybom, 2003; Smith, 2002)

Even though the notion of academic freedom was first explicitly used in Germany and then expanded to the entire world, this was ended by the Nazi regime in the 1930s. By this time academic freedom had been well established in the United States of America by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP).[2] The *AAUP 1915 Declaration of Principles* confirmed Humboldtian concepts, adding three sub-concepts: freedom to inquire and

1 Currently Cairo University, from 1908 to 1940 was known as the Egyptian University, from 1940 to 1952 was known as King Fuad I 'Fu'ād al-Awwal' University (Cairo University, 2017).

2 The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) is a nonprofit membership association of faculty and other academic professionals, founded in 1915, aiming to advance academic freedom and shared governance (See: https://www.aaup.org/).

achieve human knowledge, freedom to deliver instruction to students, and freedom to practise as experts in public services (Wilson, 2016). The 1915 AAUP declaration was re-issued in a shorter form by the American Council on Education as the *1925 Conference Statement on Academic Freedom and Tenure*. In 1940 the *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure* (AAUP, n.d.) was issued by the AAUP as a revised version of the 1915 declaration. The current version was issued in 1970 with some additions, and it is still the AAUP's official academic freedom statement (AAUP, n.d.; Smith, 2002; Dea, 2018). It is widely accepted that formal protection of academic freedom came into being only by the mid-20th century in 1940 when the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) set out the principles of academic freedom in teaching and scientific research (Noori, 2014).

The academic freedom debate was considered at international level in the General Conference of UNESCO in 1993 (UNESCO 1993, par 1.14) and again in 1997 through the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (UNESCO, 2008). The recommendations highlighted the importance of removing any political pressure that could limit academic freedom. In the United States, the document known as the *Chicago Principles,* which is widely advocated across the country, was developed by the Committee on Freedom of Expression at the University of Chicago in 2014 (Chicago Statement, 2014). This document was adopted by more than 70 institutions across the United States, including the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE, 2021).

Currently, academic freedom is considered a basic right in research, education, and, of course, doctoral studies. However, freedom, in general, and academic freedom specifically, has boundaries and conditions that academics should take into consideration to avoid any conflict between individual rights and society's needs (Axelrod, 2018).

4. Academic Freedom Index (AFI)

The Academic Freedom Index (AFI) for the advancement of free universities is a joint project[3] launched in 2019 to monitor the level of academic freedom in 175 countries and territories around the world (Spannagel et al., 2020). It uses five expert-coded indicators to assess the academic freedom level. These

3 The Academic Freedom Index (AFI) was developed by researchers at the Friedrich-Alexander University Erlangen-Nurnberg, the V-Dem Institute of the University of Gothenburg, and the Global Public Policy Institute in Berlin in close cooperation with the Scholars at Risk (SAR) network (Spannagel et al., 2020).

indicators are the freedom to research and teach; freedom of academic exchange and dissemination; institutional autonomy; campus integrity; and freedom of academic and cultural expression (Kinzelbach et al., 2021; Spannagel et al., 2020). The AFI is not only a research tool, but also an indication for policymakers about the level of academic freedom. The AFI has five objectives: to inform stakeholders, provide monitoring yardsticks, alter incentive structures, challenge university rankings, and facilitate research (Kinzelbach et al., 2021). The AFI uses a scale (0-1) to indicate levels of academic freedom.

According to the 2020 AFI report, 80% of academics worldwide experience some restriction on academic freedom. Figure 1 shows the global AFI levels in 2020, where we notice that many African countries are in class C, with an AFI between 0.6 and 0.4, which is lower than that of most developed countries.

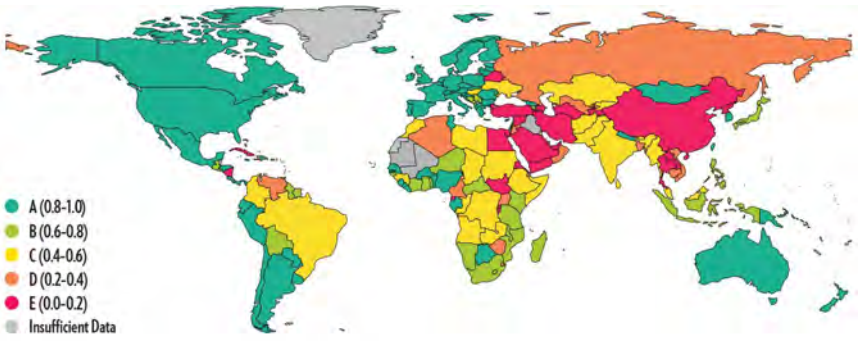
When analysing AFIs on the African continent, we notice the huge variation between countries, which may be the result of political changes and legislative reforms relating to academic freedom. The analysis of the AFI data can help higher education authorities to assess their performance. The data provide an international monitoring mechanism for academic freedom.

5. The freedom to research in doctoral studies

According to James Turk, Director of the Centre for Free Expression at the Faculty of Communication and Design, Ryerson University (Canada), academic freedom in research extends beyond the freedom to teach and research to include the "freedom of intramural expression and freedom of extramural expression" (UNESCO, 2017:1). Intramural means that academics are free to participate in the administration of their institutions, and extramural means that academics can share the outcomes of their research, access the required knowledge sources, secure adequate funding, and take part in political debates (UNESCO, 2017). The core of academic freedom is to minimize interference of politicians, administrators, and trustees on scholarship and teaching, leaving the evaluation of academic quality to peers within the relevant discipline (Finkin & Post, 2009).

When reviewing the literature concerning academic freedom at the international level, we find that there is a clear definition of limits that may be imposed on academic freedom to ensure an academic environment free from constraint. However, in African and Middle East universities this debate is quite recent and still needs more adaptation to fit into cultural, economic, and political conditions (Noori, 2014). When considering academic freedom for doctoral studies we will find differences between higher educational institutions (HEI)

Figure 1: Global levels of Academic Freedom Index (AFI) in 2020 (Kinzelbach et al., 2021)



in African countries compared to (HEI) in other parts of the world, as in most cases doctoral research may exceed the geographic region to include places with different political, cultural, and/or religious points of view. This adds to the complexity of academic freedom for collaborative doctoral studies between African countries and the many other countries in the world.

6. Academic freedom in African universities

The debate about academic freedom in the African context is fairly young, however, its actual achievement is still far behind to varying degrees from one country to another. From Figure 1 we can recognise the huge variation between African countries; we find a few countries in west and south Africa experience higher levels of academic freedom (AFi 0.8- 1.0), similar to the western world (Europe, UK, USA and Australia). On the other hand, 11 African countries[4] score the second-lowest level of academic freedom (AFi 0.6-0.8), like some countries in Asia (e.g. India and Pakistan); and five African countries have the lowest level of academic freedom in the world (AFi 0.0-0.2), comparable to China and some countries in the Middle East and South-East Asia. Despite the variety in the levels of academic freedom within Africa itself, as a region overall, the continent scores the lowest of all the regions in the world.

4 According to the United Nations Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, there are 54 countries in Africa, which are members of the United Nations (United Nations, n.d.).

Figure 2: Levels of Academic Freedom in Africa (years 2000, 2010 and 2020).
Source: extracted from AFI maps, based on V-Dem data (v11)[5]

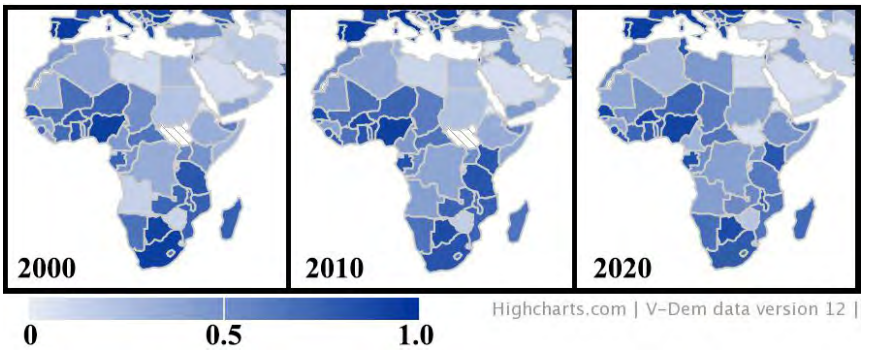


Figure 2 shows the changes in the AFI of African countries from 2000 to 2020, where we notice a slight increase in the AFI in a few west-African countries and a decrease in AFI in some north-African countries mostly because of political unrest.

African universities – like other African institutions and systems – were affected for long periods of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by colonization and then the absence of democratic regimes. The debate about academic freedom rose in prominence with the democratic movements in many North African countries traced to the Arab Spring in the early 2010s. In a review of academic freedom in African universities, in line with the 1997 UNESCO recommendation, Appiagyei-Atua assessed levels of academic freedom, using four indicators: personal freedom, institutional freedom, institutional governance, and tenure (Appiagyei-Atua et al., 2016). They concluded that academic freedom had started to find its way back to African universities after a complete absence; however, the development of academic freedom in African universities has been slow compared with other academic developments during recent years.

One of the main movements by African scholars towards academic freedom was the *Dar es Salaam Declaration on Academic Freedom and Social Responsibility*[6] adopted in Tanzania in 1990 by six academic staff associations.

5 https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/MapGraph/

6 The Dar es Salaam Declaration on Academic Freedom and Social Responsibility of Academics was adopted by delegates from six academic staff associations at the end of the Inaugural Workshop held at Silversands Hotel on 19th April 1990. The six associations participated in Dar es Salaam Declaration are: Ardhi Institute Staff Assembly (ARISA) - Cooperative College Staff Association (COCOSA) - Institute of Development Management Staff Association (IDMASA) - Institute of Finance Management Staff Assembly (IFMASA) - Sokoine University of Agriculture Staff Association (SUASA) - University of Dar es Salaam Academic Staff Assembly (UDASA), (http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/africa/DARDOK.htm)

This declaration, along with the *Kampala Declaration on Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility,*[7] also adopted in 1990, paved the way for establishing the basics of academic freedom in African universities. The Dar es Salaam declaration argued for academic freedom through two main issues, academic rights and the autonomy of academic organisations, along with the security of tenure.

At the governmental level, Africa is taking positive steps towards improving people's and human rights. The most promising action is the *African Charter on Human and People's Rights* which came into effect on 25 January 2005 (ACHPR, 2005). However, the charter does not directly mention academic freedom. Adding to this movement, a series of conferences were held in Africa (July 2005 in Dakar, Senegal, then in May 2006 in El Jadida, Morocco, and July 2007 in the Democratic Republic of Congo), with the aim of learning from the European model known as the Bologna process. This series of conferences led some North African countries – such as former French colonies, Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia – to adopt a model similar to the Bologna model, and re-align their higher education systems, "undergraduate, master, and doctorate", with the French higher-education system (EDSLR, 2008). The adoption of the Bologna model helps HEI in these countries to build more cooperative international relationships, which in turn helps with the adoption of clearer principles of academic freedom.

Currently, most African countries include academic freedom in their constitutions, however in different ways. In some cases, it is done indirectly as part of the freedom of expression, for example, article 16(1) of the South African Constitution states that "everyone has the right to freedom of expression …". Other countries have a direct recognition of scientific or academic freedom, for example in article 49 of the Republic of Cape Verde Constitution "[E]veryone shall have the freedom to learn, educate, and teach" (Appiagyei-Atua et al., 2016). However, although academics are officially protected in many African countries, the actual achievement of academic freedom in research and doctoral studies still needs more development to be realised, given existing constraints (Scholars at Risk, 2020).

7 The Kampala Declaration on Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility (1990), adopted at a Symposium on Academic Freedom and Social Responsibility of Intellectuals held in Kampala, 29 Nov. 1990. (http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/africa/KAMDOK.htm)

7. Limits and constraints on academic freedom in doctoral studies

According to a 2012 report by the International Association of Universities and the Catalan Association of Public Universities (IAU-ACUP), the challenges facing doctoral studies, in general, could be summarised as: funding shortage (for both institutions and students); institutional capacity; supervision quality; inadequate responsiveness to national, social and economic needs; weak links to industry; lack of international information-sharing and lack of academic freedom (IAU-ACUP, 2012; Cloete et al., 2015).

According to Fish (2014), we may categorise academic supervisors into five 'schools' in terms of their justifications for academic freedom. Fish named the first school 'It's Just a Job' based on 'professionalism, pure and simple'. He named the second group the 'For the Common Good' school, which stresses the positive impact of academic freedom as 'shared governance and democracy'. The third type is the 'Academic Exceptionalism or Uncommon Beings' school, which claims the superiority of the moral and intellectual virtue of academics over other callings. The fourth is the 'Academic Freedom as Critique' school, which presents more critiques of society, politics, and academic norms. The fifth school, 'Academic Freedom as Revolution', goes deeper and advocates the revolutionary role of academic freedom (Downs, 2015; Fish, 2014). Fish argues that some academics are fulfilling only their jobs of teaching and research, avoiding moral guidance and political persuasion (Fish, 2014).

In the countries where academic freedom is fully protected by the constitution and realised, the debate moves to a focus on creating a balance between the freedom to research and other basic civil rights, public safety, and ethics (Santosuosso et al., 2007). Almost all the issues that affect higher education studies also affect academic freedom and limit its healthy application in doctoral studies (Scholars at Risk, 2020).

Levels of achievement of academic freedom are subject to many constraints. These may include, but are not limited to the following four, whose identification is based on the current author's observations of conditions affecting academic freedom in Africa. Gathering empirical data to test these observations is a project for further research.

7.1 Institutional and bureaucratic constraints

Institutional regulations could affect academic freedom in many ways, such as the selection procedures of doctoral candidates, the allocation of supervisors

to students and limitations on research topics. It has become common in most research centres – especially in the sciences, where expensive laboratory equipment is required – to define research programmes and themes where prospective doctoral students must find a topic within that programme in one of the themes. This practice developed because of funding requirements and had a quality dimension, however, to avoid its limitation on academic freedom, it needs to be clearly communicated to both supervisor and candidate before starting the doctorate study, and any changes could be applied only on new candidates. The research programmes need to be flexible to fit a wide range of research themes within the discipline and the implementation should be equal for everyone.

The freedom to select a research topic, along with the freedom of the doctoral student to choose their supervisor, in addition to the freedom of the supervisor to select students, will create a healthy environment for academic freedom. Moreover, supervisors have an increasing role in the management of doctoral studies. The supervisor as a project manager (Grant & Manathunga, 2011; Pyhältö et al., 2015) is required to help students starting from registration and administration to funding support, not only the main role of scientific support (Waghid, 2006). Additionally, the supervisor has to manage academic freedom within the existing limits and constraints.

7.2 Funding constraints and autonomy

Funding is one of the main constraints on academics, especially with the limited resources in most public universities (Neave, 1998), and more so in African universities (Van't Land, 2011). The increasing number of doctoral students has a negative effect on supervisors. On one hand, it puts more academic pressure on them (Cloete et al., 2015), and on another hand, it could affect the supervisor's freedom to choose doctoral candidates which reflects on academic freedom. The supervisor should manage within the institutional constraints to achieve an acceptable level of academic freedom.

Currently, due to the globalization of technological exchange and financial sources, many research institutions encourage supervisors and students to find funding from industry, sponsors, or scholarships (Van't Land, 2011). In most universities and institutions, any external funding should be through an official academic authority that monitors the flow of funds and ensures that the money is allocated to the designated purpose. However, monitoring the financial flow should not interfere with the research itself, even by the funding sources or official authorities, to avoid compromising academic freedom.

The international funding of doctoral research is one of the main supports for developing doctorate programmes. Moreover, the financial support and scholarships offered for doctorate students from governments and organisations in some developed countries help to overcome cultural differences and enhance political relations (Axelrod, 2022). However, they could have a negative effect on academic freedom, as the students, supervisors, and even the institutions are threatened by rejection or withdrawal of financial support when discussing sensitive topics.

7.3 Ethical, social, cultural, and religious constraints

Academic freedom is not only practised in the academic community, but it reflects the degree of freedom in society and can be seen as an extension of it. Thus, academic freedom is embedded in the conditions and circumstances of the society in which it is practised (Axelrod, 2022). In other words, academic freedom can be seen as a reflection of public freedom and vice versa (Axelrod, 2018; Axelrod, 2022; Neave, 1998). However, doctoral research cannot be detached from intercultural relations, in some cases between student and supervisor, and in other cases between the location of the research institution and the location where the research is conducted (Lee, 2008; Martin & Price, 2021; Manathunga, 2014).

However, although doctoral students and supervisors are free to do research, in many cases it is complicated in certain cultures to deal with certain sensitive issues or topics. Many of the societies in Africa, and almost all the Middle East, are conservative societies where there are some inherited social habits that no one can speak about, and some religious boundaries that cannot be crossed. Even if doctoral students and supervisors wanted to research these topics, it would be very difficult to collect data or publish the results. Supervisors play a major role in guiding and adjusting students' freedom to research, respect and fit within the ethical, social, cultural and religious limits based on location, topic, and persons involved in the research.

7.4 Political constraints

The political situation in a country is the most obvious constraint on academic freedom in doctoral studies. Political conditions may limit research related to certain countries or places, prevent research into certain topics or encourage avoidance of some people or national figures in the research. In some cases, even with the full political freedom and ethical permissions to do research in

one location or country, a problem may appear when the research is done in another location with less political freedom. There are some cases of researchers who are registered as doctoral students in institutions located in countries with high levels of academic freedom, and they do the research in another country with limited academic freedom. One such a case was the British PhD student, Matthew Hedges. His research focused on authoritarian regimes with an emphasis on the Arabian Peninsula. He was arrested in 2018 for about six months while conducting fieldwork research in the United Arab Emirates and considered a spy. He was later freed after a pardon (BBC News, 2018). Another case is the Italian PhD student, Giulio Regeni, who was brutally murdered in 2016 while doing research in Egypt. His case is still under investigation by Italian and Egyptian authorities (Walsh, 2017). In its report, Scholars at Risk highlighted many other examples around the world (Scholars at Risk, 2020).

8. Academic freedom and doctoral supervision in Africa

Insufficient or lacking academic freedom in certain disciplines, especially when it comes to sensitive topics, is one of the obstacles to doctoral studies in African universities. The supervisor needs to guide students throughout the research process to deal with all the constraints while maintaining an acceptable level of academic freedom, keeping in mind student safety and research quality. The supervisors may fulfil this role by *claiming*, *enhancing*, *managing*, and *limiting (as appropriate)* academic freedom throughout the research process.

Claiming academic freedom is the responsibility of all academics in general, and specifically also the responsibility of supervisors of doctoral candidates. Supervisors should implement the required academic rules while communicating the main principles of academic freedom within their field and in their institution. Full academic freedom in doctoral studies in African universities will never be achieved without supervisors' efforts to claim academic freedom, demanding more academic freedom for the doctoral candidates, the supervisor, and the institution.

Giving academic freedom is another role of supervisors. However, supervisors do not have ownership of academic freedom to give it; but they have a level of authority over doctoral students that, in some cases, can deny students' rights to academic freedom. Academic freedom is a basic right of everyone. Hence, supervisors are required to enhance the freedom of doctoral students, where applicable, to identify the topic within the available research themes; participate in the selection of the supervisor while considering specialization and availability; choose cases and locations which are suitable to their conditions

and abilities while maintaining the quality and added value of the research; and discuss and publish their opinions freely which is the core of academic freedom. Academic freedom is indivisible; it must be guaranteed equally to all academics at all levels without any exceptions.

Creating and enhancing the optimal conditions for academic freedom is an essential role of the supervisor. The supervisor needs to support the doctoral candidate by helping them find sustainable funding sources and securing accurate and reliable data sources. In addition, the supervisor needs to manage any possible risks that may affect the research or the student's safety by informing the doctoral student about any ethical, cultural and political risks they may face during research.

Finally, limitations to academic freedom within the research environment. The supervisor as project manager of the doctoral research has the responsibility of setting the frames that define the research boundaries such as time, budget and research domain. However, the supervisor also needs to clarify the ethical constraints, societal cultural limits, and the limits of freedom. This does not mean minimizing the student's freedom or compromising the research quality but keeping the student aware of all circumstances and thus ensuring that the student is free to make informed decisions.

9. Conclusion

Academic freedom is a pre-condition for academic integrity and research quality; it is the right to learn, teach, and express opinions free from external constraints. Academic freedom in modern universities was first expressed explicitly in Germany at the beginning of the 19th century and then in other regions in the world. However, in Africa, academic freedom started to receive attention after the end of colonialism.

Academic freedom is not absolute; it needs to be protected and enhanced while taking cognisance of the social, cultural, economic, and political values and practices of society. Academic freedom in doctoral research must be practised at different levels, beginning with the institution, then the supervisor and the student. It is an important factor to achieve reliable results.

Academic freedom in doctoral studies entails everything throughout the research journey starting from supervisor–student allocation, topic and domain selection, constraint-free funding, and most importantly, the freedom to express opinions and publish results. All of this must be practised by everyone at all levels without exception and with no external constraints other than the research constraints themselves. Noting that academic freedom given to

academics by the state or the institution should not interfere with the freedom of individuals or society.

With the multicultural nature of doctoral research, academic freedom needs more attention when implemented in different contexts and places. This requires more effort from the supervisor, as the project manager, to facilitate academic freedom within prevailing limits and constraints.

The author is conducting further study based on an analysis of the AFI data in the African context using semi-structured interviews and questionnaires to acquire solid results related to the role of supervisors in enhancing the level of academic freedom.

References

Aarrevaara, T. (2010). Academic freedom in a changing academic world. *European Review, 18*(1), S55–S69. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1062798709990317

American Association of University Professors (AAUP). (n.d.). *1940 Statement of principles on academic freedom and tenure*. https://www.aaup.org/report/1940-statement-principles-academic-freedom-and-tenure

American Association of University Professors–Utica College (AAUP-UC). (2017, September 27). Wednesday wisdom: Albert Einstein on academic freedom. https://aauputicacollege.org/2017/09/27/wednesday-wisdom-albert-einstein-on-academic-freedom/

African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR). (2005). *African charter on human and people's rights*. African Union.

Anderson, W. M. A. (1934). Academic freedom. *Australasian Journal of Psychology and Philosophy, 12*(2), 138–142. https://doi.org/10.1080/00048403408541034

Appiagyei-Atua, K., Beiter, K. D., & Karran, T. (2016). A review of academic freedom in African universities through the prism of the 1997 ILO/UNESCO recommendation. *AAUP Journal of Academic Freedom, 7*. https://www.aaup.org/sites/default/files/Appiagyei-Atua.pdf

Axelrod, P. (2018, January 24). Academic freedom: Can history be our guide? *University Affairs*. https://www.universityaffairs.ca/features/feature-article/academic-freedom-can-history-guide/

Axelrod, P. (2022). Academic freedom and its constraints: A complex history. *The Canadian Journal of Higher Education, 52*(1), 51–66. https://doi.org/10.47678/cjhe.vi0.189143

BBC News. (2018, November 26). Matthew Hedges: Who is the man at the centre of the spy row? https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-tyne-46318655

Cairo University. (2017). *CU History*. https://cu.edu.eg/History

Chicago Statement. 2014. "Report of the Committee on Freedom of Expression" at the University of Chicago. https://freeexpression.uchicago.edu/

Cloete, N., Mouton, J., & Sheppard, C. (2015). *Doctoral education in South Africa: Policy, discourse, and data*. African Minds.

Dea, S. (2018, October 9). A brief history of academic freedom. *University Affairs*. https://www.universityaffairs.ca/opinion/dispatches-academic-freedom/a-brief-history-of-academic-freedom/

Doğan, D. (2016). Academic freedom from the perspectives of academics and students: A qualitative study. *Education and Science, 41*(184), 311–331. https://doi.org/10.15390/EB.2016.6135

Downs, D. A. (2015). Just a job [Review of the book *Versions of academic freedom: From professionalism to revolution*, by Stanley Fish]. *Academic Questions, 28*(2), 244–249. https://www.nas.org/academic-questions/28/2/just_a_job

EDSLR. (2008, May 25). The Bologna Process in Africa: A case of aspiration, inspiration, or both? *Global Higher Ed WordPress*. https://globalhighered.wordpress.com/2008/05/25/the-bologna-process-a-case-of-aspiration-and-inspiration-in-africa/

Emerson, T. I., & Haber, D. (1963). Academic freedom of the faculty member as citizen. *Law and Contemporary Problems, 28*, 525–572. https://scholarship.law.duke.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2967&context=lcp

Finkin, M. W., & Post, R. C. (2009). *For the common good: Principles of American academic freedom*. Yale University Press.

Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE). 2021. https://www.thefire.org/about-us/mission

Fish, S. (2014). *Versions of academic freedom: From professionalism to revolution*. University of Chicago Press.

Grant, B., & Manathunga, C. (2011). Supervision and cultural difference: Rethinking institutional pedagogies. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International, 48*(4), 351–354. https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2011.617084

Grimm, J., & Saliba, I. (2017). Free research in fearful times: Conceptualizing an index to monitor academic freedom. *Interdisciplinary Political Studies, 3*(1), 41–75.

International Association of Universities and Catalan Association of Public Universities (IAU-ACUP). (2012). *IAU-ACUP International seminar on innovative approaches to doctoral education and research training in sub-Saharan Africa*. http://www.acup.cat/sites/default/files/final-report-iau-acup-seminar-innovative-approaches-doctoral-education_1.pdf

Kinzelbach, K., Saliba, I., Spannagel, J., & Quinn, R. (2021). *Free universities: Putting the academic freedom index into action*. The Global Public Policy Institute. https://www.gppi.net/med

Lee, A. (2008). How are doctoral students supervised? Concepts of doctoral research supervision. *Studies in Higher Education, 33*(3), 267–281. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070802049202

Manathunga, C. (2014). *Intercultural postgraduate supervision: Reimagining time, place, and knowledge*. Routledge.

Martin, R., & Price, M. (2021). Co-constructed transnational learning in postgraduate research supervision: Exploring issues of power and trust. *African Perspectives of Research in Teaching & Learning, 5*(1), 158–165. https://research.stmarys.ac.uk/id/eprint/5289/

Neave, G. R. (1998). Autonomy, social responsibility, and academic freedom: Thematic debate. UNESCO. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000113549

Noori, N. (2014). Does academic freedom globalize? The diffusion of the American model of education to the Middle East and academic freedom. *PS: Political Science & Politics, 47*(3), 608–611. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096514000717

Nybom, T. (2003). The Humboldt legacy: Reflections on the past, present, and future of the European university. *Higher Education Policy, 16*(2), 141–159. https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.hep.8300013

Pyhältö, K., Vekkaila, J., & Keskinen, J. (2015). Fit matters in the supervisory relationship: Doctoral students and supervisors' perceptions about the supervisory activities. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International, 52*(1), 4–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2014.981836

Saliba, I. (2018, January 25). Academic freedom in the MENA region: Universities under siege. *Youth, Society, Media & Culture, IEMed Mediterranean Yearbook: Strategics Sectors-Culture & Society,* 313–316. https://www.iemed.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Academic-Freedom-in-the-MENA-Region-Universities-under-Siege.pdf

Santosuosso, A., Sellaroli, V., & Fabio, E. (2007). What constitutional protection for freedom of scientific research? *Journal of Medical Ethics, 33*(6), 342–344. https://doi.org/10.1136/jme.2007.020594

Scholars at Risk. (2020, November 18). *Free to think 2020: Report of the Scholars at Risk academic freedom monitoring project*. Scholars at Risk Network, New York University. https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/resources/free-to-think-2020/

Sherman, M. A. B. (1990). The university in modern Africa: Toward the twenty-first century. *The Journal of Higher Education, 61*(4), 363–385. https://doi.org/10.2307/1982076

Smith, S. E. (2002). Who owns academic freedom? The standard for academic free speech at public universities. *Washington and Lee Law Review, 59*(1), 299–360. https://scholarlycommons.law.wlu.edu/wlulr/vol59/iss1/9/

Spannagel, J., Kinzelbach, K., & Saliba, I. (2020). *The Academic Freedom Index and other new indicators relating to academic space: An introduction*. Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute, Department of Political Science University of Gothenburg. https://v-dem.net/media/publications/users_working_paper_26.pdf

Stone, G. R. (2015). A brief history of academic freedom. In A. Bilgrami & J. Cole (Eds.), *Who's afraid of academic freedom?* (pp. 1–9). Columbia University Press.

UNESCO, (1993). Records of the General Conference. Twenty-seventh Session. Paris, 25 October to 16 November 1993. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000095621.locale=en

UNESCO. (2008). *The ILO/UNESCO recommendation concerning the status of teacher (1966) and the status of higher-education teaching personnel (1997) with a user's guide*. UNESCO. http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0016/001604/160495e.pdf

UNESCO. (2017, October 18). Protecting academic freedom is as relevant as ever. *UNESCO*. https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/protecting-academic-freedom-relevant-ever

United Nations. (n.d.). Regional groups of member states. https://www.un.org/dgacm/en/content/regional-groups

University of Chicago. (2021). *A history of commitment to free expression*. https://freeexpression.uchicago.edu/history/

Van't Land, H. (2011). *The changing nature of doctoral studies in sub-Saharan Africa: Challenges and policy development opportunities at six universities in sub-Saharan Africa*. International Association of Universities (IAU). https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.1.3560.2407

Waghid, Y. (2006). Reclaiming freedom and friendship through postgraduate student supervision. *Teaching in Higher Education, 11*(4), 427–439. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562510600874185

Walsh, D. (2017, August 15). Why was an Italian graduate student tortured and murdered in Egypt? *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/15/magazine/giulio-regeni-italian-graduate-student-tortured-murdered-egypt.html

Wilson, J. K. (2016). AAUP's 1915 Declaration of Principles: Conservative and radical, visionary and myopic. *Journal of Academic Freedom, 7*. https://www.aaup.org/sites/default/files/Wilson_1.pdf