RECONCEPTUALIZING UBUNTU AS INCLUSION IN AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION: TOWARDS EQUALIZATION OF VOICE

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ABSTRACT. Inclusionary higher educational practices have become a topical issue in recent debates on the Africa continent. While the idea of inclusion in communal practices is embodied in the notion of Ubuntu in Africa, a number of silences and inconsistencies still remain in the way the marginalized groups (the poor, people with disabilities, women, homosexuals and so forth) are treated in African higher education (AHE). The dilemmas implicit in the idea of inclusion in contemporary higher education institutions (HEIs) in Africa restrict the marginalized group's voices, thereby treating them as unequal members of the assumed equal society. This suggests that an African conception of Ubuntu in its current form may not bring about adequate transformation to the African higher education system. The underlying assumption in the existing conception of Ubuntu as a communal practice – more specifically knowledge culture – of seeing humanity in others provides sufficient grounds for the inclusion of all members of society. Employing Young's (2000) interpretation of inclusion as exclusion, Ubuntu in dominant and current thinking and practices can be inclusive and exclusive simultaneously. The article proposes to re-examine the potentiality of an African philosophy of Ubuntu as a way of curtailing exclusionary practices in higher education (HE). As long as HE in Africa embraces Ubuntu as inclusion, a substantive form of inclusion may not be engendered. The article makes its argument using Rancière's perspective of "equalization of voice." By arguing for an Ubuntu of inclusion as voice, we make a cogent defense for thinking differently about African people's communal practices, thus looking differently at their conception of a knowledge culture.

Keywords: Ubuntu; inclusion; equalization of voice; higher education; Africa

1. Introduction

Central to the contemporary higher education debates lies the question of whether or not Ubuntu as an African philosophy and way of life can assist in promoting inclusionary institutions on the continent. Ubuntu as an African epitome of inclusion has become a topical issue and prevalent framework in curtailing unjust practices in contemporary African higher education (AHE) and in other institutions of democratic society. However, although different scholars' perspectives of Ubuntu exhibit unique elements that could engender a genuine inclusionary society, we deem it necessary to reconceptualize this dominant African philosophy of Ubuntu (humanness) as a worldview and its relevance to higher education (HE). At stake are the incongruences between the theoretical understanding of Ubuntu and the practices in higher education institutions attested to by unsubstantive inclusion of the marginalized groups, especially women. Contemporary research findings on the place of women in higher education in Africa indicate a grave lack of access and inclusion, an increasing number of the marginalized groups, as well as marginalization of their voice (see Assié-Lumumba, 2007; Shanyanana, 2014). This then poses a challenge to the current conception of Ubuntu as inclusion as a salient approach in transforming higher education in Africa. This paper observes that scholars who have discussed Ubuntu as a moral approach and an ideal framework for promoting transformation (e.g. Ramose, 2002; Wiredu, 2004; Waghid, 2011; Metz, 2014; and others), or Ubuntu in relation to the inclusion of marginalized groups, particularly women, or those who have discussed women's access to and inclusion in higher education (like Kwesiga, 2002; Mama, 2006; Assié-Lumumba, 2007; etc.) have not connected Ubuntu as inclusion to equalization of voice.

Thus, this paper reconceptualizes Ubuntu in relation to the equalization of voice beyond statistical representation based on gender, and explores equalization of voice that can be applied through university pedagogy. In doing this, we firstly probe the existing understandings of Ubuntu as a traditional African philosophy by showing its characteristics and distinctiveness. Secondly, we expose the incongruences between the understanding of Ubuntu and its exclusionary practices, resulting in unequal representation of all people, especially the marginalized groups – the poor, people with disabilities, women and homosexuals – in higher education in Africa despite the shift to democratic rule claimed by many African countries. Thirdly, we substantiate our call for an understanding of Ubuntu as inclusion using Young's (2000) interpretation of inclusion as exclusion. Fourthly, we demonstrate the plausibility of a post-liberal Rancièrean (1999) perspective of equalization of voice as an alternative approach in advancing substantive inclusion in HE, specifically in university pedagogy. We contend

that if Ubuntu, as an African philosophy and conception of a knowledge culture, can be framed differently, HE potentially may engender substantive inclusion.

2. African Conception of Inclusion in Understanding Higher Education

This section explores the meanings, characteristics and distinctiveness of Ubuntu as an African philosophy and way of life. Van Binsbergen (2002: 6) perceives Ubuntu as a revived African concept that does not only focus on a particular locality or region, but rather on the entire continent, while De Tejada (cited in Ramose, 2002: 324) sees Ubuntu as a way of life and practice of many Africans in most parts of the continent, especially in those regions stretching "from the Nubian desert to the Cape of Good Hope and from Senegal to Zanzibar." However, Ramose explains that this geographical delimitation is problematic, since it creates a barrier to the desert as Africa's birthmark, and therefore obscures the meaning and import of human interaction on the continent before the desert sneaked in. This means that connecting a philosophy of Ubuntu to a geographical location may limit its relevance to the entire continent. Mapaure (2011: 160) affirms that Ubuntu is used in several Bantu languages, manifesting an African philosophical worldview, in terms of which each person is regarded as a human being who may engage in all processes of knowledge. Put succinctly, Waghid (2009: 76) confirms that Ubuntu means "human interdependence through deliberative inquiry … [that] exists in most of the African languages, although not necessarily under the same name." In other words, an African philosophy of Ubuntu is not something new; it must have existed among the peoples of Africa since ancient times. In the following sub-sections, we further explore the meanings, fundamental nature and significance of Ubuntu in relation to the practices in higher educational institutions.

2.1 Ubuntu as Inclusion – An African Perspective

Ramose (2002) offers a comprehensive conception of Ubuntu in three maxims: "The first means that to be human is to affirm one's humanity by recognizing the humanity of others and, on that basis, establish respectful human relations with them. The second entails that if and when one is faced with a decisive choice between wealth and the preservation of the life of another human being, then one should opt for the preservation of life." The third maxim is a "principle deeply embedded in traditional African political philosophy," which says "that the king owed his status, including all the powers associated with it, to the will of the people under him" (Ramose,

2002: 324–325). This implies that the concept of Ubuntu is a personified way of life – a word with no English equivalent.

The first designation means "a person is a person through other persons," based on the Zulu maxim, "umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu" (Ramose, 1999: 49). This shows how the being of an African person is not only embedded in the community, but in the universe as a whole. This is articulated mainly in the prefix ubu- of the word Ubuntu, which, refers to the universe as being enfolded, containing everything. The stem -ntu means the process of life as the unfolding of the universe by concrete manifestations in different forms and modes of being. This process includes the emergence of the speaking and knowing human being (Ramose, 2002: 325). As such, this being is called umuntu or, in the Northern Sotho language, motho – one who is able by common endeavors to articulate the experience and knowledge of what ubu is. Thus, -ntu stands for the epistemological side of "being." This is the wider horizon against which the intersubjective aspects of Ubuntu should be seen. Mutual recognition and respect in the different intersubjective relations are parts of the process of the unfolding of the universe, which encompasses everything in the speaking and knowing of human beings. In the main, Ubuntu as a philosophical concept is associated with the being of a person, which is determined by his or her association with other persons in intersubjective community.

Likewise, Letseka (in Waghid, 2011: 240) regards boto or Ubuntu "as normative in that it encapsulates moral norms and virtues such as kindness, generosity, compassion, benevolence, courtesy, and respect and concern for others." The idea of respect and concern for others is more profound and implies the inclusion of all, because even those who seem to experience some exclusion are considered. Ramose (2002: 325) underlines the oneness and wholeness of this ongoing establishment of community. One can surmise that the oneness of African philosophy is perceivable in the plurality of its voices, and that no voice should be disregarded in the whole community of engagement. In particular, the notion of Ubuntu underlies the communalism by which the African community is characterized. For Ramose, the meaning of Ubuntu indicates that there is an elevated judgment of the community in African thought and practice, which is greater than that of the individual, but that does not take place at the expense of overlooking the individuality of the person. A person is a person in the community, and his or her individuality is exercised through others in that community. This attests to a culture of mutual relations, of caring for one another and sharing with one another. We infer that the underlying principle of Ubuntu emphasizes a community, which clearly exhibits an opportunity for inclusion, that is, one in which everyone is included in deliberation. If it is correct that AHE upholds Ubuntu, then no one is supposed to be excluded and their voices will be heard in policy, practices, as well as in decision

making. Although there might be some disagreement between members in the AHE community, each member could depend on other members of the community for sustenance and support.

Augmenting the distinctiveness of Ubuntu, Metz (2014: 6761) further states that "[t]o have Ubuntu is to be a person who is living a genuinely human way of life, whereas to lack Ubuntu is to be missing human excellence or to live like an animal." Tutu (1999: 34–35) declares that "a person is a person through other people; that I am human because I belong, I participate, and I share… [I am] open and available to others, affirming of others, [and do] not feel threatened that others are able and good." This means that one belongs to a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished. The concept of "I belong, I participate and I share" could be said to underscore what it means to cultivate an inclusive environment. Again, the phrase "a person is a person through other people" assumes that, when some people are excluded and mistreated, others should act to address the problem. In other words, when some people, for instance, are humiliated or oppressed they are regarded inhumanely, and this points to the absence of Ubuntu in the practice.

Poignantly, Maathai (2009) posits that the exclusion of marginalized groups, especially women, is due in particular to the elongated colonial ideology and patriarchal system that perceive some people as inferior and as needing representation (see also Kwesiga, 2002; Assié-Lumumba, 2007). We therefore question the significance of Ubuntu, which attests to the absence of a legitimate form of human interdependence in HE practices in Africa. Equally, Wiredu (2004) points out that an African philosophy of Ubuntu as inclusion cannot be articulated without any reference to what it means for a person, specifically an African – whether a man or a woman – to be educated. Thus, AHE need to shape human action in a way that is comparable with and analogous to its fundamental ideas, meanings and practice (in this case Ubuntu) within its context. Hence, AHE ought to act out the democratic element of Ubuntu, that is inclusion, in which all are acknowledged as equal members of the same community. Waghid and Smeyers (2012: 6–7) affirm that Ubuntu as an African philosophy represents a form of human activity that can create space in higher education, in which all people can engage freely with one another deliberatively through practices and shared values such as Ubuntu. Yet, taking into account the abovementioned distinctiveness, we question whether Ubuntu as inclusion is indeed embraced and practiced in AHE, especially in relation to the marginalized groups.

2.2 Inconsistency in Meanings and Practices of Ubuntu as Inclusion

The underlying understanding of Ubuntu as inclusion rests firstly on the idea of a communal practice, which by its nature is inclusive. Ubuntu as a contextualized approach centers on a community of engagement of all members, and this understanding of Ubuntu, if extended to HE, would make a case for inclusionary practices. In this sense, the phrase "I am because we are" is a manifestation of inclusion through Ubuntu, which AHE ought to encourage. The idea that an African philosophy of Ubuntu is underlined by "I as we" makes AHE problematic, as some people seemingly remain excluded.

Despite the existing inclusiveness in the communal practices embodied in the notion of Ubuntu, as explained above, there remains a grave exclusion of the marginalized groups (in this case women), who also are treated unequally. Innumerable studies have shown that women have been, and still are being, excluded from African HE (Kwesiga, 2002: 152; Mama, 2006; Assié-Lumumba, 2007). A study conducted by the London Institute of Education (2005: 10) shows that the percentage of female enrolment in HE in Africa is low. Nigeria has 39.9%, Tanzania 24% and Uganda 34%, while Lesotho has 50% and South Africa has 53% female enrolment. Many of the female students in AHE are clustered at the undergraduate level, and more are studying for certificates and diplomas, while fewer women are found at the Master's and doctoral levels. Similarly, a study of 32 universities in 16 African countries found that a larger proportion of university dropouts consisted of female students (Leathwood & Read, 2009: 3). This denotes that women not only are underrepresented numerically, but they also are at a greater risk of non-completion and dropping out. So, the way HE limits women's equal access to its practices seems to suggest that there is no space for them, thus confirming a kind of exclusion.

The above depiction corroborates the inconsistency between the conception of Ubuntu as inclusion and practices in relation to the marginalized groups, especially women in HE on the continent, since the current understanding of Ubuntu as inclusion centers on the idea of seeing humanity in others and having concern for the other. HE then ought to enact inclusionary practices in which all people could be included, irrespective of their differences. What is significant is that the inclusion of all people becomes something in agreement with Ubuntu, not something divergent from or in contrast with it. Excluding the marginalized groups from HE means that they are being disregarded and treated inhumanely. Such elements of exclusion in the practice of AHE seem to affirm, to some extent, Enslin and Horsthemke's (2004: 57) distrust of a limited understanding of Ubuntu. It remains unclear how characteristically African ways of philosophizing are meant to help resolve problems and clarify issues in

education. The authors' concern seems credible, especially considering that Ubuntu exists in the language of African societies, yet some people remain excluded from HE. Here, to substantiate our argument for the inconsistencies in meanings and practices within Ubuntu as inclusion, especially the exclusion of the marginalized groups, we draw from Young's interpretation of inclusion as exclusion.

2.3 Ubuntu as Inclusion with Subtle Forms of Exclusion

The conception of Ubuntu as inclusion entails involving others or inviting them to participate in doing something in public. Inclusion is recognized as a norm for democratic society, including the HE community (Young, 2000: 23–25), where public deliberative engagement is the norm. Inclusive processes of communication ought to be marked by people's disposition to be accountable to others and make deliberation open to the public, making it accessible for it to count as normatively legitimate (Young, 2000: 13). This approach envisages that decisions on how to address and promote inclusive democratic institutions, such as HE in Africa, are legitimate. For Young, a justified Ubuntu as inclusion can only happen when all stakeholders are included in the process, which inclusion needs to occur irrespective of their gender and other differences. Within Ubuntu as inclusion, each person has the right to be included and treated as important in the dialogues and decision-making processes from which their voices and interests previously were excluded. So, exclusion happens when some people, specifically the marginalized groups, experience subtle forms of exclusion within public institutions – in this case higher education in Africa. Young's (2000) interpretation of Ubuntu as exclusion inherent in inclusion can be viewed in two forms, namely external exclusion and internal exclusion. External exclusion occurs when some members are kept out of the democratic community and its debates or decision-making processes, to the extent that such people (e.g. women) are not involved in a community of engagement and in public discourses due to their status in society (Young, 2000: 52–53). Internal exclusion happens when individuals or groups are represented formally in social institutions, but excluded from the discussion and decision-making process by means of a specific style of expression; the use of language that is difficult to understand; and the dismissal of the participation of some people as being out of order. Young (2000) states that, while mechanisms are accelerated to include all stakeholders, new forms of exclusion come into play, that is, exclusion is concurrently intrinsic within inclusive democratic processes.

In terms of HE efforts to address external exclusion, the study (London Institute of Education, 2005: 5) shows that there also is a sizeable gender gap in staff employment, particularly at higher decision-making levels. Of the

four Commonwealth African universities examined, the percentage of women at professor, associate professor and senior lecturer levels was decidedly lower than that of men. Statistics of the position of professor held by women at the four universities showed that Ibadan University had 12.5%; the University of Cape Town 7%; Dar es Salam University 5.2%; and Makerere University 6.1%. Positions of associate professor held by women constituted 17% at the University of Cape Town; 14.8% at Dar es Salaam; and 20% at Makerere (London Institute of Education, 2005: 5). In addition, statistics of women as rectors, vice-chancellors, deputy chancellors, registrars, executive directors and deans of faculties showed that, in 2006, in the overall gender proportion of the 92 African universities, only four countries attained 30%, namely Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia and Swaziland. Countries such as South Africa, Mozambique, Uganda and Botswana had 28%, while the rest had between 0 and 24 % representation of women (Onokala & Onah, 1998: 10–12). Evidently, women are accessing AHE, although they are underrepresented as students at the Master's and PhD levels, and as senior staff members. Teferra and Altbach (2004: 21) highlight that the challenges experienced by female students include a lack of access to HE at many universities in Africa. Mainly, we argue that HE seems to be addressing external exclusion, although in minimal ways.

In terms of women's experiences of internal exclusion, Maürtin-Cairncross's (2013: 1) study conducted in South Africa showed that women experience some sense of invisibility and exclusion within their workplaces, and various academic respondents stated that:

> Women are made to feel invisible[;] one is often called to meetings and informed of decisions that were made. When challenging these decisions, you are 'allowed' to speak but at the end of your discussion, the initial decision is reiterated as if you had not spoken at all. That is the reason that some women become aggressive … they want to be heard; they want their opinions to be taken seriously. When they react in this way, they are labelled emotional … So what does one do [?] I have taken to remain[ing] silent … (Respondent 1, higher education executive).

> The work climate females experience in a very covert way excludes women from the real decision making … They [the men] have a camaraderie which excludes women, in the real sense. Women are listened to, without taking their points seriously. [Men's] importance and being busy becomes an excuse for hoarding information and creating a sense of power that hides their inefficiencies (Respondent 2, higher education executive). … being overlooked because of perceptions about you (age, EI [emotional intelligence], intelligence not being taken seriously by

the senior managers and being overlooked for the work you deliver on in favour of someone else …) (Respondent 5, director).

From the above we can deduce that women, especially those in senior positions, often feel excluded from decision making because their presence and ideas are ignored. Noticeably, women's experiences demonstrate that, when they feel invisible and excluded, especially when there only are a few women in senior positions in which they are expected to influence decisions and policy making, they become afraid to act with confidence. The following quotations from Maürtin-Cairncross's study (2013: 1) reflect some of these sentiments:

> Lack of confidence on the part of many women [keeps them from being] bold and stand[ing] up for themselves (Respondent 5, director).
> Male counterparts … are driven by a fear that they may lose power and therefore they do not share it. They do self-esteem-lowering things – ignore people … [implying] I am busier than you and therefore I can give you only limited time and space! Women's need to be made to feel valued is never addressed. Building self-esteem … you have to find these things for yourself and spend energy on 'bouncing back' and keeping your own power as they will take it away from you and make you feel inferior; if you are not working from an inner centre of strength you are doomed (Respondent 2, higher education executive).

The above illustrates how people without self-confidence could find it difficult to assert their voices as equal agents and stand up for their arguments, largely because of the fact that there are few women representatives in senior positions. On the other hand, the challenge faced is due to women's resistance to support one another's standpoints, as well as their promotion. We agree with Maürtin-Cairncross (2013: 2) that, even though the "dominant social groups often control the channels of communication, reinforcing women's subordinate status, when academic women do not challenge dominant institutional cultures, they may tacitly accept subordinate status." This suggests that only when women have the confidence to challenge these exclusionary attitudes and practices by demanding their equal space might their ideas possibly be taken into consideration as a way of attaining internal inclusion. The foregoing views show clearly that HE has reached the point of addressing external inclusion, although in minimal ways. The dilemma facing HE is how to halt internal inclusion. A notion of Ubuntu as both inclusion and exclusion, as argued for by Young (2000), presumes that women's presence in African HE will be far more inclusive than a reliance on mere statistics. This view reinforces our argument that, although Ubuntu as inclusion is a plausible framework for

facilitating public deliberation for an inclusive democratic society, exclusion is inherent within inclusion.

In response to the question whether Ubuntu is perfect, Appiah (1996: 134) responds that Ubuntu should not be regarded as a flawless worldview, but as a concept with merit that could be explored in order to assist in recognizing others as reasonable. As such, no educational institution in Africa could claim to practice Ubuntu without affording equal space to all to contribute reasonably to all pressing issues. Thus, Appiah's notion of recognizing others as reasonable beings should be at the center of Ubuntu as an inclusive philosophy in African societies, including in the HE community. However, since some people often are excluded, the practice of Ubuntu as inclusion requires further scrutiny and expansion. Appiah (1996: 135) calls for a critical reflection on our understanding and practice of fundamental concepts such as Ubuntu in order to bring about +change for the educational community of engagement to make sense. In other words, if Ubuntu symbolizes a community of practice and human dignity, the placement of some people on the margin, as well as the perception of them as passive members, then Ubuntu in its current form may not bring adequate transformation to the AHE system. What follows is a Rancièrean notion of equality of voice as an alternative in promoting Ubuntu that potentially could engender substantive inclusion.

3. A Rancièrean Conception of Ubuntu as Inclusion:
   Post-liberal Perspective

Rancière (1999) offers a unique approach to thinking about Ubuntu as inclusion to achieve equality that describes a way to act out, rather than a mere distributed and received equality. This means that participants in these case women should be allowed to act out in terms of voice to make meaningful contribution to decision makings and other forms of democratic processes. For Rancière, equality is the presupposition of those who act on their own behalf, rather than being represented by others. The idea of acting on their own behalf ties in very well with an inclusive HE, in which all people, engage in educational practices and demand their deliberative spaces. Nonetheless, when people are being represented, the representatives act in support of others for the purpose of achieving equality on the assumption that they are acting on behalf of others, that is the marginalized groups – the poor, people with disabilities, women, homosexuals and so forth – who are incapable of asserting their own equality. To put it succinctly, Rancière points out that equality cannot be achieved only when those who are deprived of it receive it through others, but also when they engage in educational deliberations in their own capacity. In concurrence

with Rancière (1999: 30), equality is a way of disrupting and attaining justice, and that is what all people are entitled to expect from the state or social institutions (higher education) in which they happen to find themselves. So, attaining equality is based on how people ought to act and what they do while claiming their equality – even in African higher education arrangements. For him, equality is not a principle of receptivity or passivity – attained by being visible in AHE without making any meaningful contribution. Rather, it is a principle of activity (Rancière, 1999: 33). We found Rancière's view of people engaging in a particular activity to demand equality, equal voice, rather than waiting as passive recipients of what is being distributed to them, quite compelling. This approach has the potential to engender equality in HE, as it could empower and change the position of the marginalized, especially women, and enable them to air their voices like their male counterparts. Thus, only when AHE creates an enabling atmosphere in which all voices are heard can substantive inclusion be achieved.

The potential question is how the excluded groups may demand their inclusion? Rancière (1992: 4–8) states that all humans are equally intelligent, and that the difference between them lies not in their intelligence, but in their attention. Since all human beings have equal intelligence, everyone ought to be afforded a space to unleash their intelligence in AHE. So, Ubuntu as inclusion in HE needs to be advanced by captivating the intelligence of all people irrespective of their differences. In response to whether those who have been deprived of HE, particularly the marginalized groups, possibly could act out and exercise their equality of intelligence, Rancière (1992: 46) posits that equality of intelligence does not imply that students (people) have the capability of scoring the same marks or grades; rather, it implies equality of intelligence on a standard base. In other words, intellectual skills may vary from one person to another, but we are equally capable of using those skills to communicate, to discuss, to make decisions, and to take account of the world around us. To understand and practice equality, Rancière (1992: 46) argues that "[o]ur problem isn't proving that all intelligence is equal. It's seeing what can be done under that supposition. And for this, it's enough for us that the opinion be possible – that is, that no opposing truth can be proved." Stated differently, it is clear that human beings possess equal intellectual abilities that can be nurtured. Equality should be approached on this basis.

Within this framework, equality of voice ought to rest in a person's ability to be attentive to what is seen and what is spoken in the world around. Intelligence is, first, "attention and research before being a combination of ideas" (Rancière, 1992: 54–56). Interestingly, in order to establish one another's intelligence, people have to listen attentively to the point of view of others, and this can be done in HE in Africa by including all people and

treating them as equal partners. In Rancière's (1992: 57) view, the notion of being attentive is said to be "the moral foundation of the power to know." However, this moral act, in turn, is not to be used to condemn others, but is a moral act of being truthful to oneself, and to start from the fact that "not knowing yourself would be a contradiction in terms" (Rancière, 1992: 57). Regarding the equality of intelligence, what we consider interesting is the exploration of the power that is set free by any man or woman when he or she judges himself/herself equal to everyone else, and judges everyone else as equal. It is further posited that, for everyone to engage in the community of intelligence (e.g. HE), there is a need for the distant being to communicate, translate and counter-translate in order to move ahead with others. In this respect, the community of intelligence ought to embody the ability to be attentive, which is a fundamental attribute of education. This is why Rancière (1992: 64–65) rightly points to three ways in which attentiveness can be inculcated – the first is the shift from intelligence to attention; the second explains what it means to be attentive; and the third considers the consequences of such a view for education, and for forms of teaching in AHE in particular. Finding one's voice and the equality of intelligence could have a substantial influence and possibly may address inequality in AHE. However, to advance "equalization of voice," AHE should reconstruct ways of including the marginalized groups based on voice.

In essence, through Ubuntu as inclusion through "equalization of voice," AHE ought to nurture in all people, regardless of their gender, some sense of assertiveness, which may enable them to engage in debates and offer their reasons with confidence. At the same time, there is a need to cultivate the ability to listen, with attentive listening, as Rancière (1999) puts it, to all members of an educational community as a way of promoting internal inclusion. The above view suggests that human beings, regardless of their differences, possess equal rights to higher education practices, which require Ubuntu as inclusion to embrace "equalization of voice." Consequently, to attain the level where people exercise their voice and listen attentively without considering which gender or group is making the claim, Africa needs to educate citizens on such attributes. If all human beings indeed have equal intelligence, then higher education in Africa needs to create an environment in which all people can exercise their equality through voice. Remarkably, a Rancièrean "equalization of voice" could be a plausible approach and yardstick for substantive inclusion in HE in Africa.

4. Equalization of Voice and the Implications for University Pedagogy

Here we show how equalization of voice can be enacted, and we identify and suggest how voice could be promoted through the three facets of university pedagogy, namely governance and management, classroom engagements and research. We argue that it is only through the reconceptualization of the taken-for-granted approaches and views, in this case Ubuntu as inclusion, that education institutions may enact inclusionary systems.

4.1 University Governance and Management

University governance and management should frame the policy and practices within the equalization of voice towards a substantive inclusion. Firstly, there should be a clear pronouncement on the practical implications of the equalization of voice as a yardstick for the good of the entire institution. This requires policies and an environment that respects all people's voices and affords students, staff members and leaders equal opportunities, irrespective of their differences. Secondly, recognition of the voice among management members should also break away from the traditional belief of looking at people based on gender in decision making, thereby leading to the domination of one over the other. University governance ought to transcend the gender divide in its attempts to advance the inclusion of all voices, especially those of the internally excluded groups. By so doing, their voices may make a meaningful contribution to democratic processes. Treating some people as the other should be discouraged, since this might trigger forms of discrimination and exclusion. Thirdly, university governance and management should begin to take seriously issues of marginalization and act publicly against all forms of injustice. Fourthly, university governance and management should treat all people as equal human beings, rather than as gendered beings, particularly in their allocation of courses, jobs and even leadership positions. Equally, they also should sensitize staff to their democratic responsibilities as a way of holding people accountable for the excluded group's voices. Unless governance and management pronounce themselves clearly on what equalization of voice entails and how it should be attained, classroom engagements could be influenced.

4.2 Classroom Engagements

In classroom engagements, all students (especially the internally excluded) should be encouraged to air their views, while the others are expected to listen attentively. This requires lecturers and all staff involved to be informed of the equalization-of-voice framework in which all people's

voices are heard, irrespective of their differences. Classrooms should be friendly to the voices of the marginalized groups so that they can develop confidence and ability to air their views and participate like others. Waghid (2005: 340) offers a compelling argument that university classrooms require not only the socializing of students with an implicit body of facts and knowledge-constructs about society, human values and different cultural traditions, but also should initiate them into a discourse of critical questioning so that they challenge what they have been taught. Thus, the enactment of active and attentive listening among students may enable the marginalized groups to express their ideas without fear of rejection; as Rancière (1999) puts it, as a way of exercising their freedom and equality through a voice. In exercising one's right, Waghid and Smeyers (2012) assert that the embodiment and practice of Ubuntu in HE can be propelled when everyone's voice and experience would be listened to and respected. Affording all people, especially the marginalized groups, the opportunity to be included would unlock their cognitive and intellectual ability to express themselves freely within an enabling environment, and vindicate democratic HE in Africa. Waghid and Smeyers (2012: 6) postulate that educational institutions on the African continent ought to become concerned especially with cultivating Ubuntu as respect for persons in terms of which everyone deliberates freely in a humane and communally engaging manner. This implies that these educational institutions need to be concerned with creating democratic and responsible citizens and future leaders who are attenuated to the humane practice of Ubuntu.

4.3 Research

Firstly, the university should create enabling processes and practices in terms of which the marginalized groups (women) are encouraged and afforded opportunities to engage in commonly male- dominated fields such as science and engineering. Secondly, there should be recognition of their voice through research and funding set aside for the marginalized groups especially women in male-dominated research fields, such as science, IT, engineering and so forth. Thirdly, the university ought to offer the necessary support in promoting unfamiliar voices in such areas. We strongly argue that the recognition of the voices of the marginalized groups in such research areas may lead to many female students pursuing studies in male-dominated fields and contributing to knowledge production. By so doing, women's voices, just like those of other marginalized groups, may become part of the university research focus and may lead to a balanced and equally represented university system and entire society.

5. Concluding Remarks

This article has reconceptualized Ubuntu as inclusion, drawing from different perspectives – the traditional African, and Western liberal and post-liberal viewpoints. We have argued that the African notion of Ubuntu could be construed as inclusion, since it involves communal practices and seeing humanity in others as opportunities for inclusion, thus looking differently at African philosophy and idea of knowledge culture. Despite Ubuntu's inclusive nature, some people, particularly the marginalized groups – the poor, people with disabilities, women and homosexuals – are being excluded and their voices are not heard, which undermines the democratic ideal of the inclusion of all people. In attempts to understand Ubuntu as inclusion, we used Young's (2000) interpretation, which reveals the subtle form of exclusion within inclusion. In order to enhance Ubuntu as inclusion, we examined Ranciere's view of voice as an alternative means of engendering internal inclusion. Our argument is that Ubuntu as inclusion ought to transcend physical representation, status and popularity in order to include the voices of all disadvantaged and excluded groups, irrespective of their differences. Our contention is that there are inherent forms of exclusion within efforts at inclusion that perpetuate the exclusion of marginalized groups, such as women in Africa. The impasse calls for a post-liberal theory, and a Rancièrean perspective of "equalization of voice" could offer a deconstructed view for advancing substantive inclusion. Thus, this article defends "equalization of voice" as a plausible approach to enhancing Ubuntu as inclusion, since it possesses the ability to disrupt inequality and engender a substantive inclusion in university pedagogy, namely governance and management, classroom engagement and research. Unless university pedagogy embraces and enacts the equalization-of-voice framework, the marginalized groups – in this case women – may not make meaningful contributions to knowledge production and substantive inclusion may not be realized.

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