From the Local to the Global

Theories and Key Issues in Global Justice

Charles Quist-Adade

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All chapters in this book have undergone peer review.

Printed on acid-free paper

To my family: Malaika, Christopher (Kweku), Maayaa, and Geralda (Dada)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

Canadian mass communication theorist and social philosopher Marshall McLuhan put us all in a global village. If we are to go by the logic of McLuhan's postulate, we are all citizens of a single global village, all equally empowered to speak out and be heard. However, Marshall McLuhan's village does not give all of us equal say in the day-to-day running of its affairs. The principle of democracy is subverted by some village members who happen to have acquired the ability to speak louder than the rest. McLuhan's other postulate, that the "medium is the message," has taken another ironic twist: now power is the message (and consequently those with power are morally and ethically correct in their choices). Thus the powerful wielders of "loudspeakers" and "amplifiers," e.g., the dominant media and their multi-national accomplices in the industrialized corporate world have arrogated to themselves the right to shape the attitudes and feelings of all the inhabitants of the village. They have also appointed themselves the cultural purveyors of the village.

According to a 1999 UN report, cultures which include a preponderance of poorer members of the much-touted global village are under siege from the forces of global economic integration. Apologists for globalization (read "global-corporatization" or "Westernization") say it opens peoples' lives to a global culture in all its creativity. They call it euphemistically "glocalization" or the hybridization, the intermixing of different cultures. Glocalization is equated with cultural borrowing which will lead to a new global culture. There is nothing wrong with cultural borrowings. In fact any culture, to remain dynamic, must borrow from other cultures. In fact, according to American Anthropologist Ralph Linton, what we call American culture constitutes 80 percent borrowing from other cultures (Linton, 1937).

Glocalization is not cultural borrowing, nor does it not necessarily lead to the creation of a new global culture. For a truly global culture to form, the flow of ideas, knowledge, values and norms must happen in all directions freely, and cultures must borrow from others on their own accord. However, the direction of flow of the "new" global culture is unbalanced and uni-directional, proceeding largely from rich countries to poor, from North to South. Indeed, not much has changed since the 1970s, when McLuhan identified the global village and when the developing world charged the West with cultural imperialism. The only real change is in technology, where the West has grown ever more powerful while the chasm in the digital divide between the North and South has grown ever wider.

But even more pernicious is the fact that a tiny fraction of the members of the village own the lion share of wealth. At least 80 percent of humanity lives on less than $10 a day. More than 80 percent of the world's population lives in countries where income differentials are widening. The poorest 40 percent of the world's population accounts for five percent of global income. The richest 20 percent

accounts for three-quarters of world income (Chen & Ravallion, 2008). As my poem (See sidebar on p. 67.) says, in the Global Village we see ugly scars of all manner of injustice. The majority of the "Global Villagers" gasp in suffocating oppression, In the midst of plentitude, we see starvation and pillage in the Global Village. Around 27 to 28 percent of all children in developing countries are estimated to be underweight or stunted. The two regions that account for the bulk of the deficit are South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa (Chen & Ravallion, 2008). In his eulogy to the Nelson Mandela, the late former president of South Africa and anti-Anti-Apartheid and social justice champion, U.S. President Barack Obama made the following observation: "For around the world today, we still see children suffering from hunger and disease. We still see run-down schools. We still see young people without prospects for the future."

According to the International Labour Organization (2013, p. 6) 120 million human beings are chronically undernourished, 884 million lack access to safe water, and 2,500 million lack access to basic sanitation; 5 2 million lack access to essential drugs; 69.24 million lack adequate shelter and 160 million lack electricity; 77.74 million adults are illiterate; and 218 million children are child Laborers. The United Nations Annual World Report of 1999 revealed these statistics: Europeans spent $11 billion a year on ice cream. This accounts for $2 billion more than the estimated annual total needed to provide clean water and safe sewers for the world's population. Americans and Europeans spent $17 billion a year on pet food. This accounts for $4 billion more than the estimated annual additional total needed to provide basic health and nutrition for everyone in the world. The fortunes of the world's three richest people, Bill Gates and Paul Allen of Microsoft and financier Warren Buffet, exceeded the gross national product of the poorest countries and their 600 million inhabitants. The richest fifth of the world's people consumed 86 percent of all goods and services while the poorest fifth consumes just 1.3 percent. Indeed, the richest fifth consumed 45 percent of all meat and fish, 58 percent of all energy used, 84 percent of all paper, has 74 percent of all telephone lines and owns 87 percent of all vehicles (UN World Report, 1999).[1]

My experience during the 23 years that I have been teaching sociology, and particularly social justice related courses, is that few students make the connection between what happens in their country with what happens in other parts of the world. At the beginning of each semester, after introducing the concepts—"*sociological imagination*" and "*global sociological imagination*"—to my students, I ask them to write a short essay, using the concept of "global sociological imagination," to explain how their lives, i.e., their personal biographies have been shaped by other people, social structure and history. This is the essay question: "*Now that you have learned about the concepts 'sociological imagination' and 'global sociological imagination', write a 300-word essay explaining how your life has been influenced or affected by other people, keeping in mind C. W. Mills' observation that we are who we are thanks to the intersection of biography, history and social structure.*"

Almost invariably, the majority of the students mention their parents and their grade school teachers as the most influential people in shaping their lives. Hardly any of them referred to the roles people in other parts of the world have played or play in shaping their lives; not even the contributions of their neighbors and other compatriots to making them who they are. Yet, the items of clothing they wear to class, the food they eat, and even the fuel they fill the cars with to travel to campus were largely produced by people in other parts of the world. Their sociological imagination does not extend beyond their immediate nuclear family and school. It is this inability of students to see the links between their personal lives and the lives of the legions of people in other parts of the world, their inability to see the interconnectedness between local and global issues in our increasingly globalizing world that prompted the writing of this textbook. The other reason this book was written is that finding a suitable textbook on the sociology of social justice, much less on social justice in both local and global contexts, was a challenging task.

This book is intended to fill this void. *From the Local to the Global: Key Issues in Global Justice* explores and explains the relationships between social justice as it is constructed and implemented at the local and global contexts. It will do so by examining social justice from a theoretical and substantive perspective.

What is Social Justice? Why study social justice? What are the local and global dimensions of social justice? Cramme and Diamond (2009, p. 3) defined *Social Justice* as *the relative distribution of rights, opportunities and resources within a given society, and whether it deserves to be regarded as fair and just*. It is a vision and a mission, as well as a practice that aims to create a just society. A *Just Society* is *one wherein each member has equal access to basic and valued societal resources, including food, shelter and clothing, and is able to enjoy the rights and freedoms all other members are entitled to, such as the right to life, education, free speech, thought, assembly, association, to profess a religion or not to, and human dignity*. A just society is one that empowers each member to develop his or her full human potential.

However, while social justice in theory represents these lofty ideals, the vast majority of people are deprived of the most basic rights. Both locally and globally, millions live in abject poverty; irking out a miserable living, with no job opportunities (or poor-paying jobs for those who have them); they lack adequate food, proper shelter clean water, and good health facilities. At the same time, a tiny minority of people live in opulence. For the majority of the '*wretched of the Global Earth*', to paraphrase Frantz Fanon (1965), life hangs on a thin thread. Yet, it is the sacrifices, the toils and labours of the global wretched that produce the wealth of the rich. It is the single mother sweatshop worker in India who is paid a pittance of $5 or less a day in order to ensure that the Chief Executive of Enron makes a four-figure a day salary. It is the back-breaking labour of the single mother in Sri Lanka in the Global South that ensures that Global North consumer buys his or her Nike running shoes at $60 or less. The picture is not that different for the worker in the Global North.

According to the International Labor Organization, World Employment Report (1998–1999), at the end of 1998, some one billion workers—one third of the world's labor force—were either unemployed or underemployed, the worst this figure has been since the Great Depression of the 1930s due in part to the transplanting of factories from the industrialized countries in Western countries to the Developing countries.[2] The unmitigated over consumption by people in the Global North has led to depletion of natural resources (forests fishes, fossil fuel, etc.) in the Global South. The destruction of forests and the burning of fossil fuel and other substances have led to global warming, endangering our planet.

In 2001 when terrorists attacked the World Trade Center in York and the Pentagon in Washington, inordinate empathy was expressed globally for the two thousand plus innocent victims, and rightly so. However, as the global outpouring of sorrow and sympathy went on, hardly did anyone ponder over the souls of tens of thousands of innocent children, women, and peasants in the developing world who have perished and continue to die every day. Their peril is not only due to the direct and indirect interventions by the US-led West, but also by the apathy, wastefulness and greed of people in the industrialized nations of the world. For example, arms manufactured in the Americas, Russia, and many of the industrialized countries are sold presently to Africans, Asians and Middle-Easterners, to kill and maim one another. For example, more than three million people have died in Congo alone since 1996 with the complicity of the western countries as their Multinational Corporations stand by, pillaging the country's mineral wealth.

What this book intends to show is how local problems, actions and indeed inactions, have wide-ranging global ramifications and how global problems, actions and inactions have local repercussions.

NOTES

[1]   UN World Report: http://www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus/dailyfax/df99ix.htm
[2]   http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Globalization/Globalization_FactsFigures.html

ARRANGEMENT OF THIS BOOK

This book is meant to offer a survey of social justice concepts, theories and issues as they apply to local and global settings. *Chapter 1* includes a detailed analysis of knowledge construction and indigenous systems of knowledge, with a look at African and Native American/Canadian indigenous systems of knowledge. *Chapter 2* introduces several concepts and recurring themes and critical thinking terms that will help the reader navigate and digest the topics and the rest of chapters in the book. The critical thinking terms provide a toolkit, intended to sharpen assessments in making the necessary connections and interpretations of issues raised throughout the book, including their own lived experiences and the real world, both locally and globally. *Chapter 3* explores how social reality is constructed and how the different constructions of reality affect the meanings and the importance different people and cultures apply to such concepts as freedom, equality, fairness, and justice. It also introduces the reader to knowledge and knowledge construction, different systems of knowledge, critical thinking concepts, as well as recurring themes and terms that will be used throughout the book. This book approaches social justice from critical constructivist and human rights perspectives and as such we will devote a considerable part of this chapter to explaining social construction of reality, then critical constructivism and end with the sociology of human rights. We explore how social reality is constructed and how the different constructions of reality affect the meanings and the importance different people and cultures apply to such concepts as freedom, equality, fairness, and justice. This book approaches social justice from critical constructivist and human rights perspectives and as such we will devote a considerable part of this chapter to explaining social construction of reality, then critical constructivism and end with the sociology of human rights. *Chapter 4* is devoted to the social construction of inequality. Inequality, like all social phenomena, is a human invention rather than a biological or genetic creation. This chapter explains the process of the creation of inequality and how the process leads to the creation of hierarchies, oppression, and injustice. In *Chapter 5*, the concept and theories of social justice are explored together with the concept of human rights. We also explore the sociology of human rights. *Chapter 6* focuses on social justice, its meaning, dimensions and types. The various theories of social justice are discussed in *Chapter 7*. A particular emphasis is placed on the contributions of *Durkheim*, *Marx*, and *Weber* to the social justice project. Theories of political social justice are explored in *Chapter 8*. Here the contributions of classical and contemporary theorists mostly from social philosophy are discussed. In *Chapter 9*, we take a look at gender theories of social justice. Modernization theory is analyzed in *Chapter 10*. Postmodernist theories are tackled in *Chapter 11*. *Chapter 12* explores economic theories of social justice. The topic of globalization and social justice is taken up

in *Chapter 13*. *Chapter 14* tackles "race," racialization, and racism. It begins with the social construction of "race" and provides a brief excursus of the origin of the notion of "race" and racialization and concludes with a short discussion of anti-racism education. *Chapter 15* is devoted to *Epilogue*—final remarks.

INTRODUCTION

Until the philosophy which holds one race superior and another inferior is finally and permanently discredited and abandoned, everywhere is war.
(Bob Marley sang the above in Zimbabwe in April 1980)

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.
(Martin Luther King Jr.)

DOES SOCIAL JUSTICE MATTER?

Justice is not only a universal concept; it is the most cherished and sought after ideal in most, if not all societies. It is also the most abused. Even in the animal kingdom justice matters as, illustrated in the lyrics of a song by a popular Ghanaian musician. Kwame Ampadu's song *Ebi te yie, ebi nso nte yie,* translates to "*some of us are well seated, but some of us are not seated well at all.*" The lyrics of the song begin by saying that some of the citizens of the animal kingdom are well placed and privileged, but others are under excruciating oppression from others. The lyrics go on to relate the rest of the fable. in which at a general assembly of the animal kingdom, the antelope had the misfortune to have been seated in front of the lion, who not only pinned the antelope's tail to the ground, but also kept knocking the antelope in the head each time it attempted to speak up. Eventually, the antelope mustered courage and addressed the chair of the assembly: "*Petition please, a point of order! I humbly request this meeting to adjourn, because, Sir, at this august gathering, some of us are well seated, but some of us are not well seated at all.*"

As in the animal kingdom, human society is riddled with the perennial tug-of-war between the privileged and non-privileged, between the haves and the have-nots, the powerful and the powerless. For centuries, the 'lions' of human society have always attempted to gag and suppress the 'antelopes,' often with tragic consequences. Human history is replete with countless such cases. From the M'aafa or the Great Tragedy (the European Slave Trade) and the Holocaust, to the Rwanda Genocide and the Bush Administration's invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, millions of innocent people have been brutalized and butchered to death at the hands of the 'lions' of the world. Across the globe, millions are deprived of their basic human rights and face persecution in their own countries and in foreign lands for all manner of "infractions" or because of their birth assignments or ascribed statuses, running gamut from skin colour, sex, sexual orientation, physical and mental disability, to age and religion. From Africa to Europe, from Asia to Latin America, people are murdered and maimed, maligned and muzzled, ostracized and excommunicated for being the "wrong" colour, sex, age, etc.

Social justice indeed matters. From time immemorial, the denial of equal rights, respect for human dignity and the equitable distribution of valued societal resources has been the bane of most societies. The denial, real and perceived, of justice has spawned conflicts throughout history, many of which have led to major wars. As the quest for social justice has continued, it has also led to the emergence of ideas, movements and the creation of projects to address social injustice in various parts of the world.

This book examines key issues in social justice in the local and global contexts. It takes the perspective that social justice is a multifaceted, dialectical, intersectional, evolving, and cross-cultural phenomenon with both local and global interfaces and implications.

The book is based on four premises:

1. Global Social Justice (GSJ) recognizes the commonality of the human condition.
2. GSJ is a deeply and inextricably a local and global phenomenon; one cannot exist in isolation from the other. In other words, the promotion or denial of social justice locally has both immediate and remote/future implications globally. The reverse is equally true; social justice promoted or demoted in a far flung corner of the world affects social justice at home.
3. GSJ is transnational, transcending national and cultural boundaries.
4. GSJ is both a domestic and global normative imperative, recognizing interstices of race, gender, class, sexuality, age, and (dis)ability.

The overriding problem of global inequality must be addressed as a necessary condition for solving problems of health care, debt, racism, homophobia, sexism, ageism, terrorism, and other critical issues facing citizens nationally and globally. In addition, I posit that real-world solutions to social problems, be they local or global, require collective global efforts. Finally, I contend that in our ever interacting, interdependent, and globalizing world, students need the requisite vocabulary and literacy in order to capture, discern, describe, and critically analyze social justice issues. Similarly, critical literacy (knowledge not just for the sake of acquiring knowledge, but knowledge for self and collective emancipation and empowerment) is a prerequisite for the development of the highest level of awareness of local and global social justice issues and a tool of action in addressing these issues and building upon progressive gains for the common good.

This book approaches social justice from a critical human rights perspective. While it adopts a multi-faceted approach, the book places a premium on the critical constructivist perspective. In other words, while the author introduces students to different perspectives on social justice, he privileges the critical constructivist perspective, which posits that social reality is socially constructed and that power dynamics play a pivotal role in knowledge creation, dissemination and consumption. In addition, the critical constructivist approach sees social justice as contested, contextual, ever-changing and value-laden, while at the same time, universal and global.

KNOWLEDGE, KNOWING, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

SECTION I

The old cliché that knowledge is power acquires vintage relevance and currency when it comes to our knowledge about the workings and principles of social justice at both the local and global realms. Knowledge as a source of power is not only *dialectical*; its use can have *unintended consequences*. In other words, knowledge is double edged; it cuts in both ways. It can be used in both positive and negative ends. As well, in its use for positive ends, knowledge may unintentionally lead to negative effects. The opposite is equally true. Using knowledge for negative purposes may unintentionally trigger counter actions, which may prove positive for one group or another. *Knowledge is also contested and value-laden*. What is "positive" or "good" knowledge for one person or group of people may be "dangerous" or "bad" knowledge for someone else or some other group We will seek to answer the question: "How does a particular knowledge community relate to other knowledge community?"

In this section, we will look at knowledge as a source of power, oppression and resistance, sources of knowledge, indigenous ways of knowing, and end with a discussion of several conceptual tools in sociological research methodology. We answer the question "how do we know what we know?" by exploring such concepts as *ontology*, *epistemology* and the *critical paradigm (a paradigm is a way of seeing and evaluating the world)* under three worldviews. This will be followed by an analysis of the theory of social construction of reality. We end the chapter with a discussion of the critical constructionist paradigm.

KNOWLEDGE, POWER, AND POWERLESSNESS

Crudely defined, knowledge is the minimum amount of information one needs in order to successfully navigate and negotiate his or her world, be it natural, physical, and social at any given time. Knowledge, far from being natural, biological or genetic, is a *social and cultural construct*. It is informed by not just social interactions and cultural ethos, but also by both *endogenous (internal)* and *exogenous (external)* factors, such as *temporal (historical)*, *spatial (territorial)*, and power dynamics. As a social process, knowledge is acquired through continuous learning (and re-learning/unlearning) as social actors interact with others and with their physical and natural worlds. As a cultural phenomenon, knowledge derives from and responds to the cultural milieu. In other words, knowledge is culturally-bound. Every culture

produces its own stock of knowledge. But while knowledge is culture-specific, it is nevertheless influenced by external/exogenous sources, through exposure to, and interaction with, foreigners or foreign cultures. Time affects knowledge. As time changes, the content, utility and validity of knowledge change. "Old" knowledge may be supplanted by "new" knowledge when people feel that the existing knowledge is no longer serving them; it can no longer stand the test of time, or may be doing more harm than good. Power dynamics also affects knowledge production, accessibility, dissemination and consumption. Power affects who acquires what type of knowledge where, how and when. It is pertinent to mention here that knowledge as a social product, is collectively created by all members of society. But as we shall see in Chapter 2, what becomes "acceptable knowledge" must first be sanctioned by the ruling elite. Thus the ruling elite not only hold sway over social knowledge, they also use it to further their interest at the expense of the masses. In other words, the ruling elite use knowledge as a tool of oppression to perpetrate social injustice. But this is far from a zero-sum game. The masses sometimes do fight back; contest elite power in a process of *counter-hegemony*, undermining and often successfully overthrowing the hegemonic stranglehold of the ruling elite. Revolutions in the past, from the French Revolution to the Bolshevik Revolution, to anti-Colonial Revolutions in the Tri-Continents of Africa, Asia and Latin America to more recent ones as the so-called Arab Spring in North Africa are all examples of the masses rising up to overthrow elite power.

Knowledge emerges through a *two-way process of taking and giving*. It involves the social actor taking from others and giving back. Knowledge also results as people engage their environments—social, physical, and natural. It also involves processing and reprocessing data, old and new. It is both a *cumulative* and a *dialectical* process. As a cumulative or additive process, we add new and raw information to pre-existing knowledge. As a *dialectical process* knowledge grows through refinement, where new data/information synergistically fuses with and contradicts the existing information, where the old is not entirely discarded, but fuses with the new. *Dialectical knowledge* is the end product of such dynamic fusing, negation/contradiction of existing and new or emergent information. Knowledge consists of information that has been interpreted, categorized, applied, experienced and revised.

So what is knowledge after all?

Knowledge is defined by the *Online Dictionary.com* as:

1. Acquaintance with facts, truths, or principles, as from study or investigation; general erudition: knowledge of many things.
2. Familiarity or conversance, as with a particular subject or branch of learning: A knowledge of accounting was necessary for the job.
3. Acquaintance or familiarity gained by sight, experience, or report: a knowledge of human nature.
4. The fact or state of knowing; the perception of fact or truth; clear and certain mental apprehension.

5. Awareness, as of a fact or circumstance: He had knowledge of her good fortune.
6. Information combined with experience, context, interpretation, and reflection.
7. Knowledge "is a high-value form of information that is ready to apply to decisions and actions" (Davenport et al., 1998).

The literature on knowledge defines knowledge variously as:
- Knowledge is a theoretical or practical understanding of a subject or a domain.
- Knowledge is the sum of what is currently known.
- Knowledge is the sum of what is known: the body of truth, information, and principles acquired by mankind.
- Knowledge is what I know, Information is what we know.
- Knowledge is "information combined with experience, context, interpretation, and reflection.
- Human expertise stored in a person's mind, gained through experience, and Knowledge is interaction with the person's environment." (Sunasee and Sewery, 2002)
- "Knowledge is a physical, mental or electronic record of relationships believed to exist between real or imaginary entities, forces and phenomena." Worthington, 2005.
- Knowledge is "the insights, understandings, and practical know-how that we all possess – is a fundamental resource that allows us to function intelligently." Wiig, 1996.
- "Knowledge is information evaluated and organized by the human mind so that it can be used purposefully, e.g., conclusions or explanations." (See Rousa, 2002)

TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge is a complex phenomenon and it comes in different forms. While many types of knowledge have been identified, the following types are the most referenced: general knowledge, specialist knowledge, *a priori*, empirical knowledge *(a posteriori)*, inferential knowledge, factual knowledge, situated knowledge, partial knowledge, and scientific knowledge.

According to the *Open Knowledge* website *general knowledge* is knowledge that every person possesses to a certain extent. It is sometimes also referred to as school knowledge or as common sense. *Specialist knowledge*, on the other hand, is a type of knowledge restricted to a small number of people and it is characterized by an understanding of a highly complex field of expertise. An example for general knowledge would be knowing what the capital city of your country is, while an example for specialist knowledge would be knowing how to create a jet engine or how to set an antelope trap.

The second distinction in the concept of knowledge *is a priori knowledge* in contrast to *empirical knowledge*. An *a priori* knowledge is built on the Latin, a priori for "before." Thus *a priori* knowledge is a *deductive* type of knowledge that can be gained without observing or experimenting with the outside world. *Empirical knowledge* or *a posteriori knowledge* stems from Latin root a posteriori for "after." Empirical or *a posteri* knowledge is knowledge that can only be acquired after observation or interaction with the outside world. An example of *a priori* knowledge would be learning the 10 Commandments in the Bible, while *a posteriori* knowledge would be knowledge gained from experiments or surveys.

KNOWING: KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION

Knowing is an ongoing process of acquiring, organizing, and studying knowledge. It is the process of learning a body of facts, data, and information about how things (a) are, (b) work/operate, (c) will be given under certain conditions and (d) should be. Knowledge acquisition is both a passive and active process. Knowledge can be acquired without a conscious or deliberate effort. For example, we may learn about how to handle a loss of a friend through the lyrics of a song we listened through our I-phones as we sat in the bus to school. *Passive knowledge acquisition* is the process whereby we learn information without intentionally setting out to do so. It is the opposite of active knowing or *active knowledge acquisition,* which denotes a conscious effort on the part of the individual to learn something. It is goal-oriented and targeted and often proceeds in a systematic fashion. It may take place in both formal (e.g., in the classroom) and informal (e.g., at a friend's birthday party) settings.

There are two ways of designating the 'knowledge' generated by society: Episteme, which the Greek word for knowledge and techne—Greek for craft or art. According to Geortzel (2016), *episteme is used to denote s*cientific knowledge and it has the following characteristics, including universality, invariability, context-independent. Episteme, Goertzel asserts, is based on general analytical rationality. The original concept is known today from the terms "epistemology" and "epistemic". *Techne, on the other hand*, is variable, context-dependent and it isoriented toward production. It is based on practical instrumental rationality governed by a conscious goal. Goertzel further notes thatThe original concept appears today in terms such as "technique," "technical," and "technology". Other terms that derive from techne are "pragmatic" and "praxis". Thus, episteme and techne are distinct ways of understanding, perceiving, appreciating, and experiencing reality.

Table 1.1 Episteme versus Techne

Logical deduction	Intuition
Analytical	Indecomposable
Articulate	Implicit
Universal	Contextual
Cerebral	Emotional
Theoretical	Practical
Verifiable	Discovery
Impersonal	Personal

It is pertinent to note that the dichotomy or separation of Western and non-Western forms of knowledge is artificial, and hence problematic. The two forms of knowledge are not entirely pure or stand-alone It is wrong to assume that

non-Westerner thinking is bereft of the characteristics assigned to Western thinking and vice-versa. For example, much of the phenomenological and ethnomethodological traditions in Western theorizing and research revolve around people's intuitions and emotions. Social actors' everyday interactions are understood in the contexts in which they occur.

SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE

There are two main types of sources of knowledge, namely documented and undocumented. *Documented* sources of knowledge are invariably written or encoded in one form or document or the other. Documented sources of knowledge take multiple forms. Examples of documented source of knowledge are the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the U.S. Bill of Rights, the Koran, the Bible, the Bhagavad Gita. *Undocumented* sources of knowledge are usually in the "expert's" mind. In oral societies, the main source of knowledge is undocumented. Sages are the repositories of collective knowledge. In West Africa, griots—musician-entertainers—serve as the main of source of knowledge. The griots narrate the ethnic histories and genealogies through performances include ethnic histories and genealogies.

WAYS OF KNOWING

Indigenous Ways of Knowing

Indigenous peoples inhabit pockets of the global landscape from Africa to the Americas, from Australia and Asia to New Zealand. They number some 300 million and live in 70 countries. The majority are impoverished and marginalized, largely living in marginal areas, often in conflict zones. But indigenous peoples play useful roles as guardians and protectors of biodiversity of traditional knowledge of natural resource management. According to the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), indigenous peoples "seek to benefit from development interventions, while safeguarding their cultures, values and institutions" (IFAD, 2013, p. 1).

WHAT IS INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE?

Obviously, the concept derives from the terms "indigenous" and "knowledge". Indigenous literally means native to a place, original, or aboriginal people of an area. Knowledge, as we have discussed above denotes a justified personal belief that increases an individual's capacity to take effective action. Alternative terms for indigenous knowledge include traditional knowledge, local knowledge, rural people's knowledge, people's science, indigenous technical knowledge, and ethno-ecology.

Warren (1991) defines Indigenous knowledge (IK) as the local knowledge – knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society. Iit constitutes the collective traditions, customs, and practices of indigenous communities IK contrasts with the international knowledge system generated by universities, research institutions and private firms. It is the basis for local-level decision making in agriculture, health care, food preparation, education, natural-resource management, and a host of other activities in rural communities. For their part, Flavier et al. (1995, p. 479) "Indigenous Knowledge is … the information base for a society, which facilitates communication and decision-making. Indigenous information systems are dynamic, and are continually influenced by internal creativity and experimentation as well as by contact with external systems".

According to Ermine (1995), indigenous ways of knowing are based on locally, ecologically, and seasonally contextualized truths. "In contrast to the aspirations of some Western scientific traditions for universal truths, Indigenous epistemologies are narratively anchored in natural communities. Those natural communities are characterized by complex kinship systems of relationships among people, animals, the earth, the cosmos, etc. from which knowing originates" (pp. 101–112). IK is practical common sense based on the teachings and experiences passed on from generation to generation. It covers knowledge of the environment and the relationships among things. It is holistic, and cannot be compartmentalized or separated from the people. It is rooted in the spiritual health, culture, and language of the people. It is a way of life.

The World Bank (1984, p. 2) has identified several special features of indigenous knowledge, which distinguishes it broadly from other knowledge. IK is:

- Local, in that it is rooted in a particular community and situated within broader cultural traditions; it is a set of experiences generated by people living in those communities.
- Separating the technical from the Non-technical, the rational from the non-rational could be problematic. Therefore, when transferred to other places, there is a potential risk of dislocating IK.
- Tacit knowledge and, therefore, not easily codifiable.
- Transmitted orally, or through imitation and demonstration. Codifying it may lead to the loss of some of its properties.
- Experiential rather than theoretical knowledge. Experience and trial and error, tested in the rigorous laboratory of survival of local communities constantly reinforce IK.
- Learned through repetition, which is a defining characteristic of tradition even when new knowledge is added.
- Repetition aids in the retention and reinforcement of IK.
- Constantly changing, being produced as well as reproduced, discovered as well as lost; though it is often perceived by external observers as being somewhat static.

FUNCTIONS OF IK

According to Ermine (1995) IK serves many purposes for the community and the individual. As a traditional authority system, IK sets out the rules governing the use of resources. It engenders respect, an obligation to share. It defines what the truth is It embodies a way of life, serving as a repository of native wisdom, norms, values and indeed the ethos of the entire community.

Indigenous Knowledge Global Social Justice

Noting that it is a key element of the "social capital of the poor, the World Bank" (1984, pp. 4–5) has argued that "Indigenous knowledge is an important part of the lives of the poor," as it forms "an integral part of the local ecosystem." IK is a key element of the "social capital" of the poor; their main asset to invest in the struggle for survival, to produce food, to provide for shelter or to achieve control of their own lives. The World Bank (1984, p. 4) further notes that Indigenous knowledge also provides problem-solving strategies for local communities and helps shape local visions and perceptions of environment and society. The following are examples:

- Midwives and herbal medicine.
- Treatment of cattle ticks by the Fulani using Tephrosia plants.
- Soil and land classifications in Nigeria.

Traditional knowledge
Traditional knowledge refers to the collective traditions, customs, and practices of indigenous communities. Indigenous people possess important traditional knowledge that have allowed them to sustainably live and make use of biological and genetic diversity within their natural environment for generations. Traditional Knowledge naturally includes a deep understanding of ecological processes and the ability to sustainably extract useful products from the local habitat. The Traditional Knowledge of indigenous people offers a set of proven practices and solutions for today's global dilemmas. Most TK is handed down through generations. These methods endure the test of time as the indigenous community works within the flow of nature to ensure a continued supply of the resources upon which their way of life depends. Industrial societies groping with health issues, species extinction, and habitat loss can learn much from indigenous people. Their knowledge of the beneficial resources of their region- and how to manage these resources within a complex ecosystem – may prove to be invaluable.
Source:
http://indigenousknowledgeproject.org/traditional-knowledge

- Water catching stone bunds in Burkina Faso.
- Construction of buildings with natural "air conditioning" in the Sudan.
- Kpelle artisans' steel making technology in Liberia.
- Agroforestry systems emulating the natural climax vegetation on the Kilimanjaro.
- Settlement for land disputes between farmers and nomads in Togo.
- Communal use and individual allocation of land by the Washambaa in Tanzania.
- Local healers' role in post-conflict resolution in Mozambique.
- Transfer of knowledge through elders, rituals, initiation, and story tellers in West Africa.
- Systems to control power and distribute wealth among the Maasai in East Africa.

WHO ARE THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE?

The term "indigenous" is often used synonymously with the term "aboriginal." Indigenous people are considered as the 'original inhabitants' of a territory prior to colonization. According to the Indigenous Knowledge Project website (http://indigenousknowledgeproject.org/who-are-indigenous-people) the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues has identified about 370 million indigenous people in some 90 countries worldwide. They face a plethora of challenges and life-threatening difficulties, include encroachment and plunder of their lands and natural resources. Governments and multinational corporations loot their natural resources, in the name of modernization and economic growth. Pharmaceutical companies *plagiarize* and *pirate* their knowledge of traditional medicinal herbs and patent them without compensation, much less acknowledgement. In what

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Box 1.1. Biopiracy

Biopiracy, a term originally coined by ETC Group, refers to the appropriation of the knowledge and genetic resources of farming and indigenous communities by individuals or institutions that seek exclusive monopoly control (patents or intellectual property) over these resources and knowledge. ETC Group believes that intellectual property is predatory on the rights and knowledge of farming communities and indigenous peoples. Through nanotechnology- and synthetic biology-related patents, intellectual property claims are now being extended to elements of the periodic table and to key metabolic pathways involved in cellular functioning (and resulting in natural products with high commercial value).

Source: Patents & Biopiracy | ETC Group
http://www.etcgroup.org/issues/patents-biopiracy

Box 1.2. Cultural Destruction and Genocide of Indigenous People

Indigenous groups have a unique cultural identity that formed in the niche of their geographical region. For example, archeological evidence suggests that Indigenous people have been occupying the Pacific Northwest of the United States for at least the past 10,000 years. Inseparable from their cultural heritage are the salmon and cedar of which are key species of this region. Many indigenous cultures are on the cusp of extinction. Beginning during the era of *colonization* and continuing through the modern era of *globalization*, indigenous people have been faced with forced dispossession of their lands, territories, and resources. Every 14 days a language dies. With the loss of the language so too does the accompanying cultural knowledge. The cultural knowledge of indigenous people in regards to agricultural/farming practices, biologically important medicines, sustainable resource management, and biodiveristy conservation can provide us with models for responsible resource stewardship. By conserving the customs and habitat of indigenous people, we concurrently reduce emissions from deforestation and ecosystem degradation. Furthermore, cultural survival is a basic human right. "Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems." – A Technical definition of 'indigenous' as outlined by the *International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs* as articulated by José Martinez Cobo the former Secratery General of *OPANAL*.

Source: http://indigenousknowledgeproject.org/traditional-knowledge

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Box 1.3. African Indigenous Systems of Knowledge

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Every human society and culture that has evolved in any geographical location has been compelled by its environmental condition(s) to spawn worldview and ideas to help its members to know and understand the workings of all or

aspects of nature, engineer scientific thoughts and technological paradigms, and fashion cultural moral values and norms for their survival within their earthly milieu. Since their genesis, human communities have reflected and yielded cosmogonic and cosmological ideas, employed intellect and instinct to make and use hand tools, built shelter, made fire, developed agriculture and pottery, used iron, built urban settlements, established religious, legal, social and political institutions and concepts in an endeavour to make life liveable by understanding and benefiting from the environment. These led to other forms of creations such as steam engines, electric and nuclear power. The organic/primary sources of these concepts, know-hows and creations were Indigenous Knowledges (I.Ks.). These 'knowledges',[1] generally underpinned by spiritual beliefs and practices, advanced the principle that all that existed were organic and had physical and spiritual (metaphysical) essences/dimensions. Human life-ways, including epistemology and technological creativity, therefore, had to be inspired by and operated within the frame of those dimensions of reality.

Europe's imperialist dominance in the world, starting c. 15th century, and the use of her colonialism enterprise to internationalise ideas from her so-called Age of Enlightenment, facilitated a grave imposition of Europe's (the West's) so-called scientific, cognitive superior, and universally applicable reason-based ways of living, knowing and technology on other cultural and demography spaces outside Europe.

This so-called reason-based epistemic view claimed to support a knowledge system grounded on verified theories and propositions, also called proposition knowing. It excluded spirituality in matter. It sought scientific, philosophical and technological ideas and structures for development through only the mechanistic and mathematical study of aspects of nature that can be quantified by shape, movement, number, weight, and rationality. The promotion of Europe's mechanistic view of nature as a system that was value free, objective in procedure, based on abstractions and reason, empirically rooted, transcending time and space, and the replication, application and imposition of that Western system, in spaces beyond the area of its production, antagonised non-Western I.Ks. It suppressed and/or obliterated experiential knowing (knowledge derived from direct experience), and intuition- and spirituality-inclusive schemes of knowing, which produced indigenous African deep thought and understanding (philosophy), and technology. Africa, the genesis of humans, first towns and states, and the great civilisations of Nubia, Ethiopia and Khmet (Egypt),[2] which nurtured the Greek and Roman civilisations,[3] fell victim to Europe's cultural dominance and colonialism.

Africa's indigenous deep thought, which contained assumptions "about the structure of reality, the name and origin of things [and] problems of justice",[4] science, and technology, needed as the fundamental pillar for experiments

and sustainable developments, was weakened and arrested.[5] African I.Ks. were suppressed because they were deemed backward, unscientific and not in confluence with European methods. Apparently, the exogenous ideas could not answer all the specific problems and questions in the African unique situation. Rather, they contributed in ill-preparing Africa and limiting its capacity in economic competition, development planning and intellectual discourse during the eras of colonial and independence.

The forceful "globalisation" of Western knowledge ways has not answered all of humanity's, problems. It is apparent even in the 21st century that the world has rather paid a high negative cost such as environmental degradation, ethnocide, and rise of individualism because of such hegemony. To counter this negative cost, it has been argued elsewhere that all knowledge ways – Western, African, Indigenous American, Pacific, and Asian – should be respected and confluence. Aspects of each knowledge should be applied, where applicable, to solve specific human problems. This process of relating the so-called "global" with the "local" is what we call paradigmatic complementarity.[6] The arrogant posturing of one as superior and other(s) as inferior is not necessary, because one cannot remedy all of humankind's problems. A syncretism or synthesis of all knowledges is not necessary, if not achievable, because they are different knowledges. However, they should co-evolve and complement each other.[7] This is why Turnbull aptly observed that "Without the awareness about local differences, we will lose the diversity and particularity of the things themselves. We need a new understanding about the dialectical tension between the local and global. We need to develop forms of understanding, in which the local, the particular, the specific and the individual [regardless of their limitations] are not homogenised [or syncretised] but [are made to complement the global and others, and] are listened to and enabled to talk back."[8]

Knowledge is what is known and can be known (understood). There are different ways of knowing. Positivists have their way(s) of knowing, and knowledge(s) for the naturalists cum metaphysicians come(s) through the combination of natural/material and spiritual means. The latter is fundamental in most I.Ks including Africa's.

What is/are I.Ks. within the African context? We present I.Ks. as the complex set of knowledge, mental and spiritual concepts, beliefs and practices, skills, and technologies arising, existing and developed locally around specific conditions of populations and communities indigenous, or with long term occupancy, to a particular area in Africa. I.Ks. constitute the knowledge that a given African community have developed from their deep thoughts (philosophical reflections), experiences and experiments overtime and continue to develop to guide, organise, and regulate their African ways of living and to serve as the basis for their livelihood including agriculture, food preparations, educational

curriculum, health care, environmental conservation, law, nation building, and political administration.[9]

This study therefore defines as "African" those I.Ks. authored by people who not only resided on the African continent but who had "basic Africa"[10] as their roots and were also members of ethnic groups indigenous to Africa. For example the Dutch-descended Afrikaners of South Africa cannot be included in that category. Arabian migrants, whose ancestors Arabised North Africa, are also distinguished from that category. I.Ks. is/are therefore not and should not be imported from outside. Their creators should be aware of their ownership in order to bequeath such knowledges to posterity for its continuity. All imported I.Ks. that joined with autochthonous ones and, for generations, found traditional uses and prevalence in any given community should be viewed as Traditional Knowledges (T.Ks.).

T.Ks. include knowledges and practices that were imported from non-African societies, such as Arabo-Islamic cultural practices and beliefs, into Africa and have overtime continued and become traditions in African societies. All components of I.Ks. are taught and/or learned.

What are the spaces and sites and nature of teaching and/or learning of the ideas, concepts, and attitudes that constitute I.Ks., and shape the psyche, character, creativity, scientific and technological orientations of the individual and society? How does the dissemination/deployment and assimilation/employment of aspects of I.Ks. take place? The home/household featuring the family, mostly the extended type, is the primary site of teaching and learning. Catering for all ages, it starts with the person right after birth. Naturally, teaching takes the forms of informal oral instructions and non-verbal lifestyles/social ways, and learning takes the forms of informal and/or unconscious observation of, and participation, in practices, and internalisation of ideas about life, provided by the instructions. This give and take pattern and intercourse happens in horizontal and vertical forms of relationships between family members. They learn from the experiences of all members. The aged orally instruct the young to observe and emulate positive social ways and certain technical skills of the experienced aged. Age peers are expected to counsel and learn from the mistakes and successes of each other. Parents educate their children and normally the men instruct and coach their biological sons and mothers do same for uterine daughters. Through the home, the individual becomes conscious that their personhood is possible because they have and are members of a family. The household gives a person, and illuminates them about their, identity as human. This site and education therein, prepares the individual to understand and practically live and not to comprehend specific or group of subjects like math, biology, and chemistry. Basic concepts of cosmology and cosmogenesis and ideas about ethics, the absolute, and logic are explained there. It is there that

family trade secrets, basic food production techniques, basic spoken language techniques and numeracy, some family history and rituals, certain life skills, basic medical therapies, and the responsibility that each family member has to the family and the extended society are disseminated, through theoretical and practical instructions, observation and emulation, to family members. Any learning that is induced from outside the home (secondary learning) is refined in the home.

The secondary site is the surrounding active environment comprising of the physical environment and human community, and their interactive activities and institutions. The processes of knowledge production and knowledge consumption, within the surrounding active environment, are for all age groups, and are formed, and operated, in either organised or unorganised and formal or informal modes and settings. The unorganised situations include open social spaces like playgrounds, natural world spaces like forests, farms, and animal sanctuaries, and social events such as funerals, durbars, festival, entertainment venues such as drinking pubs, and markets. These spaces facilitate informal collective interactions between peer and peer, and peers and non-peers. Within such interactions, oral instructions are given and taken, actions are performed and copied, experiences/technical concepts are shared and absorbed, and successes and mistakes are committed and lessons drawn from them. In fact fauna, of the natural world, which is intrinsically linked to the human world, also gives education.

Humans are able, through a long term observation, to copy and humanise certain survival techniques of the instinct-, discernment-driven life-ways of animals. The mass movements/migrations of certain birds or fishes are used to forecast, and prepare for, imminent natural occurrences such as rainfall, draught or earthquakes. The sighting of certain fishes in water bodies helps fishermen to predict either a boom or lean season of fishing in aquatic areas. The dietary habits of some animals are able to inform humans about edible and therapeutic items from the world of plants. In fact, many indigenous African oral traditions recount how animals, some totemised, gave humans certain knowledges and social life-ways. The Akan of Ghana and Bambara of Mali assert that the spider and antelope taught their ancestors how to weave the *kente* cloth and farm respectively. The informal teaching and learning within the context of the surrounding active environment spans over an unlimited period of time.

The organised situation, which largely defines the teaching and learning processes in a formal way, within the surrounding active environment, normally and consciously generates the process to last within limited periods. Participants are aware that they constitute parties that are supporting and advancing a dissemination and assimilation process. Here, there is/are specialist(s) or authoritative person(s) who, endowed with expertise, skills and

experience, give(s) special and specific ideas and performs specific actions for the assimilation and emulation of a learner. The learners may be from different age, sex and social status backgrounds or may come from specific age, sex, and social status groups. The spaces which accommodate such processes include shrines of priests and priestesses, nurseries of healers and herbalists, workshops of artisans and craftpersons such as dancers, musician, griots, and metallurgists, shelter of the trees of the society's story teller and historian, lodges of societies with secrets (secret societies), farms, and palaces of chiefs. For example formal teaching and learning, governed by rules, laws and a specified time frame, goes on between a priest and neophyte for a period. The neophyte is trained to become adept in histories, rituals, symbols, potency of the spoken word (prayers and incantations), codification and deciphering of ideas in proverbs, preparation of therapies, clairvoyance and clairaudience.

Lodges of societies with secrets and special training camps, catered for by some experts, accept initiates and trainees, pass them through some arcane rites, and train them to acquire theoretical understanding and practical competence about different know-hows, ideas, trade methods and social skills. These include the Dipo of the Krobo of Ghana, Bragoro of the Akan of Ghana, Sande and Poro of the Mande of Sierra Leone, and Egungun of the Yoruba of Nigeria. Such organised situations are more like institutionalised schools.

Apparently, an indigenous idea and system of institutionalised formal education has been part of the indigenous African society. As argued elsewhere, the idea and institution of high education, prototypes of the present university education, which the High Middle Age Europe promoted, existed in Africa in Khmet (ancient African Pharaonic Egypt) and sustained the renowned material and intellectual civilisation of Khmet.[11] The unique thing about the higher learning in Khmet's I.Ks., grounded in an African worldview, was that it explained reality in empirical/physiological and spiritual terms. It accepted that reality and all constellation of knowledge were domiciled in two realms: the physical (material) and spiritual/metaphysical (immaterial). It, therefore, used indigenous physiological/scientific and metaphysical ideas and practices to explain human existence and natural phenomenon, and develop material culture and technology, such as the marvelous pyramids, to make life liveable for the Khmet (African) society.

Clearly, the household and active surrounding environments, being sites of African I.Ks, facilitate the teaching and learning of ideas and practices, and enhance human creativity, and comprehension of the nature of reality.

What, in African worldview, are the general methods or conventional rules for the pursuit of understanding or knowing reality (nature) in all its aspects and phenomena – patent and hidden, visible and invisible? In what contexts of reality do phenomena occur and can be known? Finally, what contexts

provide knowledge and understanding about reality and phenomena, which help humans to manipulate objects, and start social relations, intellectual ideas, and technological creativity to meet the practical needs of life?

Contrary to the view of the Wittgenstein school,[12] worldviews are relative or differ. The systems and orientations of reasoning and thinking, and knowing ways, which underpin African I.Ks. differ in many ways from the dominant Western approach. The model uses experiential and metaphysical approaches. Presently, the Western (so-called modern) model cohabits with the indigenous in most African societies. The former, which is based on the physiological function of the brain, as a data processing master organic machine, avers that knowledge comes only through the organ's reaction to the sensory data from outside which are and should only be transmitted through the five physical sense organs. Conversely, the African concept, which also accommodates a physiological definition of the knowing process, additionally approaches the issue of knowing from a multi-sense method – the reliance on common sense (deduction and induction) and application of spiritual techniques. The latter is used to establish a divine, universal, intergenerational communication between humans on one hand and spiritual and natural forces in the spiritual and natural worlds on the other. Common sense and the dialogue between humans and the Creator of everything, cosmic forces, nature, and creatures of the animal and mineral worlds, provide insight, epiphanies and discernment to humans.

Africa's I.Ks. are informed by some main categories of understanding about the composition of the world. There is a self-creating Creator, who is the genesis of and ultimate explanation for everything; spirits and spirits of ancestors; human beings; animals and plants; and minerals without biological life. These live in three dimensions or worlds of reality – spiritual, human, and natural. All these entities and dimensions contain the Creator's divine spiritual energy. These classifications define and give comprehension about the genesis and meaning of life, multiple dimensions of reality, formulation and transformation of ideas into physical creations and actions, and the nature of the economic and technological relationships that humans should have with their environment. This perception, which can be called [African] cosmovision, informs the way that indigenous Africans perceive and relate to the cosmos. It is made up of assumed relationships between the human, natural, and spiritual worlds.

The spiritual world provides guidance, bounties, and punishment to the human world and the human world has to respect the spiritual world and ask for support. The natural world, created by the Creator spirit, provides habitat and sustenance for humans and provides communication channels, such as sacred trees and animals, between the human and spiritual worlds. Humans, in turn, are to protect and respect the natural world otherwise there would be repercussions from the other two worlds. These interactive worlds give humans physiological

and spiritual insights both about what to do (right thought and action) and what not to do (wrong thought and action), and understanding and explanation for phenomena. Moreover, cosmovision embodies and determines the moral basis for human intervention in nature and root of technology. It dictates the way humans should behave, relate and use nature's land, water, plants and animals, how humans should take decisions, solve problems, undertake experiments and organise themselves.[13] Realities and comprehension of them are based in the interaction between the human, spiritual and natural worlds and the survival of man depends on the harmonisation of these worlds. The permutations of the various interactions which produce knowledge patterns for human consumption are as follows: (i) human (social) only, (ii) social + natural, (iii) social + spiritual, (iv) natural only, (v) natural + spiritual, (vi) spiritual only, and (vii) interaction between social, spiritual and natural. The latter, the perfect state of balance/harmony, is where all understanding and answers to all questions reside. Because holistic knowledges emerge from, and are explained, within these three realms, physiological definition of the knowing process does not and cannot stand alone in the African world. The definitions must complement each other.

Humans, therefore, must be aware and understand the workings of these worlds. The Khmet maxim "man know thyself",[14] when contextualised in indigenous African deep thought, becomes an admonishing to humans to pursue understanding about the physical self and environment, and all realities – visible and invisible, spiritual, human, and natural worlds, and phenomena that sustains life and can give knowledges to man.

Familiarity about the workings of these worlds varies among persons since by virtue of special trainings and experiences some do have deeper comprehension and higher capacity, than others, to tap, manipulate and use the knowledge forces for different actions and creations in fields like medicine, witchcraft, priesthood, iron technology, and rainmaking. They become skilled aspects of deep thought (philosophy), intuitive and discerning use of the mind, art of the potency of speech and prayer, and rituals such as those for fertility, crops, birth, marriage, planting and harvesting. Some people, guided by five principal values of African I.Ks., which are spirituality, harmony with nature, humanness, rhythm,[15] justice[16] and respect for the environment, use such knowledges for good, others for the ill of their communities.

Regardless of the intrusion and assault on I.Ks., by non-African ways, particularly Western procedures, pains of suppressions of colonialism, and the post-colonial pressures of globalisation, which in practice is Westernisation,[17] vestiges of African I.Ks. persist. I.Ks. can make valuable contributions to African sustainable development. Western scientific methods are not absolute. These

"scientific" knowledge systems suggest that phenomena must be rationally explained in terms of specific empirical cause and effect categories; causation must be viewed as natural/biological/physical in contrast to supernatural and metaphysical suppositions. In such a "scientific" approach, substantiations in the system of belief must be reached through the observation of empirical data and information. Through the sketching and organisation of phenomena, analytical classificatory systems can be obtained and through the process of induction, hypotheses are framed and attained. Within these deductive processes, predictions are made about relationships between events and occurrences. Such forecasts and ideas are proved or dismissed through further processes of inquiry and experimentation. However, this same methodology accepts that the outcomes of new experimentation can change the basic models and values. Therefore, if on the basis of specific empirical evidence ideas and procedures are subject to modification and rectification in the face of the new facts to meet the life demands of people, then the trajectories of knowledge within the context of Western 'scientific' paradigms cannot be absolute. Conversely, the I.Ks. of many indigenous societies promotes other paradigms which utilise the people's socio-cultural orientations, including the spiritual and metaphysical concepts, to meet the practical needs of life. In light of the above argument, no society has monopoly over the method and understanding of knowledge, and animation of development and modernisation.

There is a way forward for African I.Ks. They must be documented and systems of investigation developed to provide a better understanding about the aspects which are supposedly shrouded in "secrecy" and "mystery". Inter and intra cultural dialogues must be initiated, by academics and local experts, to streamline the similarities and differences in the various African philosophies and employ them in the development processes in Africa. The five general principles: spirituality, harmony with nature, humanness, and rhythm, and justice, and respect for the environment, must undergird all social development processes engineered by African I.Ks., even in this so-called modern era.

can be termed a conspiracy of pillage, poachers, pharmaceutical companies and governments seriously undermine the pristine biodiversity of indigenous territories. The actions of these entities decimate the pristine habitats of indigenous people wreaking carnage and destruction, seriously their livelihood and indeed their very lives. Beside the *biopiracy* of multinational dug companies (Big Pharma), climate change and globalization compound the adversities facing indigenous people. With their traditional methods of procuring food depending solely on the natural resources in their territories, the climate change and global corporatization, euphemistically called globalization, have rendered indigenous life extremely precarious.

WESTERN SYSTEM OF KNOWLEDGE

How Do We Know What We Know?

Social scientists answer this question by using two different paradigms or approaches: Ontological and epistemological. *Ontology*, simply defined, *is the study of being or what is*. It refers to theories concerning what 'exists' to be known. Thus, taking a particular ontological position articulates one's assumptions about the nature of social reality and what is 'knowable' to the social scientist. In answering this question some social scientists who adopt the ontological approach position employ the *positivistic method* of research. In other words, some researchers answer the question *"how do we know what we know?"* by way of positivism and empiricism, the idea that sense perceptions are the only admissible basis of human knowledge and precise thought. The term positivism was coined by French Sociologist *Auguste Comte*, who insisted that social scientists must use the same method employed by natural scientists— observation, collection data, analysis of the data, drawing conclusions, etc., – to study human society. Just as the natural world is guided by natural laws, positivists contend that society is guided by societal laws and the duty of the social scientist is to discover these laws, in order to properly understand the workings and control of the social world.

Another question ontological posed is "Can (should) social entities be considered objective entities?" If the answer is in the affirmative ("yes"): the research takes a position of *objectivism* (i.e., social phenomena confront us as external – independent and objective – facts)or are they social constructions However, if the answer is in the negative ("no"): the research takes a position of Constructionism (Constructivism) – social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors; the phenomena are not only produced through social interactions, but they are in a constant state of revision.

Empiricism is an outgrowth from and an extreme form of positivism and emphasizes verifiable, observable phenomena. The central premise is that research should be driven by raw data drawn from objective, observable and quantifiable social phenomena. In other words, the empirical and positive traditions to social research and analysis assert that only what is perceivable by our senses—sight, smell, touch, hearing, and taste—are worth studying. Positivists seem to argue that "seeing is believing," everything else is speculation, conjecture, wishful thinking, and does not count much in scientific research. From the positivist perspective, things are what they are ("what you see is what you get"). They exist outside our consciousness. A tree is a tree; period. Just as the mathematical formula $1 + 1 = 2$ will hold true anywhere. Knowledge is held to be universal and standard.

In the social sciences, two major worldviews (particular conceptions of the world) help us to capture the essence of how we come to know what we know. The ontological paradigm falls under *Worldview I*. Worldview I adopts a positivistic, objective and empiricist methodology in research and knowledge creation and is based on the following assumptions:

1. Knowledge is created through discovery.
2. The world and its attributes are assumed not only to be external to the individual, but also conceived as already existing, *a priori*.
3. The world and its attributes are quantifiable, meaning each attribute can be studied separately.
4. There is only one knowable truth about the world to be discovered.
5. This truth is not constructed by human beings; rather it is a natural, objective reality, waiting to be discovered by the social scientist.
6. The truth is quantifiable, i.e., it can be objectively perceived and countered one by one.
7. The point of academic research, then, is to discover the truth (Littlejohn, 2008).

In short, the ontological approach informs *positivist, empirical scholarship* and *quantitative research methodology*, including the *experiment* and the *survey*.

Epistemology is defined as *the study of knowledge and how knowledge comes to be created*. It is used to refer to theories about the ways in which we perceive and know our social world. An epistemological position thus states *how we know what know*. Knowledge, from the epistemological position, is not *sui generis* (self-generating/of its own), something out there or *a priori* (independent), but instead, a social and cultural construct. What this means is that human beings create their own knowledge about the world through interactions with fellow human beings… In some sense, what we know is simply our own creation through interpretations and understandings of the social world. Thus, for example, a tree is not a tree unless we call it so. This book you are reading is simply an object like any other human phenomenon until you call it so (a book). A Martian, for example, may call this book something else (flakes of wood with undecipherable gibberish, perhaps). Under the epistemological position, researchers seeks to answer the questions "What is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline?" and "Can (should) the social world be studied according to the same principles as the natural sciences?" If the answer is in the affirmative ("yes"), the research is said to follow the doctrine of the natural science. Here epistemological position will be *positivism* (and also *realism*) If the answer is in the negative ("no") the research follows the opposite to positivism doctrine, and that is: *interpretivism*.

The epistemological paradigm falls under Worldview II. Worldview two is interpretativist and constructivist and treats knowledge not only as a social, historical, political, and cultural construct, but also as value-loaded. Rather than being a fixed, universal and natural phenomenon, knowledge is an ever-changing, fluid reality bound by temporal (time/historical), spatial, political, normative, and cultural factors. Furthermore, since knowledge is constructed by human beings, it stands to reason to expect that the "constructors" will embed their values in the knowledge they construct. As is true that beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder, the "truth" of any given media message, for instance, is dependent on each individual's perception and conception of what constitutes the truth. For example, different

people will read different meanings into the evening news because media texts are conceived by social scientists who adopt the second worldview as embedded with multiple meanings and hence are *polysemic or polysemous*. Each individual filters the same media message from his/ her cultural, "race", ethnic, gender, class, religious backgrounds.

Worldview II adopts *qualitative* and *interpretative methodology* in research and knowledge creation and is based on the following assumptions:

a. Knowledge is arrived at by interpreting the world.
b. The world exists outside the person but individuals conceptualize and interpret it in ways that make sense to them.
c. There is not one single, knowable truth in the world to be discovered, but rather multiple truths.
d. The point of academic research, therefore, is to examine how and why different people construct, understand, and interpret the social world.
e. Knowledge is not fixed or immutable; rather it changes with time.
f. There is nothing as objective, universal truth.
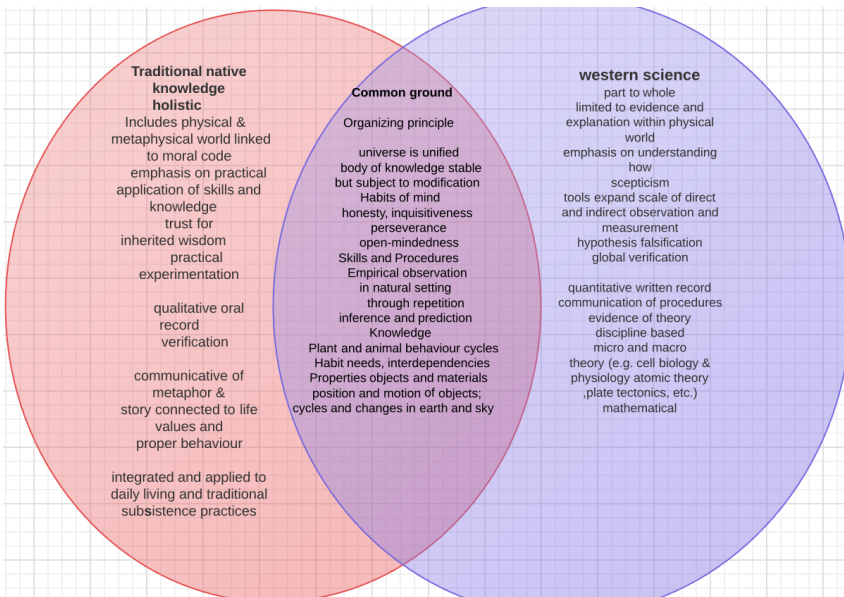g. Knowledge cannot be quantified or measured (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008).

COMMON GROUNDS

Figure 1.1. Common grounds.
Source: Liz Estey, Aboriginal Health Research Group; Jeff Reading, Scientific Director
CIHR-IAPH Andrew Kmetic, Aboriginal Health Research Group

SECTION II

WHAT IS CRITICAL THINKING? WHY DO WE NEED IT?

To begin our journey into the intriguing and fascinating world of social justice it is pertinent to put on our critical thinking hats, as it were. This is because the study of the issues of social justice requires a dispassionate, sober, reasoned and analytical thinking that transcends *parochialism* (narrow-mindedness) and ethnocentrism. To this end, we will set out with an exploration of a critical thinking toolkit (a number critical thinking terms and concepts). This will be followed by certain key concepts and themes that will appear several times throughout the book.

Critical thinking is the premise of intellectual growth and awareness. Learning how to engage this book critically will help you, not only to facilitate your own intellectual growth; it will also enable you to see and dig deeper beyond the surface realities, in order to see the connections with knowledge you gain from this book and the real world. Familiarizing yourself with these concepts and themes will facilitate your understanding of the complex issue of social justice. Some of the terms and themes are included not so much because they are used in the text *per se*, but because of their fundamental importance in helping students adopt a flexible and broad perspective, as they learn the "ins-and-outs" of social justice in both local and global contexts.

DEFINING CRITICAL THINKING

Anderson (2012, p. 10) defined critical thinking as *thinking that is purposeful, deliberate, and self-regulatory, and that arrives at judgments based on well-defined criteria and evidence.* Alongside research skills and theorizing skills, critical thinking is a one of the three core skills sets a student of sociology must have. Critical thinking is the kind of thinking which challenges fatalism, prejudice, apathy and indoctrination. The aim is to engage active citizens in informed participation in social and political life to achieve a more equitable and socially just democracy. Critical thinking is not simply concerned with overcoming individual and group 'ignorance' but with encouraging ways of thinking that are critical of the kind of status quo which supports inequalities, injustices and the abuse of power (Mayo, 1997).

To be a critical thinker does not mean, as the common-sense view might hold, to find fault, be harsh, or be judgmental. Rather, it denotes a careful analysis with an eye to seeing both merits and demerits of a given social phenomenon. *Critical* refers to the process of debunking and unmasking "beliefs and practices that limit human freedom, justice, and democracy" (Glesne, 2011, p. 9). According to *Critical Thinking.co*, critical thinking is the identification and evaluation of evidence to guide decision making. For his part, Glaser noted that critical thinking is:

(1) an attitude of being disposed to consider in a thoughtful way the problems and subjects that come within the range of one's experiences, (2) knowledge

of the methods of logical inquiry and reasoning, and (3) some skill in applying those methods. Critical thinking calls for a persistent effort to examine any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the evidence that supports it and the further conclusions to which it tends. (Glaser, 1941, pp. 5–6)

Critical thinking has a long history and deep multicultural and multidisciplinary roots. All societies have given birth to thinkers who challenged some form of existing social arrangements, habits, and norms. Anderson (2012, p. 11) noted that people in many different fields and disciplines and across time have challenged the established beliefs of their society. Examples abound in both Western and non-Western society of thinkers who debunked the received wisdom and long-held beliefs and practices. History is replete with examples of such thinkers, running the gamut from Aristotle, Aveccina, Chuang Tzu, and the Buddha to Socrates and Shriharsha.

Critical thinking is based on the assumption that social reality is not only social constructed, i.e., a human creation, but is also a historical, cultural and dynamic process, which reflects power relations. Socrates reminds that an unexamined life is not worth living. Over the centuries and across cultures and societies, people have sought to re-examine the existing ways of living and introduced changes or abandoned cultural practices they find to no longer serve them through critical thinking. Critical thinking leads to creativity and innovation. Thus, critical thinking must be viewed as the spark that ignites social change. Without critical thinking, a society may stagnate.

Lipman (1995, p. 116) averred that "Skillful, responsible thinking that is conducive to good judgment because it is sensitive to context, relies on criteria, and is self-correcting."

For his part, Siegel (1990, pp. 23, 34) saw the critical thinker as "one who is *appropriately moved by reasons*…critical thinking is impartial, consistent, and non-arbitrary, and the critical thinker both acts and thinks in accordance with, and values, consistency, fairness, and impartiality of judgment and action."

CHARACTERISTICS OF CRITICAL THINKING

Hernández and Noruzi (2013) have summarized the characteristics of critical thinking as follows:

1. It is purposeful;
2. It is responsive to and guided by intellectual standards (relevance, accuracy);
3. It is precision, clarity, depth, and breadth;
4. It supports the development of intellectual traits in the thinker of humility, integrity, perseverance, empathy, and self-discipline;
5. It is self-assessing and self-improving;
6. There is integrity to the whole system;

7. It yields a well-reasoned answer. If we know how to check our thinking and are committed to doing so, and we get extensive practice, then we can depend on the results of our thinking being productive;
8. It is responsive to the social and moral imperative to enthusiastically argue from opposing points of view and to seek and identify weakness and limitations in one's own position.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CRITICAL THINKER

Hernández and Noruzi (2013) have pointed out that the thinker can identify the elements of thought present in thinking about any problem, such that the thinker makes the logical connection between the elements and the problem at hand. She or he is aware that there are many legitimate points of view, each of which (when deeply thought through), may yield some level of insight. Hernández and Noruzi (2013) describe the critical thinker as someone who is "aware of the variety of ways in which thinking can become distorted, misleading, prejudiced, superficial, unfair, or otherwise defective… and is committed to be intellectually humble, persevering, courageous, fair, and just" (pp. 45–46). Anderson (2012) has identified the following characteristics and habits of a critical thinker:

(1) *Independence of Mind*—a commitment and disposition favourable to autonomous thinking, (2) *Intellectual Curiosity*—the disposition to wonder about the world, (3) *Intellectual Courage*—the willingness to evaluate all ideas, beliefs, or viewpoints fairly, and the courage to take a position, (4) *Intellectual Humility*—awareness of the limits of one¡¦s knowledge, (5) *Intellectual Empathy*—being conscious of the need to put oneself in the place of others in order to understand them, (6) *Intellectual Perseverance*—the willingness to pursue intellectual insights and truths in spite of difficulties, obstacles, and frustrations, (7) *Reflexive Disposition*—awareness that one¡¦s own approach is fallible. Critical thinking is not just the ability criticize and argue, but to conceptualize, apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information, while acknowledging your own preconceived notions, opinions and biases and seeking to understand those of others.

The critical thinker sheds light on all forms of social injustice both locally and globally. The critical thinker is disposed to exposing all structural inequalities that prevent people from realizing their full human potential. A central preoccupation of the critical thinker is to interrogate how the systems of power promote the interest of the elite groups in society and expose how it (the system of power) works against interests of non-elite classes. Critical thinking in general, and critical sociology, in particular, questions and seeks to disrupt the status quo, contending that social structures do not benefit all equally (Wotherspoon, 2009). Seeing the status quo

as inimical to the interests of vast majority of members of society who occupy the lower strata, critical sociologists actively promote social change in order to advance equality and equity.

CRITICAL SOCIOLOGICAL THINKING

Critical sociological thinking can be said to have characteristics that are specific to the discipline of sociology. Anderson (2012) suggested that what makes critical sociological thinking unique is that its practitioners possess not only sociological knowledge and skills, but also the ability to use this knowledge to reflect upon, question, and judge information while also demonstrating a sensitivity to and an awareness of social and cultural contexts. Sociology contributes the *social construction of reality* and the *sociological imagination* to critical sociological thinking. The social construction of reality is the idea that all human phenomena are created by human beings themselves, rather than some natural or supernatural entity or entities. The sociological imagination is the mindset that enables you to always see yourself not as an island unto yourself, but rather to consider your life as intertwined with the lives of others. It is the ability to see your life as intersections of your own biography (your own actions and inactions), history (historical events, decisions made by others, such as past leaders), and social structure (your sex, "race," ethnicity, social class, etc.). The East African *Ubutu* philosophy "I am because we are" and folk wisdom expressed in the Ghanaian aphorism "It takes an entire village to raise a child" capture the concept of sociological imagination.

CRITICAL THEORY AND CRITICAL SOCIOLOGY

Critical theory, according to Young (2000, p. 28), is "an approach to the study of society in which human interests shape and guide the research enterprise from the formation of analytic categories to the quest for accurate, relevant, timely, sensible information." Critical theorists have an overt political goal, which is the creation and maintenance of a rational, just, and decent society. By contrast, structural-functional theory asserts itself to be value-free or value-neutral. Starting with Weber, functionalists have maintained that the social scientist can and must stay above the fray, be objective referee of social reality. However, functionalists like all social scientists cannot be objective, no matter how hard they might try. According to Young (2000), the transfer of the political responsibility for the use of science from the producer to the user simply masks its politics and, at the same time, exculpates or frees the scientists from any responsibility for his or her product. Habermas identifies three kinds of knowledge necessary to critical research: *positive knowledge* (Knowledge which affirms something, rather than denying (or negating or disproving) something, which accumulate positive knowledge about the objective world), *hermeneutic knowledge* (knowledge as lived experience/practical knowledge), and *emancipatory knowledge*. Critical theory is associated with the

Frankfort School. Critical Sociology recognizes that structural Marxism leaves many questions unanswered. Critical theory seeks to remedy this by incorporating theory from Freudianism, phenomenology, and existentialism and lately, from feminist and from postmodern scholarship (Young, 2000).

WHAT IS CRITICAL SOCIOLOGY?

Critical Sociology is a distinctive approach to the study of society that challenges taken-for-granted assumptions about arrangements of power relations, oppressive social institution, structures, and norms with an explicit aim to emancipate and empower human subjects though praxis. Praxis denotes practical activity informed by theory. It is a process of blending of theory and action. More specifically, praxis "is the process by which a theory, lesson, or skill is enacted, practiced, embodied, or realized" (Bernstein, 1983, pp. 284; xix). The concept also refers to the act of engaging, applying, exercising, realizing, or practicing ideas. Praxis then is informed, committed action, which combines theory, action and reflection. It is more than action and reflection, however. As Paul Taylor (1993) has written, word and action, action and reflection, theory and practice are all facets of the same idea. This action is not merely the doing of something, or what Freire describes as activism. Praxis, however, is creative: it is other-seeking and dialogic (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, p. 190).

Praxis is based on the premise that it is not enough to propound academic theories, but that theories must also be translated into action with the sole aim of changing society for the better. According to the concept the worth of the scholar is to be found in his or her ability and willingness to descend from the ivory tower to the real world and to put his/her theoretical knowledge to work to bring about change in the lives of people, especially the disenfranchised, the impoverished, and "disprivileged." Karl Marx's statement, "Philosophers have merely interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it," sheds light on the concept of praxis. As Kwame Nkrumah reminds us, "Thought without practice is blind, practice without thought is empty".[18] Praxis allows the scholar to engage in community work, bring his/her valuable academic knowledge to the service of fellow citizens and bringing back to the classroom or academia the folk wisdom and practical lessons learned from the ground, the grassroots and from the community.

Critical sociology embodies an array of interpretations of social reality (Glesne, 2011, p. 9), making it *multidimensional* and *multi-centric*. Critical theorists offer holistic analysis of social phenomena by looking at the economic, social, cultural, political factors. Although they are critical of the economic determinism of Marxism and neo-Marxist, "they do not argue that [these theorists] were wrong in focusing on the economic realm but that they should have been concerned with other aspect of social life as well", such as cultural factors (Ritzer, 2000, p. 276). They are critical of a simple focus on structures within society as explanatory factors without accounting for the experiences of individuals within society (Ritzer, 2000, p. 277).

The aim of critical sociology is to question and to offer critiques of structural and historical conditions of oppression that many groups have, and continue to face. The other aim is to transform these conditions in order to put an end to various forms of oppression. The focus of critical sociology is to highlight and to bring to the centre of theory building "the experiences and perspectives of the oppressed groups in social, historical contexts, revealing how conditions serve certain groups and not others" (Glesne, 2011, pp. 9–10). They want to account for the interaction between individual and society (Ritzer, 2000, p. 277). That is, critical theory explores social, economic, political, and cultural issues by drawing upon *standpoint epistemologies*.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CRITICAL SOCIOLOGY

The critical school traces its origin to the Frankfurt School of sociology in Germany. As Meyers (2005, p. 5) noted, all sociological theories, including those deemed conservative, have an in-built motif of debunking taken-for-granted assumptions and to criticize the mechanisms of society. But more than any other sociological theory, the critical school takes the debunking motif farthest and indeed as an article of faith. Critical theory took on the aura of social scientific scholarship and research in the modern era in Frankfurt, Germany in the early 1920s. Ironically, modern critical theory developed as a criticism of Marx by some of his intellectual heirs. While maintaining the basic ideas of Marx and borrowing his notion of praxis, the Frankfurt School faulted Marxist historical materialism for being too positivistic, reductionist and deterministic. People, they assert, were seen by Marx as stepping into already conceived systems. People do not create their own motivation or ideological structures. But the Frankfurt School theorists are not unanimous in their criticism of Marx. While some of them reasserted the more humanistic, voluntaristic aspects of Marx's thoughts, others faulted Marxist analysis for being too voluntaristic with insufficient emphasis on determinative role of productive forces. But the latter comprise a minority of Marx's friendly critics (Wallace & Wolf, 2006).

In effect, concerned with what they saw as limitations and inadequacies in Karl Marx's original works the Frankfurt School scholars who came to known as Neo-Marxists, began to revise many of his postulates (Meyers, 2005). Contending that Marx wrote his seminal works in an era quite different from the twentieth century, the Frankfurt School theorists were intent on re-casting Marxism to fit contemporary Western capitalist society (Quist-Adade, 2012). Some of these theorists saw the deficiencies in Marx's works as too deterministic in its analysis of capitalism, while others faulted Marx for not being deterministic enough. Determinism, according to the Britannica Dictionary, is theory that all events, including moral choices, are completely determined by previously existing causes On the other hand, voluntarism refers to the power of acting without the constraint of necessity or fate; the ability to act at one's own discretion. It is sometimes called human agency. It is volition or the freedom to act or decide without duress, constraint or external pressure or force. Thus, their grand agenda was "to fill the intellectual gaps and elaborate on

key concepts so as to make Marxism more relevant and practical" (Meyers, 2005, p. 7). In so doing, they drew on and incorporated critical insights from other social sciences, including the sociology of Max Weber and the psychoanalysis of Sigmund Freud. "What emerged was a more nuanced perspective that examined not just the economy, but also the state, ideology, [culture] and human agency" (Ibid, p. 7).

CRITICAL SOCIOLOGY, THE SOCIOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION

It is not surprising when sociologists were called the devil's advocates and devil's handmaiden by the Roman Catholic Church in the emergent years of the discipline. Sociologists, both those considered conservative and those deemed reformist, have a knack to debunk the social systems they study. They do so by going beyond the commonly accepted rules governing human behavior. Sociological methods, theories, and concepts compel the sociologist to explore levels of reality that go beyond the commonly accepted rules governing human behavior. Any object of scientific study may be viewed from a variety of different perspectives. A critical sociological approach to knowledge abandons the search for universal measures of truth or authority. Critical sociologists look for diverse ways of understanding the same set of events. Dilthey (2010) argues that self-knowledge is historical and must always refer back to the larger social group of which we are members. Gadamer (2007) showed that we cannot understand things unless we approach them from a point of view that is consistent with our own mental history. There is no neutral position from which we can understand things—in any science.

Peter Berger, in his famous book *Invitation to Sociology* (1966) offered a valuable advice to students of Sociology: "The first wisdom of Sociology is that things are not what they seem." He explained that what may seems obvious, is only the first step examining or studying any given social reality. To him, society is a façade, and like the iceberg theory, the surface realities of social phenomena hide the actual magnitude and multiple aspects of those realities. In other words, what you see is not what you always get. You don't judge a book by its cover alone. This attitude of sociologists is what Berger called the sociological consciousness. He identified four motifs in the sociological consciousness:

(1) *The debunking motif*, which denotes not taking anything for granted, but rather developing an attitude to always question in order to unmask hidden beneath the surface logic, meanings, motives, etc., of phenomena, actions, structures, etc. It means going beyond the surface realities in order to understand the whole "truth." As Berger (1966) noted the debunking motif is *first wisdom of sociology*, because "nothing is as it seems to be." This "unmasking tendency" is key to studying and understanding society. "We would contend, then, that there is a debunking motif inherent in sociological consciousness. The sociologist will be driven time and again, by the very logic of his discipline,

to debunk the social systems he is studying" (p. 38). Like the onion, social reality has multiple layers of meaning and the duty of the sociologist is to peel off the many layers one-by-one in order to have a holistic and complete understanding of how society works. In short, the debunking motif allows us to look beyond what is presented, see through what is presented, mistrust the apparently obvious, and unmask the surface appearance.

(2) *The unrespectability* or *Iconoclastic motif*. The term iconoclast is derived from its Greek etymology (root) "icon" (an object of worship) and "clast" (breaking). Thus an iconoclast is a person who sneers or pokes fun at tradition. Sociologists have the tendency of questioning almost every taken-for-granted assumption. Berger (1966, p. 43) observed: "In looking at this American development we can detect another motif of sociology, closely related to that of debunking but not identical with it – its fascination with the unrespectable view of society" (Curra & Paolucc, 2004, p. 12) noted that: "Sociology must avoid becoming too respectful, because, if it does it will lose its sharp edge and capacity for critique and criticism" Berger also advised that the sociologist must cultivate an awareness of other than middle class standards and propriety and how these intrude popular consciousness as the norm, and not to accept the division between the respectable as an imposed value by rulers and the unrespectable, doing so always asking questions and going beyond the respectable and allowed to get a clearer view

(3) *The relativizing motif* is the ability to jump from one perspective to another without judging other people by the standards of your own group or time. The central premise is that identities, ideas, and customs are specific to time and place. It is the realization that an individual's or a group's views/values/ways are not absolutes, are not "truth/normality" itself. The relativizing motif affords sociologists the ability to adopt the both the stranger's and the native's viewpoints or perspectives. The stranger must ask the natives questions if he or she is to know how things work in the native setting. As a Ghanaian saying goes, "the stranger has a perfect, 20–20 vision, yet cannot see." The stranger does not know the nuances and intricacies of the strange or native culture and hence must rely on the natives for their insight and direction. Thus, the relativizing motif encourages the scholar and researcher to "play the stranger", to assume that he or she does not know anything about the phenomenon he or she is encountering or is about study and ask questions (Quist-Adade, 2012). Berger (1966) wrote on this score: "…we would look once more on this phenomenon of relativization that we have already touched upon a few times. We would now say explicitly that sociology is so much in tune with the temper of the modern era precisely because it represents the consciousness of a world in which values have been so radically relativized" (p. 48). To quickly summarize, the relativizing motif calls on us to be aware that the truth of one group is never absolute for all

groups, to look at the perspectives and beliefs of the different groups and individuals in our and other societies, gain insight through examining other cultures, realize that ideas, norms and values change with the times and so we must too, and finally, the sociologist can disagree with core beliefs that a society promotes as meaningful (Anderson, 2011).

(4) *The cosmopolitan motif* is the broadest, most general of the motifs. In fact, it is the foundation of the other motifs. It means being open to other ways of thinking and acting. It banishes prejudicial thinking and engenders empathy. It allows the sociologist to adopt a broad, open and emancipated view on human life and to realize that… "nothing human is alien to me." Berger contended that the cosmopolitan motif enables the sociologist to transcend the particular situation to gain a more general understanding of the whole; transcending where one is and taking a broader, more inclusive perspective. Berger (1966) explained: "To these we would, finally, add a fourth one, much less far-reaching in its implications but useful in rounding out our picture–the cosmopolitan motif" (p. 52). In short, like Charles Wright Mills admonished in his book the *Sociological Imagination* (1959), the cosmopolitan motif encourages the sociologist to transcends the particular situation, be receptive to other ways of thinking without being prejudicial, go beyond where one is and taking a wider world view, and be at home where other people are.

CRITICAL THINKING TOOLKIT

Ignorance

The root of the word is "ignore," thus suggesting that one not paying attention to or not aware of or simply not knowing. It also means not being made aware of by others or lack of desire to know about (pretending that it is not there or not real). Since no one is omniscient, all humans are relatively ignorant. Ignorance can thus be defined as: (a) not pay attention to; (b) not being aware of; (c) simply not knowing.

Obvious

This term is generally taken in a commonsense way to mean '*easy to see or understand*,' '*plain*' or '*self-evident*,' or '*it seems to need no further questioning.*' However, the term, etymologically, also means '*being in the way*,' or that which hides/conceals/distorts something else, that is the surface realities which need to be '*looked beyond*.' It means a *façade*, a screen, behind which may lurk layers of meanings. Analogous to the concept of obvious is *the tip of the iceberg theory*. There is more to the iceberg than what is visible. To fully understand the nature of the iceberg, we must be able to see both the portion jutting above the sea and the larger mass covered by the sea. In this sense, sociologists are careful to rely on first impressions, when dealing with any given social phenomenon.

Debunking is defined as looking at both the obvious and surface-level explanations for social behavior and the less obvious and deeper explanations. The working definitions of the term can be put simply as: '*What you see is not what you always get*' and '*appearances are deceptive*.' Going beyond the obvious or the façade requires the use of debunking strategy. Emile Durkheim's suicide studies are a classic example of debunking. He repudiated the conventional wisdom of his days by showing that people who committed suicide were not only afflicted by psychological malaise, but also affected by the problems of social integration. The obvious reason for suicide was madness, for no sane person would take his or her life. However, Durkheim demonstrated in his studies that the less one is integrated into his or her community the more likely that person would take his or her own life in times of personal crisis.

Critical/Critique in popular usage is negatively evaluating something. In the sense it is being used here, the term means *careful analysis*. Critiquing is thus *an attempt at objective understanding* so as to determine its merits, faults and other attributes. It means studying the nature of something in order to determine its essential features and the relation between them. In critique, we try to separate facts in order to make decisions or judgments.

Bracketing is defined as '*holding off*' to the side or suspending whatever preconceived notions, knowledge, or idea one may have about a given subject or phenomenon one is about to investigate. Bracketing has been described by scholars as *the premise of all learning and growth of awareness*. Through bracketing we allow new and different ideas to enter our minds s a result of inquiry. Bracketing is a difficult, but not an impossible exercise. Bracketing comes from phenomenological school. It is based the assumption that truth can be known only in a reflective attitude. Here distractions and biases are bracketed, or suspended. Phenomenologists hold that to get to the essence of things, we must use what they call *phenomenological reduction*. Phenomenological reduction is a process of defining the pure essence of a psychological phenomenon. "It is a process whereby empirical subjectivity is suspended, so that pure consciousness may be defined in its essential and absolute being" (as cited in Mann, 2011, p. 207). This is accomplished by a method of "bracketing" empirical data away from consideration. Bracketing empirical data away from further investigation leaves pure consciousness, pure phenomena, and the pure ego as the residue of phenomenological reduction (Little John & Foss, 2008). Bracketing allows us to suspend or "hold off to the side" any preconceived notions of any given reality we intend to understand or study. It allows us to play the role of the stranger. The stranger must ask the natives questions if he or she is to know how things work in the native setting. As a Ghanaian saying goes, "the stranger has a perfect, 20–20 vision, yet cannot see." The stranger does not know the nuances and intricacies of the strange or native culture and hence must rely on the natives for their insight and direction. Thus, the phenomenological approach encourages the scholar and researcher to assume that he or she does not know anything about the phenomenon he or she is about study and ask questions (Quist-Adade, 2012).

The critical thinker engages in an ongoing bracketing exercise. Every social phenomenon and social encounter or interaction requires an active exercise in bracketing. When one is over, the critical thinker '*release the brackets*' and allows a synthesis of what she or he has learned in the encounter with whatever preconceived ideas she or he had prior to the encounter or interaction. As mentioned earlier bracketing is a difficult undertaking and some critics point to the uselessness of an exercise in futility as it is something that impossible to achieve. Yet, Kessel (2013) contests that bracketing is achievable by other means, If one finds it impossible to suspend one's preconceived notions, one could constantly '*attack and defend*' and '*abandon and replace*' his or her own preconceived notions about the social phenomenon encountered or being studied and the new ideas/knowledge she or learns in the process.

According to Kessel (2013, p. 1), bracketing aids critical thinking because it calls for us to deliberately minimize "the effect of our current values on how we perceive, see, and judge those realities around us, including ourselves." Bracketing eases the way to empathetic understanding or non-judgmental thinking and allowing us to give others at least temporary benefit of the doubt. Bracketing is a scholarly way to seeking to understand something on its own terms without interference of our own terms. In a way, it can be said to be attempting pure, unadulterated thinking through the banishment of either ill or good thought, in order to unravel the essence of things. Kessel (2013) rightly notes that, "bracketing doesn't require us to abandon or even alter our values. It requires us to temporarily suspend them. After investigation has taken place, a "release" of these brackets allows a "mixing" to take place." Explaining the dialectical thinking involved in bracketing, Kessel (2013, p. 1) writes:

> Presuming that critical analysis provides new or different "data" to assess, the release of the brackets provides the opportunity for a clash of the old and the new…resulting in yet another "new"…a synthesis that may or may not culminate in a change of values or position. However, given that "values" aren't static…but are ever-changing if allowed to be (i.e. not prevented by rigid and controlled adherence), change is likely. Integrity comes into play here. The most authentic change is that which happens because it is warranted…and necessary to maintain the integrity of the "knower" (i.e the "self-conscious" knower).

NOTES

[1] The use of the expression 'knowledges' has been done to indicate that knowledge does not have only one way of expressing itself, but manifests itself in a variety of ways.

[2] Khmet (or Kemet/Kemit/Kmt) is the ancient name for the people and country of the territory that we now call Egypt, Africa. It was used by its ancient African people. See Cheikh Anta Diop, "Origin of the Ancient Egyptians" in G. Mokhtar (ed.), *General history of Africa II: Ancient civilisation of Africa*. Berkeley, CA: UNESCO, 1981, pp. 27–57.

[3] See Cheikh Anta Diop, *The African origin of civilization*. New York, NY: Lawrence Hill, 1971; Yosef Ben Jochannon, *Black Man of the Nile*, New York, NY: Alkebu-Lan, 1970.

4   See Henry Olela, The African Foundation of Greek Philosophy" in Richard A. Wright (ed.), *African Philosophy*, Lanham: University Press of America, pp. 77–92.

5   See Gloria Emeagwali "Colonialism and Science in Africa," in H. Selin, (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the History of Science, Technology and Medicine in Non-Western Cultures*, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997, pp. 220–221.

6   See "Introduction" to D. D. Kuupole and De-Valera N. Y. M. Botchway (eds) *Polishing the Pearls of Ancient Wisdom: Exploring the Relevance of Endogenous African Knowledge Systems for Sustainable Development in Postcolonial Africa*, Cape Coast, Ghana: Faculty of Arts, University of Cape Coast, and Centre for Indigenous Knowledge and Organizational Development, 2010.

7   Ibid.

8   Ibid.

9   D.D. Kuupole and De-Valera N.Y.M. Botchway, op.cit.

10 Ahmadou H. Bâ, "The Living Tradition", in J. Ki-Zerbo (ed.), *General History of Africa Vol. 1: Methodology and African Prehistory*, California: UNESCO, p. 201 (pp. 166–205).

11 De-Valera N.Y.M. Botchway, "Descending the Ivory Tower": Unveiling Khmet's Legacy in Africa's Quest for an Afromorphous University, in D.D. Kuupole and De-Valera N.Y.M. Botchway, (ed.), *Polishing the Pearls of Ancient Wisdom: Exploring the Relevance of Endogenous African Knowledge Systems for Sustainable Development in Post Colonial Africa*. Cape Coast: Ghana, Centre for Indigenous Knowledge and Organisational Development, Faculty of Arts, and University of Cape Coast Printing Press, 2010, pp. 19–37; (pp. 17–52).

12 This school of thought, subscribing to the idea of one worldview, opines that "[T]he world is everything that is the case". See page 11 of Ludwig Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, 1922. http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext04/tloph10.txt; [accessed 20 June 2012].

13 See B. Haverskort and W. Hiemstra, (eds.), *Food for Thought; Ancient Vision And New Experiments of Rural People*, London: Zed Books / Bangalore: Books for Change, 1999.

14 This saying is commonly associated with Socrates, the Greek thinker.

15 See Janheinz Jahn, *Muntu:The New African Culture*, New York: Grove Press, 1961.

16 By Justice, we, drawing on the Pharaonic multilayered concept of Maat and the clarification given to it by Théophile Obenga, mean, "[Human thought and actions/behaviors/lifeways/rules that promotes rational thinking], Order, universal balance, cosmic regulation, justice, truth-in-justice, rectitude and moral uprightness." See Théophile Obenga, *African Philosophy: The Pharaonic Period: 2780–330 BC*, Popenguine, Senegal: Per Ankh, 2004, p. 189.

17 D.D. Kuupole and De-Valera N.Y.M. Botchway, op.cit. p. 5.

18 Kwame Nkrumah's Philosophical statement of Purpose – Assata Shakur.