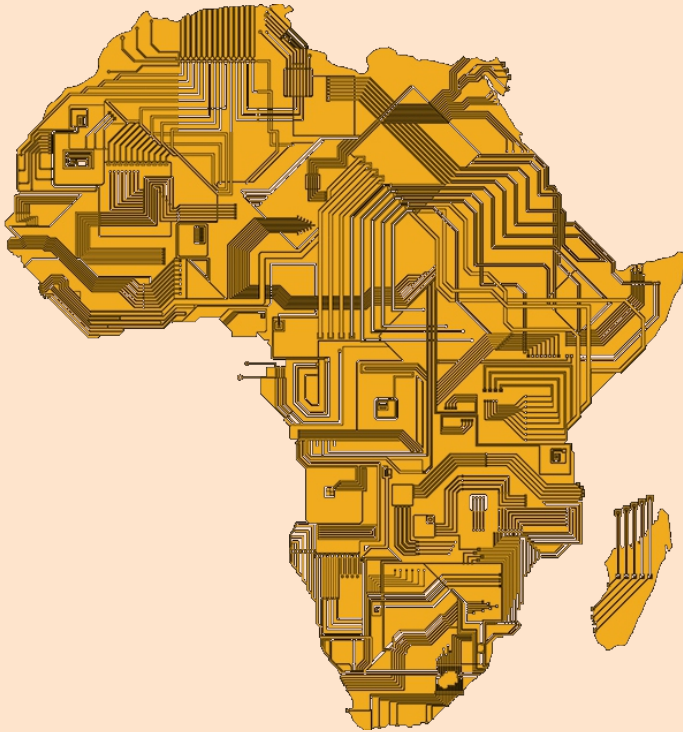


AFRICAN STUDIES WITHOUT ETHICS DUMPING: A PILOT STUDY



RESEARCH SECTION: MORALITIES

**ADEMOLA K. FAYEMI Ph.D
AKINMAYOWA AKIN-OTIKO Ph.D**



PROJECT REPORT



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BIOGRAPHY OF RESEARCHERS

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Ademola Kazeem FAYEMI is a Senior Faculty member at the University of Lagos, Nigeria, where he teaches Philosophy. He is a Principal Investigator at the African Cluster Centre of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence (ACC), University of Lagos. He writes and lectures widely in African Philosophy, African Bioethics, Research Ethics, and African Environmental Ethics. He holds a B.A. (Hons.), M.A., and Ph.D. in Philosophy from Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye in 2004, 2007 and 2013, respectively. Ademola also earned a M.Sc (Degree) in Bioethics from the consortium of Katholieke Universiteit, Leuven, Radboud University, Nijmegen and University of Padova, Italy in 2014. He received the Global Excellence Postdoctoral Fellowship Award from the University of Johannesburg in 2017. He won the 2020 Mark S. Ehrenreich Prize in Healthcare Ethics Research for the African region, awarded by the Pacific Centre for Health Policy and Ethics, University of Southern California at the 15th World Congress of Bioethics Virtual Conference for being the best paper from Africa presented at the Congress. In 2022, he was a Research Fellow, Moi University African Cluster Centre of the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, Kenya. Ademola's current collaborative research, which falls within the Morality Research Section of the ACC, is on the problem of ethics dumping in African Studies, and developing a relational research ethics framework to avoid ethics dumping in the project of reconfiguring African Studies.

Dr. Akinmayowa Akin-Otiko

Akinmayowa Akin-Otiko is a Senior Research Fellow in the Institute of African and Diaspora Studies, (IADS) University of Lagos and has special interest in the Religions, Cultures and Traditional Medicine of the Africans. He has a B.A and M.A in Philosophy, from the University of Ibadan, in 1996 and 2006 respectively; and in 2013, he defended his Ph.D. in African Religion and Belief System, from the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan. Over the years he has engaged in researches and discusses in African Traditional Religion and Medicine. He is a member of different academic Traditional Medicine Practitioners associations. He has written books, contributed chapters in books, as well as published in different journals. His current research interest includes Bioethical Issues in African Traditional Medicine and this has worn him a Fellow of the Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies (BA). His interest falls within the Knowledge and Morality Research Section of the ACC.

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Barr. Ugochi Vine Eleanya

Barrister Ugochi Vine Eleanya, a current Ph.D. student, is an alumnus of the prestigious University of Lagos, Nigeria. She graduated with honours in LL.M and LL.B from the Faculty of Law, University of Lagos. She is a member of the Nigerian Bar Association, Lagos Chapter and a passionate Researcher. Ugochi is currently a Doctoral Research Assistant on the project of ethics dumping in African studies, and developing a Policy review literature, in preparation for a Policy Brief on Research Ethics in Nigeria.

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INTRODUCTION

Ethical review processes are integral to critical and morally grounded research. As a mechanism for external accountability of integrity of research proposals and execution, ethical reviews are institutionally governed by moral principles and ideals. Such ethical ideals are instructive in safeguarding against the exploitation of research participants, prescribing acceptable behaviour in research, censoring methodology while also ensuring epistemic fidelity of research. Today, the transnational and collaborative dimensions of research in African Studies throw up the challenge of ‘ethics dumping’. Ethics dumping is understood as the intentional (and inadvertent) practice of conducting research capable of exploiting research participants in low-and middle-income countries rather than in the investigator(s)’s own (high-income) country due to higher research governance that prohibits such research. Ethics dumping is not an end; it is a process mediated by contextual factors and characterised by power relationships, such as cross-national standards of research ethics falling apart in local interpretations and adaptations and having institutional power relations between research funders from high-income countries and research locations in low-middle countries hinder ethical practices in the conduct of research (Macleod, Marx, Mnyaka, and Treharne, 2018).

Given the history of unethical and exploitative research in Africa, an important task in reconfiguring African Studies is creating synergetic capacities in research ethics governance across the African regions to promote African Studies without ‘ethics dumping’. While some studies have established how power relations in cultural, structural, interpersonal, and

disciplinary domains, inform racial and ethnic, gender and class hierarchies in African studies scholarship spaces (Collins and Bilge, 2016: 25-30), some others have investigated how raced, classed, and gendered positionalities amongst researchers affect their collaborative relations and engagement in African studies research (Tamale 2020, Kessi et al. 2020). Though these studies recognise the importance of both structural and epistemic decolonisation in African studies, little attention is given to the gatekeeping institutions and the guiding principles in African studies research. A few studies have documented the research ethics governance structures in some African states (Sambiéni (2018), Chilisa (2019), Chatfield et al. (2020), Schoeman (2019), Cook, Chatfield, and Schroeder (2019), Yakubu (2017), Chu, et al. (2014), Chantler et al (2013), Goduka (1990)). Insofar as these studies are instructive, there has been no discussion on the multiple-space African-inspired theoretical exploration of research ethics protocol.

This study aimed at determining and examining the existing research ethics governance structure and the principles underpinning its operations using Nigeria as a pilot case. The study's objective was to unpack the extent of ethics dumping pre-eminence in research ethics committees' operations. A few selected literatures were reviewed on conceptual bases of Multiplicity, Relationality, Reflexivity, Ethics and Morality, Policy on Relationship between Researchers in the South and North, Ethics Washing and Ethics Bashing and Developing Indigenous Models. The finding of this Research is that there is largely no *intentional* Ethics Dumping in Nigeria; albeit, the findings further suggest that there are instances of

unintentionality in ethics dumping in research collaborated with the Global North.

HYPOTHESES

This study conceivably linked reducing both intentional and unintentional ethics dumping in African Studies to three issues:

- (i) The level of capacity skills training, and goodwill of the stakeholders in North-South research collaborations;
- (ii) Lack of feasible and cogent development of African research ethics protocols for use in African Studies; and
- (iii) Non-availability of African moral or ethical theories of engagement that can be used in evaluating research protocols.

PROCEDURE

In embarking on this study, our team applied for ethics clearance from the Health Research Ethics Committee at the College of Medicine, Idi-Araba (REC 11) University of Lagos, the only ethics committee in the University. In the process of the application, serious hurdles were experienced specifically in terms of aligning our research protocol with the established template of the ethics committee, which is highly tailored towards research in the medical and pharmaceutical sciences. Having succeeded in uploading all the required documentations on the online portal of the ethics committee, we were anticipatory of an expedited approval since the study falls under

an ‘Exempt Review’ⁱ by the established organisational guidelines and procedures of the College of Medicine, University of Lagos Health Research Ethics Committee (CMUL HREC).

Unfortunately, six months down the line after applying for the ethics clearance, the status of the application has not changed from submitted. Contrary to the estimated average time of 58 days for final approval as stipulated on the Research Ethics Dashboard of the CMUL HREC, our submitted proposal has not yet received any official feedback even with a series of follow-ups. Perhaps, an extenuating explanation by the Secretary of the CMUL HREC is that the ongoing strike action by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in Nigeria has not enabled the committee to meet. Conscious of the need to have a receipt of the ethics approval of the CMUL HREC prior to the commencement of implementation of our research protocol, and the time-demand (with expected obligation) of delivering on the study with a 12-month duration, we experienced some moral distress as the Principal Investigators. In this circumstance, we leveraged on: the ‘Exempt Review’ category that our study falls

ⁱ A submitted research protocol qualifies for ‘Exempt Review’, according to the CMUL HREC, if the study involves “the use of survey procedures, educational tests, interviews or observation of public behaviour, provided that the information from these sources is recorded in such a manner that participants cannot be identified, and/or any disclosure of the human participant’s responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to their financial standing, employability, or reputation.” For details, *CMUL HREC Operational Guidelines and Procedures*, see p. 15 on <https://cmul.unilag.edu.ng/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/CMUL-HREC-Operational-Guidelines.pdf>

into; and the strength of a customised Consent Form developed for this project. These gave the moral strength to commence our study while we await the feedback and approval of our research protocol by the CMUL HREC.

METHODOLOGY

The study began by identifying potential research participants through stakeholder mapping. The stakeholder mapping preliminarily identified all stakeholders in Nigeria that engage in research activities in African Studies. We broadly understood the stakeholders as our potential respondents who engage in direct intellectual production of knowledge in African Studies or are providing gatekeeping functions on African Studies research, especially, international collaborative research in African Studies. These two categories of respondents are not asymmetrical as they may sometimes overlap in terms of grouping. However, for ease of analysis, research institutes and centres that self-identify as African Studies focused were sampled as the source of data mining in this study. These institutes/centres were mapped across the six geographical zones in Nigeria.

Researchers were on the field for 39 days, with cooperation partners and research assistants on the trips. The team had to use a snowball method in identifying respondents. For those that were interviewed, sessions took place in their offices and institutes. The interview questions were based on the objectives of the research and their experiences as members of ethics committees.

The field data collection combined key informant interviews and a set of two surveys – one each for researchers, and the other for members of research ethics committees. The interviews centred around the respondents' perception about ethics dumping and their moral experiences during the phase of getting ethics clearance in their research projects. In all, 17 key informants were interviewed across five (out of the planned six) geopolitical zones of Nigeria. Due to high security risks, the proposed research trip to the African Studies Centre at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in North West Nigeria was stepped down pending when the security situation in Kaduna State will improve.

However, research trips were made to other African Studies Research Institutes/Centres, and African Studies research performing organisations in the remaining five geopolitical zones of Nigeria. The self-identified African Studies Institutes/Centres at the University of Lagos, University of Ibadan, and the University of Nigeria, Nsukka met the inclusion criteria. Due to the ongoing and protracted strike action by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in Nigeria, we were unable to meet and conduct interviews with Ethics Committees at the University of Ibadan and University of Lagos, respectively, and the fact that most Ethics Committees meet only on request or availability of application, we were not able to meet with the Ethics Committees as a team, however, individuals members of Ethics Committees in various institutions were met and interviewed. This gave value to the different research trips made to the different locations. African Studies research focused institutions visited were the Institute of Archaeology and Museum Studies (IAMS) (Jos), the Institut Français de

Recherche en Afrique (IFRA) Ibadan, National Veterinary Research Institute (NVRI) Vom, Jos, and the National Institute of Pharmaceutical Research and Development (NIPRD), Abuja. Although the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER) was initially included in the data site, researchers were twice denied access and approval to conduct interviews with the ethics committee members and researchers at the institute, even though appointments were agreed on. In addition to the foregoing, a research trip was also made to the Federal Ministry of Health in Abuja.

The study kept the interview until the saturation point was reached across the research sites. Data, including field notes/diary, audio files of interviews, and reports, were gathered in ways that allowed grouping of similar (and dissimilar) research ethics governance, perceptions about ethics dumping, and moral experiences of African-based researchers in international collaborative research in sample locations in Nigeria.

Data was gathered using recorders and all the recordings have been transcribed. Consent forms were designed and administered on all respondents. The data generated thus far in the study have been processed and will be archived in the African Cluster Centres (ACCs) central knowledge lab. In line with the Standard Operational Practices (SOP), the data generated from this study have been shared among participating members of this research project for various kinds of analysis. Members of the participating disciplines will discuss the jointly generated data together while having the liberty to use it in partially different ways for multidisciplinary analysis.

Challenges on the Field: Identifying and getting respondents to grant interviews was not very easy. Mining data from the ethics committees especially when such data establish either strong or weak, advertent, or inadvertent ethics dumping, such that may indict or complicate the gate-keeping competence of the research ethics committee in question. Individuals on ethics committees from different research institutions as well as staff of different archives were contacted instead of meeting with the whole ethics committees. It was difficult securing interview dates after some had agreed to be interviewed earlier. The online information about some ethical committees were obsolete, contact persons on some of the websites were retired. However, the team was able to interview some members of the different ethics committees.

Many of the identified respondents, turned down the request to be interviewed based on what they call ‘non-disclosure principle’. We could not interview members of the Ethics Committees as groups because they either meet only when needed to consider projects or they have statutory meetings dates which varied from quarterly to bi-monthly just to consider projects. For a number of the committees that were contacted, meetings had not been fixed in a long time because there were no projects to be considered. However, for some, COVID-19 made it possible for them to meet and have not met again since 2020.

FINDINGS

The preliminary findings of the study, which responded to the objectives of the study, are provided below:

1. Is there Ethics Dumping in African Studies?

Majority of the respondents interviewed are familiar with the concept of ethics dumping. Whether there is ‘ethics dumping’ in African Studies or not, and the extent of its prevalence in Nigeria are questions with ambivalent answers. While respondents working in the sciences were clear and unanimously explicit in their responses that there were no recent instances of ethics dumping in their research collaboration encounters with the Global South, except for the historical 1996 Pfizer clinical trial on meningitis in Kano, respondents in the humanities and social sciences presumed the subtle existence of ethics dumping in Nigeria’s intellectual space with silence on prevalence. The claim of the science-based scholars researching in African Studies or serving as members of research ethics committees is anchored on the oversight gatekeeping functions of the extant ethics committees in their respective research space. Yet, for the humanities and social science-oriented respondents, their perception about implicit ethics dumping is anchored on either the absence, weak status, or lack of awareness of research ethics committees’ functions within the social sciences and humanities-oriented research in Nigeria.

Consider, for example, the responses of the respondents across disciplinary lines. First, we present the science-based scholars in African Studies. African Studies is here framed as a field in knowledge production focused on studying and understanding Africa, her challenges, institutions, cultures, history, languages, philosophy, environment, together with her relations and participation in the world intellectual heritage. Dr. Peters Oladosu, a member of the research ethics committee at the National Institute for Pharmaceutical Research and

Development (NIPRD) noted the core function of the ethics committee in reviewing proposals in order to identify and avoid exploitative clauses and tendencies. According to him,

We review proposals, and if we see anything exploitative there, we point it out and we seek an explanation because it is our responsibility to guide the safety of the participants. We have reviewed a recent multicentre study and we took notes of the safety and interest of participants and we were very careful to point out whether there was anything exploitative. So far so good, we have not come across anything exploitative in what we have been doing so far.

Dr. Reuben Ocholi, Director of Bacteriology, Parasitology and Virology. National Veterinary Research Institute Vom, submits that there have been research works that required him collaborating with researchers from Global North, and he does not think the policies were exploitative because their operations are generally based on this international use of animals. He speaks thus:

Yes, we have had so many projects in the past in which we collaborated with them – funded projects where they came right here because of the collaboration. They have the opportunity to go out with us to the field, take samples and so on and bring them to the lab for analysis. For instance, when carrying out an experiment, not using too many animals, ensuring care of animals and so on. We follow those procedures and I cannot remember

anytime we were forced to do what they cannot do in their own place and bring it here to apply.

Dr. Ayoola Olushola who is a surgeon and member of the research policy making body of the Ministry of Health confirms that though he is not currently a frontline researcher, he has been involved in some collaborative research in the past. He speaks thus:

Yes. I have engaged in a few researches. As a surgeon, when we conduct surgeries, we collect and triangulate data, however, that is before now. Now I am more in the Ministry, I have been involved in the field of retrospective studies and also evidence based study as to what can improve the system.

He clarifies that there is no ethics dumping as a result of the existence of the National Health Research Ethics Committee. The Ethics Committee usually gives a checklist to proposed researchers. In answering the question of what is needed by the Ethics Committee to expunge or drastically reduce the incidence of ethics dumping in the medical field, he states further:

Like I said, I am not more into the ethics branch. However, I know they will give you their checklist to guide you to categorise the kind of research one wants to do. When it is given, for example in this division, you must be able to provide them with a research protocol. This research protocol is expected to guide what you feel and how they interpret what you feel. They would then be able to classify your research into their three basic

protocols: Is it for expedited approval for the fact that it does not involve human specimen, is it for intermediate approval, subject to the ethical review, or the one that would go through proper two-face approval for our own system here in Nigeria. For example, I am involved in the WHO solidarity clinical trial on COVID 19 therapeutics. Presently, we are randomising Infliximab, Martindale and Artesunate. It has to go through the two phase trial which I am trying to describe, NAFDAC has to be a component of that approval and also the National Health Research Ethics Committee ought to also give approval for that. It also has to go through the NREC (National Health Research Ethics Committee).

Dr. Peters Oladosu, is the administrator of NIPRD Health Research Ethics Committee. NIPRD stands for (National Institute of Pharmaceutical Research and Development), he submits that there is no ethics dumping by making specific reference to a research conducted by his team which had to do with African Health Management. According to him, an in-house Consent Form was designed and contextualised to the happenings in Nigeria:

Yes, I remember vividly that I have been involved with research that has to do with African Health Management and we designed an in-house Consent Form and the format followed was not specific to Nigeria alone because we were working with African Traditional Healers. The work took us as far as Mali and Burkina Faso. We contextualised our Consent Form to what is happening in Nigeria. We took it to be general because

we were dealing with African traditional medicine and we used the Nigerian context to develop the Consent Form.

Dr. Oladosu agrees that there have been cases of attempted ethics dumping, but the regulations were immediately pointed out to the detractors.

Yes, I would not say categorically that the research would not have been allowed elsewhere, but we were quick to let the researchers know that you are based in another country and you want an approval from Nigeria. First and foremost, you have to get your country's regulatory approval before coming to us and even the approval must come through the regulatory Ethics Agency in Nigeria which is NREC. Whatever their motive is, we do not know, but we were contacted directly and we quickly pointed out that we have our own jurisdiction and when coming as international researchers, you must follow due process as laid down by NREC.

In similar way, Dr. Muyiwa Akintola, Secretary of the Research Ethics Committee of NOUN, notes that there is in existence at the National Open University, Abuja, a Research Ethics Committee where everyone who wins a grant must fill the Ethics Clearance Form before commencement of research because some researches may involve slaughtering animals, taking blood samples, etc.

The existence of ethics committees is one common narrative given among the science-oriented scholars, whether independently working as researchers or sitting on ethics committees of their institutions, for why there is no ethics dumping in their international collaborative research space. In this regard, Dr. Sambo Mamman, National Institute Librarian and Chairman of Ethics and Plagiarism Committee National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies insists that there is no ethics dumping because of the existence of the Ethics and Plagiarism Committee at the National Institute:

The Ethics and Anti-Plagiarism Committee of the National Institute is primarily concerned with the researches that are conducted by participants in the National Institute. Our mandate covers research that is conducted in the National Institute. Although, the research could be on any subject matter. We have not even reached that stage; it is a pretty new committee which was established last year and is just about a year old. The Committee is concerned with ensuring that participants are well guided in writing their projects. We have supervisors that supervise participants in the course of writing their projects. So, we have set guidelines for the supervisors and the supervisees i.e., the participants so that both parties are protected. This is the essence of the guidelines. For instance, some of the conditions in the guidelines or what the guidelines stipulates include like supervisors must not have sexual relations with the participants or get inducements by collecting bribes. They are also to ensure that participants do their research within the stipulated time and lots of things like that.

Issues about the integrity of members of the ethics committee came up. While emphasising that the Ethics Committee of the Federal Ministry of Health is not unduly influenced by the Global North because they have funds, Dr. Ayoola Olushola argues that:

The Committee is made up of men and women of integrity. The Committee is not disposed to any. What would have put the Committee in a position to be disposed of is if they charge for Ethical Clearance. It is absolutely free at least as of today. In 2019, we were at Asaba where we had the National Council on Health which is the highest decision-making body in the health sector. That council agreed that 0.5% of international grants should be paid for ethical clearance and administration of research. We have not started doing that for bureaucratic reasons. So maybe to answer your question, if that was in place, it might be a biased one. We would have more money to do our work better if we had that in place, but we do not, so we are disposed to every form of research.

Dr. Michael Ukonu, the Chairman of the Faculty of Arts Ethics Committee, which oversees research at the Institute of African Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, discloses what his committee does in avoiding the phenomenon of ethics dumping in African Studies research. His words:

First, we seek to know what you want to do; we ask about your objectives and who the participants are; we get information about the funders and then we now also seek

to know who the participants are. As a committee, we ask about efforts to obtain their consent and ask them about what the research is about. And then, take cognisance of the educational level of the participants to be sure that if they do not understand the language in which their consent is sought, that it is rendered in a way that they will understand and be able to freely give consent; then we also seek to find out if the research has taken notes of some security issues, both risks to themselves and to the participants and how they intend to handle that. These are the things that we lookout for especially when we ask for what we call a statement of intent to find out what the person actually wants to do and how they want to go about it... We are also interested in understanding the extent to which researchers plan to anonymise the participants or take their information in confidence and they intend to store them and how they intend to use the information they give. By doing so, we try to look at the way you plan to manage the risks that participants might be exposed to – for instance, emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm or all kinds of harm that might go with your research.

One important point worthy of note in the claims above is that the fact that members of the ethics committee and stakeholders in the science-oriented research collaborations in African Studies reported the absence of ethics dumping is not a guarantee that such seemingly absence implies no helicopter research practices in science-based collaborative funded research in Nigeria. Where ethics dumping is broadly understood as situations where privileged researchers from high-income

countries, regardless of the geo-spatial locations, “export unethical or unpalatable experiments and studies to lower-income or less-privileged settings with different ethical standards or less oversight,” helicopter research “occurs when researchers from high-income settings, or who are otherwise privileged, conduct studies in lower-income settings or with groups who are historically marginalised, with little or no involvement from those communities or local researchers in the conceptualisation, design, conduct or publication of the research.” In both cases, there is a climate of exploitation in varying degrees, with positionalities that impact and drive unethical research in the production of knowledge.

It is important to note as well that beyond the variable of the integrity of the ethics committee in guiding against potential ethics dumping, there is also the dimension of personal principle and professional integrity. One of the respondents, Dr. Omotoso, reasoned along this line thus:

Now, asking if my collaborative research with colleagues from the Global North has intentionally or unintentionally exploited people, I will say no to that. That is because I am on ground here and regardless it is funded research; I am aware of the culture of my people. I know the in and out of my community, and from the outset I am quick to tell my Global North researcher partners about the possibility or impossibility of whatever research we are embarking on.

Given the above findings at the level of science-oriented respondents, let us now report the findings amongst the

respondents in the humanities on whether ethics dumping exists in African Studies. Dr. Tobi Oshodi, a Political Scientist with many international research collaboration replies thus on the question of whether there is ethics dumping in African Studies and in his collaborative engagements:

Yes, I have heard the concept [ethics dumping] used a few times. The concept is directly connected to this broader concept of decolonising academia, where scholars are increasingly becoming conscious of deeper relations and research in academic partnership and just global knowledge production. As a concept though, I am conscious about the need to clarify the concept because ethics dumping like decolonisation is being used and misused, sometimes instrumentalised for specific goals where some scholars sometimes want to use it to get access to resources... Also, because we have many lapses, the research ethics committees in many universities are either not in existence, or they are new. They are really not as agile to be able to identify ethics dumping and risk questions, so people go to conduct research without going to the local ethics committee.

Prof. Olatunji Oyeshile, while clarifying his perception of ethics dumping writes:

When we talk about ethics dumping, it's just to say 'anything goes' as he who pays the piper plays the tune. When you get sponsorship from without, you're likely to gloss over certain flimsy posts, and your sponsors may tell you the direction your research should go without

you having so much input. Ethics dumping is done in such a way that you gloss over certain salient principles in order to arrive at certain conclusions. This is as a result of the source of sponsorship. The typical African researcher has little or nothing to do with determining the course of research. Sometimes, some of these goals of research are predetermined. The typical African researcher who is in dire need of sponsorship or grant of academic space, space to air his own views would readily fall into anything without asserting himself when it comes to certain ethical principles. Ethical dumping is therefore the act of glossing over certain important guidelines in research because of the source of sponsorship.

Though Prof. Oyeshile did not provide any particular case of ethics dumping that he has witnessed, just as Dr. Oshodi, but the deductible inference in their views is that given the political economy of grant sourcing and absence of ethics committees in many African Studies institutes, there is ethics dumping through the back door in African Studies. Dr. Kudus Yussuf of the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, harps that:

Where the problem lies is that there is no firm implementation and expectation around the need to obtain an ethical approval in the humanities in African Studies. Unlike in other Universities, say in South Africa, every undergraduate, Masters' and doctoral student goes through an ethical review board to do their work. They have to go through the ethics rigour and requirement particularly people working on human subjects. But that

is not the case in our own setting. Students just do their research at the go; maybe for undergraduates who only go about their research once they have collected a Letter of Introduction from the Department to go to the field. That is what they carry about to do their work. At Masters' level, this also still happens and a lot of them are constrained to collect and show such letters when they arrive at the field for data collection and are asked to identify themselves to prove that they are students. And that is where it stops. This is also the case amongst many doctoral researchers unless such students work in certain peculiar fields where there is insistence on ethics approval. Many are forced to sign up for ethical approvals when they want to publish and as it is often a prerequisite for article submission in standard journals. At that point you find people developing all kinds of narratives that their study was ethically conducted. So, it means that despite having the structures in place, there are a lot of things that have to happen in terms of the universities insisting that ethical approvals must be sought for all research involving human subjects at least from the masters' level. This has to be clear and enforced.

The above observation of Dr. Kudus is corroborated by Anna Adamu Abui, an Archaeologist, and the current Acting Director of Archaeology and Museum Studies, Jos. Abui states that the institute, basically owned by the National Commission for Museums and Monument, conducts research in heritage studies with some collaboration with institutions within and outside Nigeria; however, they do not have an Ethics Committee in place overseeing research activities. In cases where no such ethics

committees exist structurally, researchers still participate in collaborative funded studies. Dr. Vitis has this to say:

As Nigerian researchers that went to the field, we were not really involved in the ethics clearance. The clearance actually came from the Global North, from the research funders. The funders will give you options as to how, when they want it. These are the stages you have to pass through. The question we raise is, you can't import your culture to a society you are not aware of. As a researcher going to the field, I'm conversant with the terrain, conflicts, and the issue of interest. Now, imposing ethics on me will always bring about conflict. It is not a matter of getting the clearance; is there any avenue where it can be adjusted when you get down to the grass root?

Dr. Ukonu of the University of Nigeria recognised an intentional horizontal dimension of ethics dumping, which may not necessarily be rooted in international funded collaborative research as it is also possible in locally funded research. Here, ethics dumping is intentionally conceived from the conceptualisation of the research design. He sees ethics dumping as:

... researchers' indulgence in unethical practices by taking advantage of the uneducated. It occurs when you conduct focus group discussions or key informant interviews. You find that the uneducated are often used as methodologies because of the demographic situation of the participants in the African setting, and if the researcher does not explain himself very well, he can just

take advantage of people. In that way, research becomes exploitative.

Dr. Ukonu clarifies the unintended feature of ethics dumping in research further by saying that it may happen whether in internationally funded, locally funded or self-sponsored research:

In this part of the world, we are still coming to terms with what ethics is about. You will see people that have risen to the level of Senior Lecturer, and they are still asking, what is research ethics or what is ethical clearance. So, we are still coming to terms with that and because we lack that grasp of what that ethical part of research should be, there is ethics dumping.... We may not even know what we are getting into by this ethics dumping and that is why someone can afford to induce participants, give them money, get into the villages, get an opinion leader, give them money to elect study and then share certain things with them. So by definition, it is ethics dumping but the problem there is that we are doing it more unintentionally than intentionally.

Dr. Ugwanyi articulated what can be called an unintentional horizontal dimension of ethics dumping in North-South funded research collaborations. His point rests on subtle but fundamental differences in what constitutes ethics in Africa and in the West. Such differences, when considered in the context of research, can lead to exploitation, though unintentional. According to him:

What constitutes ethical consideration in research in Africa and if that question is to be answered then that brings up the question about how exploitative some research ethics approaches could be... For instance, you say that you must protect the participants so that your research will not cause any harm, right? In that process, we say we anonymise participants, right? When we anonymise participants, especially cultural knowledge bearers in communities, we exploit them because we try to take control over their own knowledge, and in our publications, in our engagements we begin to proclaim knowledge and claim to be the sole authors of that knowledge... Their knowledge is taken and they are forgotten. To me, that is exploitative enough. So, I think the questions about what is ethics in Africa should be considered here because we overexpressed the question, the principles of ethics research in Africa, and we try to adapt to the western approaches which to an extent counteracts the community knowledge ownership that we know that exist in our communities in Africa. So such approaches are quite exploitative, and dumping of local ethics, if I may say.

A very apt example of ethics dumping was given by Dr. Ugwanyi:

I haven't encountered ethics dumping in the Faculty of Arts Ethics Committee, University of Nigeria, but personally I have encountered this during my Ph.D studies in Nigeria. I studied at the University of York, UK, and when I came back my focus was on heritage

studies, looking at traditional concepts, and I focused specifically on a good historical and cultural landscape. In the course of that research, I was on a field and people were interested in making sure that I published their name. They even went to the extent of asking me to go to TVs and radios stations if I have the capacity to popularise them as knowledge bearers in their community. In another community, I was asked; people look for me to make sure that I snap them alongside their masked spirits. During performances, lineage and clans that are represented by different masquerades invited me to come and take photographs and film them, and they are very happy to see films and photographs anywhere in the world align with their clans and with their names and identifying them as the custodians and owners of that particular culture. But because the ethics of my university in York was already holding me down with the idea of anonymity, I had no right to do what they have asked me to do, so when I wrote fieldwork reports to my committee, one of the committees, my Thesis Advisory Panel Committee members asked me which ethics to follow now: is it that of the University of York or that of my participants in the community. As I speak to you, up till today now, I have not been able to respect the ethics of the community that I researched, I keep following that of the University of York because globally that will affect my career if I should go against it. That's a good example of ethics dumping in Africa, trying to impose a philosophical position, a worldview that is quite different from people who see themselves as different from whatever you are trying to portray. So in this case, I

began to think that ethics guidelines or ethics negotiation should take place in the field, and not necessarily from the institutions. Before I was leaving for research in Nigeria, I had to get clearance and approvals before coming to the field without considering the way the people I'm going to meet would consider our engagement, whether it would be of harm or whether they would want to be open about it. When I got to the field, the experience was quite different from what I was commissioned to abide by, and I struggled in between these two different ethics. Up till today, I have been violating the ethical wishes of my participants, because I am trying to hold to the ethics of my institution in the UK.

From the foregoing, ethics dumping can be said to exist inadvertently through absence of relevant gatekeeping institutions at local levels such as an ethics committee or through a non-consideration of the (local) ethics of the research sites. Where research ethical paradigms of the funders of research are imposed and enforced in the process of carrying out a study in other climes, especially where privileges and positionalities are entailed, ethics dumping can unintentionally occur. Many funded studies in African Studies in low-income countries, today, fall under this category especially when the criterion of anonymising research participants is taken into consideration. While the anonymisation of research data, which underpins many funders' policies is meant to provide security for the participants in a research, in the African context of indigenous knowledge production, anonymisation of data source may

indeed be a subtle form of epistemic injustice and dumping of ethical consideration prized by the indigenous community.

2. What are the structures of research ethics committees in Nigeria and how do such structures impact the possibility or existence of ethics dumping in African Studies?

In order to discover respondents' perception about ethics dumping and their moral experiences during the phase of getting ethics clearance in their research projects, the study was interested in understanding the extant structures and compositions of research ethics committees in the various sampled institutions and how that perhaps influenced the workings of the committees. We found that the configuration of ethics committees differs along different lines depending on the research focus of the institutions; however, there is a domineering semblance of experts in the sciences serving on the committees more than trained ethicists in philosophy or religious ethics.

For instance, at the National Veterinary Research Institute, Vom, Plateau State, Dr. Reuben Ocholi states that:

As an Institute, we have an Animal Use Committee which deals with use of animals in research. This Committee is chaired by me. On that Committee, we have two: veterinarians, two research non-veterinarians, laboratory technologists or what they call laboratory scientists, manager of the experimental animal facility, technical staff (someone who can assist the Committee in anything technical using animals) and two secretaries

(Secretary and assistant). Our operation is based on the International Animal Use Committee, so we adopt their policies of use of animals in research to fit it into our own operations here.

The less diversity of members of the research ethics committee in terms of disciplinary backgrounds and other senses of identities is found in many of the ethics committees at the institutional level. According to Omotoso:

The composition that we currently have on ground in many ethics committees is unduly over scientific. What I mean by that is, you find a good number of members of that committee who are scientifically inclined. Most of them are from the sciences, and comprehension of some research in humanities and social sciences oriented African Studies is usually cumbersome.

Even at the national level of the National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC), the composition of the committee is skewed, and with such biases, the gatekeeping mission of the committee might be compromised. Dr. Ayoola Olushola, a senior official at the Federal Ministry of Health notes:

It [NHREC] is not skewed towards one field but although I am too absolute, they are not all medics. The former Director of the Ethics Committee was not even a doctor; she had nothing to do with medicine. But she is put there on the merit of her years of experience, having driven ethics as an individual for more than 20 years in the Ministry. I also know like 2 or 3 others that are not even

within the medical field. Of course, it is not unlikely that you would see more pharmacists and more doctors as components of the NREC but I don't think it is because that is what they wanted, it is the bias of selection which if that is what this study intends to do, it can be recommended that every field should be given fair opportunity. Let me give you an example of how selections are made. For example, the Director in this department, Hon. Minister Dusari, 14 people after the expiration of the last committee that was flown, the new committee that the Minister would inaugurate might be as a result of a bias of relationship, bias of profession (For instance, as she is a doctor, she might just feel everyone there should be a doctor), bias of 'man know man' but one of the biases which is not there is the geopolitical spread. At least, one person must come from one geopolitical zone. But in terms of profession, most of them are doctors and pharmacists.

While the above is currently the case, it is in contraposition to what the National Health Act 2014 instructs. This Act clearly stipulates the people that must be in the Research Committee. Accordingly, "there must be a Chairman, Medical Doctor, Legal Practitioner, Pharmacist, Representative of Christian and Islamic fields, Community health worker, 1 Researcher in Medical field, 1 Researcher in Pharmaceutical field, 1 Researcher in Medical Laboratory field, a health record officer, radiographer, physiotherapist, 1 researcher in Medical Laboratory Science, and three other person at least one shall be a woman who in the opinion of the Minister shall have integrity."

At the University of Ibadan, we got hints of the structure and workings of the ethics committee through some of the researchers working in African Studies. Given the protracted strike actions by the Academic Staff Union of Universities in Nigeria, we were unable to access and interrogate any of the members of the ethics committee on the composition of the Faculty's and College's Research Ethics Committees. While answering question on the institutional mechanisms in the University of Ibadan (UI) for managing research ethics matters, Prof. Oyeshile retorts:

The University of Ibadan where I currently work has an ethics policy where when you are engaged in any research, you must observe certain ethical guidelines and clearance that will help your research. Sometimes when we're doing it with other partners across the continent, there are general forms to fill, but there is always the section for ethics clearance so as to avoid some kinds of challenges.

Dr. Sharon Omotoso clarifies the nature of the committee at the Institute for African Studies, UI:

In African Studies at the University of Ibadan, we have our scientific committee. Within the scientific committee, members of staff and committees come together to share their research. So, the scientific committee is aware of virtually everything that goes on within the institute. So, before you apply for a grant the scientific committee is aware, how you intend to get the grant, what and what you need, the scientific committee

is aware. Also, we have what we call the Social Science and Humanities Research Ethics Committee. These are the two key mechanisms that we use at UI.

The Institute of African Studies at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, has a well-structured ethics committee. Dr. Kelechi Ugwanyi, the Secretary of the Faculty of Arts Research Ethics Committee informs that:

Besides the University's Health Research Ethics Committee, there is also the Faculty of Arts Research Ethics Committee. This committee also oversees Ph.D research as well as research at the Institute of African Studies. When a member of the Faculty applies, the application goes through the Department, and the Head of Department passes it to the Dean's office. After the Dean's office passes it, then the application will come to the Ethics Committee. So, the Ethics Committee meets to consider it.

Thus, at the Faculty of Arts Research Ethics Committee at the University of Nigeria, which also covers the Institute of African Studies, composition of the ethics committee takes departmental representation as the most decisive criterion. Dr. Ukonu confirms that "when constituting the faculty, the most important factor is representation across the departments of the faculty so that every department will be represented on the committee and if there are entries, somebody can at least work from the standpoint of an expert in that area. Departmental representation is the most important criterion when it comes to electing people to the committee."

At the Lagos State University, Dr. Tobi Oshodi ventilates on the structure of ethics committee in place and that overlaps in some significant ways with what is obtainable at UI. He reports:

Yes there are mechanisms of managing ethical issues in research here, but it is a broad structure; not specifically targeted at African Studies but research in general. LASU recently launched its research ethics policy, where a document was not only crafted but circulated among all lecturers in the university. As a lecturer, you have an idea on what the university's predisposition is on research ethics. In 2020, we had a research policy document; in 2021 we had a research ethics policy, and the university decided that rather than having just one functional research ethics committee for medical and health sciences, it wanted to broaden the structure to include people in the humanities, management arts and also the other sciences. LASU has its own structure and it is relatively new, but it is emerging.

Unlike in UI and LASU, there is still a centralisation of the research ethics committee in the University of Lagos. According to Dr. Abisoye Eleshin, a researcher at the Institute of African and Diaspora Studies, University of Lagos:

The establishment of a research ethics committee has to do with science and I think that is why the strong ones are domiciled in Idi Araba at the University's College of Medicine. But I feel that for us to develop an African based clearance platform so it would be solely for that purpose alone and we would be able to pay attention to

more areas in Africa specially but I don't know the reason why that has not come up. To the best of my knowledge, maybe we have, but I have not seen, and that is the reason why we have to go through Idi Araba.

However, the narrative is different at the French Institute for Research in Africa (IFRA), Ibadan. Our investigation showed that there are no standing research ethics committees at the institute. Our respondents who are core staff at the Institute observe below, (Patrick Enage and Dr. Victor Chinedu Eze) respectively:

“We don't have any structured ethics committee in various African Studies institutions; so, that is something we need to start talking about.”

“I am not aware of such existence of any research ethics policy [and committee] in IFRA; the people that may be aware of such would probably be the director, scientific coordinator. They may have an idea of that because they are the ones who understand and coordinate such research done here.”

3. What are the rationales of establishing research ethics committees in African Studies focused institutions in Nigeria?

In our study, we found that there are different historical conditionings necessitating research ethics committees across institutions. However, none of the committees was set up to directly tackle ethics dumping. Though many ethics committees have long been established, especially those domiciled at the

colleges of medicine; institutes or faculty based research ethics committees are more recent events.

Dr. Peters Oladosu of NIPRD states that the setting up of the Ethics Committee was as a result of the gap discovered during the COVID 19 pandemic where it was discovered that there was no particular body to handle the issue of proposal for grants. He notes thus:

As a research institute, we saw this gap during COVID 19 pandemic, researchers were in anticipation to join in looking for solution to that pandemic and while seeking for grants here and there, they discovered that they do not have a body that can actually address their proposal and as a research institute, this should be one of the things we ought to have in our institute, a Research Ethics Committee where we could be solving that problem for our researchers. By the way the institute has a research Ethics Committee before called IRV (In the 90's and early 2000), but for one reason or the other, the Committee ceased to exist and the missing gap was seen again during Covid 19 where we had to apply to ethical Committee far away from us and it took a lot of time for us to get it and we thought that was actually a missing link between Researchers and Ethics Committee. That is, our institute should have its own Ethics Committee. Our Ethics Committee is not only for us here. We do a lot of clinical trials, and so we thought an institutional based Ethics Committee should be in place and we have been receiving proposals even from outside our jurisdiction. People come in wanting to do research in our locality.

At the Lagos State University, the core rationale of setting up the research ethics committees in the University is as a result of the many ethical questions interlocking in research in humans, animals, plants, and technology which makes some groups more vulnerable to exploitation. In strategically positioning the University among “world-class universities,” where research of high ethical standards is done across the Humanities, Physical, Social and Life Sciences, Technology, Medicine and other fields, the University launched recently, additional Faculty Ethics Committee to the long-established functional Health Research Ethics Committee at the Lagos State College of Medicine.

At the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, the Chairman of the Faculty of Arts Research Ethics Committee, Dr. Ukonu observes:

The circumstances surrounding the establishment of the Faculty of Arts Research Ethics Committee has become an interesting coincidence. It was during the Deanship aspiration of the current Dean that someone raised the point about how Faculty members were labouring so much about research and publication in the Faculty and the Institute when navigating the requirement for ethics approval from international journals when trying to publish. So, it became a campaign agenda at that point. It eventually turned out that since he became the Dean, he fulfilled that campaign promise. The setting-up of the committee came to solve a problem in line with the requirement for promotion and in line with the

requirement to conscientious people about that very important aspect of research, which is ethics.

Dr. Ugwuanyi buttressed further the rationale for the establishment of research ethics committee at the University of Nigeria:

The majority of researchers in the Arts and African Studies do not know about research ethics. In fact, to be honest with you, over 85 percent of our faculty members came across research ethics that made the University of Nigeria to make it mandatory to have publications in high factor journals to qualify for promotion from the rank of senior lecturer to professor. People were now forced to start writing papers for international journals and that was when they encountered the almighty research, ethics, when the journals started asking for evidence of ethical clearance or approval.

We discovered that there is little or no relationship between the various research ethics committees in different institutions and the national research ethics committee. Such an uncoordinated relationship implies incoherent capacity development, sharing of experiences amongst varying ethics committees, and uncoordinated national research policy. We attempted investigating the root and history of other ethics committees in other research sites. However, due to the ongoing national strike of the Academic Staff Union of Nigerian Universities, we could not meet with members of ethics committees at the University of Lagos to inquire about the composition, dimensions, and rationale of the establishment of the ethics committee in the

University. Also, because of non-accessibility, we could also not conduct interviews with staff and members of the ethics committee at the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research, Ibadan. Our research team visited the institution at three different times but there was no access granted to see our potential respondents, especially, as our mapped cooperative partner at the institute was reported to be on annual leave outside the country and could not be reached. Due to serious security concerns in North West Nigeria, our team could not go on a planned research trip to the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. So, we do not have any information regarding the rationale, composition and workings of the ethics committees in that University. Some of the African studies research performing organisations visited such as the Institut Français de Recherche en Afrique and the Institute of Archaeology and Museum Studies do not have an ethics committee.

4. What are the perceptions of researchers working in African Studies on the workings of ethics committees – a clog or drive in the wheel of research progress in African Studies?

Our findings on this question showed that the majority of our respondents think that the time-consuming nature of having a clearance certificate from the ethics committee together with the bureaucracies in the process of application taint the supposed essence of the research ethics committees as a driver of research with integrity. With the exception of a few, nearly all the sampled respondents have at one point of their research collaborations or the other applied for an ethics clearance with unpalatable morally distressing experiences in the process. According to Dr. Omotoso:

Where I find this [ethics clearance application] most disturbing, is when you have a very minute data, for example you have only interviewed one person, and you have to go through all the rigours and procedures of proposal preparation, the information, the Consent Form and wait through the time to get your application of ethics clearance approved. You spend months and months waiting for that. So, I find it cumbersome. Secondly, for every study you want to carry out, you go out there, sometimes you meet with people whom you're supposed to get their approval or written consent to undertake the study as documented in your ethics clearance. And then, you meet them, and request them to sign before mining the information from them. While you are doing so because of objectivity, the participants sometimes find it difficult to understand why they have to sign. There are communities you get into that are not necessarily learned communities. They're just offering information, and now you're asking them to put their hands on paper. That makes them begin to suspect you. We find out that it's the process of needing their consent that leaves a blockage.

In a similar vein, Dr. Oshodi vented his unpleasant experience while applying for ethics clearance for an international collaborative funded research project:

My experience with reference to applying for ethical clearance is such that it would ordinarily have discouraged me from going in future to apply for ethics because it was so sad that we did not have a functional

research ethics committee as at the time I applied for the clearance, so I had to go outside of my campus to a setting that is strictly made for medical and health sciences. The implication was that as a Political Scientist, I had to relate suddenly with clique things. To make matters worse, the ethics committee was not prepared to get an application from somebody from my background. We had to go back and forth and that took months; at some point, I wrote officially that I wanted to withdraw my application. It was at that point that they agreed to approve my application. It was not a fantastic experience, and it would ordinarily have discouraged me from applying for future ethical clearances.

The experience of Vitis at IFRA is not different:

One of the problems was getting approvals from affiliations. IFRA is an affiliate to the University of Ibadan.... We would need the approval of the institute. It was in the process of getting approval from the institute that delayed the process. Eventually I got the letter.

Also, Dr. Kudus observed the undue delays in having submitted protocols evaluated:

Until recently that the social sciences and humanities review committee was set up within the main campus of the University of Ibadan, all ethical approvals are usually obtained through the College of Medicine at the UCH. This means that a lot of researchers working in the social

sciences and humanities do not usually apply for ethical approval unless you are in departments such as medical sociology or psychology where your supervisor insists that you get ethical approval, which must be gotten from the UCH. So, it takes a lot of time and it's a very stressful process. That is what led the University of Ibadan in establishing ethical review committees for the social sciences and humanities and that has been on for some time now.

Though some respondents think differently as they argued that in spite of whatever shortcomings of research ethics committees, such are episodic and not epochal, such committees are indispensable mechanisms for entrenching research with integrity in Nigeria and beyond. Dr. Oladosu argues thus:

I would not agree that the ethics committee form a hindrance to granting quick approval. Rather, the ethics committee serves as the police to monitor what scientists or researchers would want to do. We are the gatekeepers, so what I cannot say is that the ethics committee must consider situations. For example, during COVID 19, an emerging situation which caught us unaware and researchers were looking for approval to do their research here and there, all those things were considered to give expedite approval but not circumventing the dos and the don'ts. I would not agree that the Ethics Committee has ever been a hindrance.

Dr. Sambo states that the establishment of the ethics committee enhances research rather than constitute a stumbling block because:

Given the fact that both supervisors and supervisees are aware that there is an ethics committee on ground, it has set everyone on their toes and everyone is now taking the issue of research seriously. The academic community thinks it's a brilliant idea as the institute is serious about research. It wants to monitor the quality of research that is done and even ensure that people who are saddled with one research or the other are serious about it. So, I would rather think the establishment of the Ethics and Anti-plagiarism Committee would enhance research in the National Institute.

Dr. Ocholi thinks that the Ethics Committee is not a stumbling block thus:

Generally, like we said, the Ethics Committee was formed because we wanted a humane use of animals in doing research and we want a procedure where those staff who are doing work on animals follow that procedure that would not be seen as misusing animals in our work in order to get results. Also, that it is adequate as it is for African Studies. More so, that the world is a global village and so in relation to policies on animal use, if it does not comply with international guidelines, it will most likely not be accepted.

On the part of Dr. Omotosho, she thinks that:

It is really good that researchers have to go through the ethical approval process to be able to do things. So much harm has been imposed on our people because some people came into the community and did not go through the institutional measures that will determine whether the kind of research they have brought is appropriate or safe for the people.

5. How does positionality in collaboratively funded research impact ethics dumping in African Studies?

Our findings showed that positionalities and unequal power relations in collaborative research reinforces the continuous practice of helicopter research and constitute subtle drivers of ethics dumping in African Studies. Given that those that call the shots in African Studies are the privileged institutions and individual scholars with funding, proposals are designed by them, the objectives and ends of research studies are conceptualised by them, and the hands of invitation extended to scholars based in Africa for data harvesting. In many cases, the roles, responsibilities, and entitlements of each party are usually not clearly defined in the proposal. In few cases where African partners do have inputs in the conceptualisation and execution of the kind of research to be undertaken, at the level of benefit sharing and authorship credit, much is left to be desired in the end products of knowledge production. Dr. Oladosu discussed with us how power relations reinforces some undue impact on knowledge production in African Studies. His words:

It cannot be equal because he who pays the piper dictates the tune. Those guys from the Global North sponsor the studies. They own the money, so when they come, even in defining your role, you know that these are my sponsors. Mine is to do the work and deliver results. So, it cannot be equal in as much as the funding comes from them. They do determine the kind of research that is done, but it is our responsibility as mature scientists to join in driving the goal and what is not permissible or shouldn't be, we should be able to stand against it. They determine the area of study.

Dr. Oladosu's remark re-echoes Prof. Adebayo Olukoshi's words about the state of African Studies and the need to reposition it. For Olukoshi:

African Studies continues to be suffused with unequal power relations that play to the advantage of non-African high priests of the field and which have been accentuated by the context of the severe weakening of institutions of advanced research in Africa.... The expansion of relations of paternalism that are manifested in unequal divisions of labour and facilitated by the precarious conditions of many an African scholar struggling to cope with the impact of the crises of the higher education system [is perhaps inadvertently leading to a climate of ethics dumping and helicopter research in varying degrees].

However, caution needs be exercised here in not generalising such perception of African Studies drifting into ethics dumping

space on the ground of unequal positionalities. Some of our respondents across gender lines maintained otherwise. Dr. Omotosho, a female Senior Research Fellow at UI emphatically states that:

Speaking for myself, when I work with my colleagues outside the country, I don't see them as powerful because they have the grant, I see myself in a position of power because I have the information, the people and the land. I see myself as being in an advantage position, so I don't see them as the people calling the shots. There is an angle of the story we can give to them that would not necessarily answer their questions, but make it easier for them to see what the outcome of the research would be. It is sad that the government has put us in this disadvantageous position, but as long as we are there, we need to understand that we are not powerless.

Similarly, Dr. Sambo thinks that Africa is in an equal position with researchers in the Global North in the sense that intellectualism or scholarship is quite objective. He speaks thus:

Why not? Well, I have seen research that has been conducted by both Africans and the Global North. If you read the literature, you will see that collaboration between them. Even myself, I have had invitations for collaborations with white scholars, just given the fact that I publish in journals. In most cases, they tailor the research. They design the research, they decide what is to be done and then we are factored in. They invited us but I still want to believe that they seek our opinion in

whatever they want to do in the sense that Intellectualism or scholarship is quite objective. Whatever you are doing, you need peoples input, their opinions and what they think about it. So even though they may design the whole programmes to do with the research, nothing stops Africans from making our own input to say look at this and this which is okay. I think they are objective. I do not think they are dictatorial as such.

Dr. Ocholi contends that though they initiated the research which is funded by the consortium with the Global North, all the operations are based on a flat platform as co-partners, equal partners. He states:

We initiated them, because there are some solutions based on research which we want to prime for animal health, lessons for Nigeria, but the funding is not from us. So, we collaborate with them because they can bring in the funding to support such work. Most times where we did those works together, it was like a consortium of other countries coming together. Most of our work here for now according to their own policy is that if you want to do any research, it has to be in consortium anyway, so we initiated it because we needed to find a solution to a health problem affecting an animal which borders on human health also. But we did not have the backing financially and sometimes materially to be able to sort out the problem. So because they have the backing and funding, we approach them, we bring them in, we look for funds, bring in and then do the work. Once the funding is provided, all the operations are based on a flat

platform. As co-partners, equal partners. Before a project like that starts, we have an agreement on property rights, what should be done with the results, either commercialisation or whatever, it is agreed upon legally. We have a legal document to back it up which they cannot extend beyond. Signed by all partners and well understood by all partners. Secondly, some of the products that came out, if they want to take it for research they have to sign an MTA (Material Transfer Agreement) which has to be agreed upon before they can go ahead to use it.”

Dr. Kudus exposed a fundamental but less discussed aspect of funding, positionality and potential for ethics dumping and other moral issues in international funded collaborative research:

There are issues around funding and positionality. For instance, funders would say you're not going to be paid as a researcher on the project, that the money is just meant for research meaning that you're not collecting allowance, and that is based on the assumption that you are employed at the university. So your salary should be enough for you when in fact your salary is nothing. They are speaking from their own point of view, but here people engage in research so they can earn additional income, not because they just want to do research. The problem is, our people who are engaging in this funding would rather increase or make overbloated budgets on things that are unnecessary or even when the money comes in, they would divert it. The westerners would assume that they have done the proper thing by saying

that you shouldn't be paid. People are not having this conversation because they are afraid they would lose money, they're going to be losing research funding.... It's not a money issue, it's how research should be done in the way that people are projected, that collaborative research with the Global North is not used to exploit our people.

6. Is decolonising research ethics a cogent pathway in reconfiguring African Studies?

In the emerging intellectual order with emphasis on interdisciplinarity, decoloniality, diversity, partnerships across divides, the idea of decolonising the 'theoria and praxis scope' of research ethics in African Studies is of interest to the study. Our respondents, both researchers working in African Studies with profiles of funded research collaborations from the Global North and members of research ethics committees, were asked questions on the necessity, cogency, feasibility, conditionalities and implications of having research ethics decolonised amidst the ongoing process of reconfiguring African Studies. Very interesting perspectives emerged; thus, dismissing a slide into homogeneity of thoughts on disciplinary decolonisation in research ethics. However, we found that more respondents are of the view that such a theoretical excursion is long overdue and that if African Studies is to be genuinely reconfigured, decolonising research ethics is an unavoidable desideratum. Unlike in the case of whether there is ethics dumping or not that generated divided opinions along disciplinary bias lines of science, humanities, and the social sciences, responses to the question of decolonising research ethics did not reflect such path as some scholars even in the humanities thought that the fray of

decolonisation in research ethics is unnecessary. Consider for instance, the view of Dr. Kudus:

I do not think that decolonising research ethics for African Studies is necessary because there are ethical principles a lot of us can agree on, such as informed consent, non-benevolence, benevolence, confidentiality, etc. The question is about how we guarantee and safeguard all of these in different contexts of research. When you think about the issue of consent, it's about what kind of understanding of consent operates within this context. How do we ensure that consent is done in a way that manages the relationship between the research and the research participants considering the fears associated with documentation? People feel that they are signing their lives away when they engage in Consent Forms. This is so when you ask personal questions. There are concerns about being a stranger and requesting signatures. Even people you think that you know, once you begin to talk about research, their disposition changes. So, positionalities matter. The key issue is how to guarantee peace and trust across contexts. So, it may not necessarily be about having indigenous research ethical theories but about the practice of having ethical research as they may differ from context to context.

Talking about the recognition of multiplicity of contexts and how to negotiate the guidelines of ethical research with provenance from the Global North on the field in the Global South, Dr. Kudus's position resonates more with our respondents at science-focused research institutes. For instance, Dr. Peters

Oladosu objected to the cogency of having indigenous research ethics protocols. His point is that:

The checklist of ENREC (Network of Research Ethics Committees) follows international standards. We cannot develop our own local checklist because the checklist of ENREC is a global one and a standard one. It cuts across all studies, in as much as human subjects or participants would be involved.

Dr. Oladosu further reinforces the idea about the universality of ethics, its principles and precepts in research when he argues that:

Possibly, if I want to consider research that would take into consideration African culture, there is no room for herbalism, no room for incantation. Speaking from the perspective of a health researcher, there is no room for herbalism because it cannot be standardised. But, an ethics checklist would not have anything against standardising African medicine. We are talking about standardisation now, if it were standardised, it would be done in a global way, so asking ethics to consider African conditions or situations would be like wanting to water down the standard.

Also, Dr. Ocholi submits that the question whether the research policies should be African contextual friendly or not is a difficult question as the use of animals for research is an international policy and so he cannot really say for sure what form of African contextualisation can be introduced. His words:

This is a very difficult question because now originally if we do not think that the use of animals in anything for us or maybe thinking about using animals in a human manner, then if there is an international policy that says animal use should be humane, then why not? It is something to adopt. That is the way we look at it.

However, our findings further showed that amongst scholars in the humanities where decolonisation exercise and struggle are often championed in African Studies, the idea of rethinking the process, theories and policies governing the ethics of research in African Studies is commonly supported. Opinions, however, differ on how that can be achieved. There is roughly relative consensus on the colonisation of the African mindset and how that cuts across different spheres of lives and intellect, African studies and research ethics inclusive. Dr. Victor states that:

Colonialism has before now eaten deeply into the various facets of African society, except for the enlightenments we now crave to decolonise the African mindset. Generally, in Africa, research ethics has some elements of colonialism in the sense that you tend to see the hand of colonialism in almost everything; adopting the styles given to us by our colonial masters.

As a consequence of the overwhelming impact of such colonial frays, Dr. Victor argues that,

If the research that is conducted here is not indigenised, there must be indigeneity in the employment of such ethics. There are things you bring from the west

ordinarily but research must be adapted in a way that there is indigenous indigeneity.” Addressing the colonial baggage that directly informs the theoretical framework within which we conduct research in African Studies suggests that for a Global South funded collaborative research to be ethical, “it becomes difficult for researchers not also to be decolonial in their knowledge production.

In support of this position, Vitis opines thus:

Why shouldn't we come up with our own indigenous ethics policy that would guide every other person that comes into Africa? This is what we need to do in Africa. There has to be that African content in the ethics of researchers. Without that African content, researchers will always be frustrated. This is a matter of moving away from the claws of colonisation, and this goal can only be achieved when Africans are involved in crafting those ethics. If you import western ethics into Africa, it will have issues.

In consonance with Vitis's view on decolonising research ethics, Enage contends that:

Colonial history has defined the kind of research and its underpinning ethics that we do in African studies. As much as we try to decolonise African scholarship, we cannot exactly push aside the role that colonialism has played. Even the ethical consideration that we talk about is part of colonialism. We have not been able to develop

our own concept of African consideration and so it is all about what has been handed over to us. To find solutions to our problems, we need to think about Africa. There are so many concepts that are still alien to the western world. You cannot totally remove research bias, and that interest has a way of influencing your research. When you have an interest and the western research concept is kicking against it, how do you project these happenings in the society? So basically, if we're talking about marrying the western world on the concept of research to Africa, things such as decolonisation are to be looked into... For us to move beyond what we already have, we need to develop our own research, indigenous research ethics policy that allows us to dig into these areas alien to the western world. These are unique areas and should not be neglected because it is not researchable.

While Dr. Omotoso thinks that “African Studies centres and institutes would have to do that for themselves and that is where we have to start talking about decolonising methods in African Studies,” Dr. Eleshin reminisces on his experience on research field work in Nigeria that are framed within the ethical guidelines of research in the West and consequently avers the urgency of decolonising research ethics:

When we went for a research field trip and needed to interview some very old men in the western way, we had to give them Consent Forms because as we were leaving we were told that this consent is very vital, so we had to go with pads. Then I have to bring the idea of doing oral consent because we were interviewing traditionalists

who were not learned on matters as Consent Forms. I don't know whether there is a possibility for oral consent in African Studies; but it is very important, because if you're doing African Studies, you should always consider orality. The main source of knowledge transfer from one generation to the other in Africa is orality, so that needs to be considered.

Dr. Sambo Mamman of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies in Kuru writes in support of a decolonised research ethics. In his view, he thinks that:

We need something that is customised along our own traditions because the guidelines we have are very [un]African; they are borrowed kind of things because even the guidelines we have in the university, and the military, the whole issue of ethics emanated from the West. It is a borrowed kind of thing. I don't see any harm in modifying it to suit our own purposes or peculiar needs. However, because of most of the scholarly programmes we do, the programme may be westernised in a way so there is a tendency that most of the things that we do are westernised. But I think that there is no harm in having a blend of our own culture with borrowed one as long as it would meet our objectives.

Unlike the above respondents that either suggested a wholesome embrace or synthetic consideration of decolonisation in matters of research ethics and policy in African Studies, Prof. Oyeshile offered a sceptical, cautious and partial approach to decolonisation:

The important thing is to master research ethics itself. If you don't understand something, you cannot decolonise it. If you think you are decolonising it, you may be colonising it in the other way round. The major problem is that many of our scholars don't really understand what research ethics is all about. We need a lot of time, as they have not really internalised the topic, they are still in the process of learning it. There is hardly anything we do in this part of the world that is not tainted by the western ethical framework. When we talk about ethics, we are having certain universal concepts in mind, irrespective of age, skin colour or gender, for instance integrity, human essence, rationality, the concept of the good. We have to be careful when we talk about decolonisation so we don't end up with some kind of essentialist philosophy... We have to do a kind of inter-fertilisation of ideas. Complete decolonisation is not possible.

Concerned about the pedagogical component of research ethics training, which is largely defined by templates handed over by bioethical institutions in the West, Dr. Ayoola Olushola argues that a good starting point for decolonising research ethics is to review the content and curriculum of research ethics training that researchers are mandated to do before having ethics approval for their project. One such training is the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) programme. According to him:

When you want to do research, NREC will give you a course to do (e.g. CITI). These courses are not Nigerian based courses, they are foreign based courses. Why can't we have modules developed here by our own National

Ethics Research Committee? Whether audio or not, that can contextually abridge some of the things that we find are too rigid... I find that too rigid. But in terms of general principles, they are pure science, with the best of intentions. We all know what happened in Kano relating to the Pfizer issue. All those things have been put into consideration to arrive at some of the rigid protocol and ethics approval that we get, but by and large, there are still areas that can be modified [when research ethics is decolonised].

For some other respondents, decolonising research ethics is more of a function of rethinking its current structures and centralisation; and not necessarily in terms of defining its principles in African ontologies. According to Dr. Tobi Oshodi,

I honestly think that the existing structure or mechanism to attain such ethics clearance needs rethinking in terms of decentralisation.

Restructuring is understood here as re-constitution and decentralisation such that there will be diverse and different ethics committees responding to research in different areas of scientific and humanities research in African Studies. That is, research ethics committees based in the College of Medicines will no longer be saddled with evaluating research proposals from the social sciences and humanities. However, a critical objection to such a view is provided by Dr. Ayoola Olushola, a surgeon and member of the research policy making body of the Federal Ministry of Health, Abuja. While he agrees that although the ethics committee is mostly active in areas of health, he thinks

the global best practices would help us determine if we ought to develop an Ethics Committee for Arts and Humanities. His resistance towards decentralisation of research ethics committees along disciplinary lines for African Studies is premised on the interdisciplinarity of ethics. Accordingly, he remarks:

... Let us do what are global best practices. Abroad, are [ethics committees] they are domiciled under health? Or not? They can be domiciled anywhere provided they serve the purposes of ethical clearance and all. You guys can recommend what is best as I do not think that is a problem. Any studies that require some level of consent, trials, biology, there would still be an element of the ethical part of it because for instance, even if one is created in the humanities and someone has maybe a psychological issue within the context, you will still fall back to ask for evaluation. For example, in this recording, assuming I deny this interview though signed by me; it would be a very good judicial precedent to say a whole doctor denies his interview. I can now say I took an antipsychotic which made me be in euphoria during the interview. This has to come back to the medics to say if it is true, take his blood sample. Is it true that he is on this drug? Which hospital has he been going to? How has he been getting the treatment? How come it was when he was asked that he began to talk about the drug? So, ethics can be interdisciplinary.

Writing on the UI's context, Dr. Kudus notes that while what is on ground as the structure of research ethics in the university is

good as ethics committees have been decentralised, he still thinks that:

The structure of ethical clearance needs serious attention. I don't think the institutions are doing enough to educate researchers about ethics clearance as they assume that researchers know. So, a lot of work has to be done at the university management level to ensure that research is done ethically. And in insisting on that, any research with institutional grant should be checked against that as part of the quality control and not just collaborating with all kinds of research. Though the financial governance of the university is not helping matters because if research funds come through the university, it is difficult to access the fund. So, people go about the research to beat deadlines. In that process of trying to formalise the research process, people also circumvent the ethical guidelines that need to happen.

For Dr. Tobi, as buzzy as the efforts and calls towards decolonisation is today in Africa, he thinks it is not an asymmetric development in Africa alone and suggests that the impact of decolonising research ethics should be thoroughly-thought-through, especially as it affects funding in African Studies. Quoting him:

The idea of decolonising ethics and research is not only happening in Africa or postcolonial societies; it is ongoing even in the Global North. It is multidimensional, happening on the continent just as it is happening outside the continent. You find out that some have worked on

projects where we need to observe the ethical principles in the society within which you are conducting the research. In fact, if you get funding from GCFR, one of the things they talk about is the principle of beneficality. Beneficality is the idea that yes, you may collect data from low-income countries, but after collecting the data, it is ethical to give back your research findings to that society. In doing that, they are also reacting to the decolonisation conversation in which case they are willing to put their money into research that would be beneficial to society. In another case, it will affect funding because funders globally have their interest whether we like it or not. Sometimes their interest may not necessarily be in terms of what the local communities want. For instance, if you get a grant or you are in a collaborative partnership with a university in the Global North and you are being invited to be part of that partnership, at the end of the day, the main beneficiary is the company or firm sponsoring the research.

Many of our respondents think that decolonising research ethics will not negatively affect funding in African Studies. Dr. Eleshin's and Dr. Victor's views are instructive as they maintained contrary views to the dominant position on decolonisation of research ethics and funding in African Studies. For Dr. Eleshin:

Experience has shown that these funders are always keen on ethical clearance. I think they are being careful which is normal, but if we are able to make them understand that this is how things work in Africa, then maybe they

will. If you're telling us to conduct research in a different way in the Global North, how do you censor the outcome of the research? So, I think it will be a problem, because our reality is different from their reality. If you decolonise it, it is going to affect the funding process.

In some similar ways to Dr. Eleshin, Dr. Victor also notes that:

Scholars in the Global North or funders don't see the research conducted in the Global South with decolonial methodologies as something that tallies with the way research is done by them. In that light, such research will amount to an investigation that is not really an investigation. When research is defined as an ongoing global conversation in its approach because some elements of colonial involvement have been removed from it, I think with time there will be a reduction or a total removal of such funding in research conducted in African studies.

Contrary to the above views, we found that more respondents support decolonisation of research ethics process, structures, and norms without an attenuation of the funding-scape in African Studies. Dr. Omotoso's position in this regard is unambiguous:

Decolonisation of research ethics is also not going to affect the kind of funding we get. Let's not forget, it's all because our government is not responsive that we're having our Western partners do this to us. Let's not also forget that the West is looking to Africa for knowledge. There is so much that is over here for them to explore.

So, whatever method we put on the ground will be valid. It is now up to us to determine what they get to know and what they do not get to know, and if we're going to be doing that, we need to get into a convenient spot for gathering our data. It's a different thing when there is no African based counterpart, but we observe that most researchers that come from the Global North always insist that there must be an African counterpart, who can help, so that the Western researcher is not just insinuating outside the context. We should not be afraid of breaking down the method, decolonising it, making it easier.

Dr. Enage is also unequivocal in her position on funding and decolonisation:

I do not think so. Formally I used to have this notion that wrestling against colonialism can affect funding, but I have friends who did research on the evils of colonialism and still got funding. Maybe these might be some biases but I don't think it would have any drastic effect on African Researches.

For Dr. Kudus, he expresses scepticism about the conflation of issues of decolonising research ethics with funding in African Studies. While there may be seeming causal relations that may be inferred, such assumptions remain associative and not causative until empirical in-depth studies establish so. So, he consequently expresses doubt on whether:

... decolonising research ethics in African Studies will affect funding. This may be the case unless researchers coming from elsewhere, the Global North inclusive, assent that it's okay to do unethical research. But it could, because researchers who want to be exploitative in places where, say, there are institutional weaknesses in our research ecosystem. Whether research ethics would affect funding or not should not even be debated; they are two different issues. I also don't think aspiring into having an ethical research ecosystem should be bringing out the context of whether or not our funding would reduce... The problem is there isn't enough money for research, especially humanities and social science research coming from within the country or coming from within the continent. We are not doing enough. Even people that are funding research within the continent also get money from outside in the Global North. And it has to be within the priority that the West funding institutions have set. It is a problem that is going to continue for a long time if no funds are coming from within. It would be naive to fund the understanding of your society on the basis of their benevolence. It's always been about them. African Studies, historically, is about understanding the other and the making and production of knowledge about the other; not for others' sake but for their (funders') sake.

7. What are the essential principles in decolonised research ethics for African Studies and how have such been encountered in the activities of ethics committees?

Part of the broader objectives of this study is to know whether some African moral principles are also considered in addition to the dominant and frontline research ethics principles used in the evaluation of research proposals submitted to the Ethics Committee. We want to know whether or not research protocols are strictly evaluated on the basis of western research ethics ideas and principles. Interestingly in our interactions with members of research ethics committees, especially those committees with humanities and social science research focus; we found that some African moral norms influence the evaluation process. In the context of University of Nigeria, Nsukka, the Chairman of the Ethics Committee, Dr. Michael Ukonu, notes:

Yes, some African moral principles are considered in the evaluation of research proposals. If we talk about African moral principles, we understand that some of those principles are universal. For instance, the principle of giving your participant the respect due to them that they are going to participate in your study and that you have their full consent to do so. When you ask for that consent, it is respecting the moral principle of respecting the person and what they are getting into. I think that one is universal. Then, in Africa we understand that to speak to someone about what they are going to get involved in, then to explain to them about what they may benefit or what you will benefit as a researcher and of course for them to give you a space to operate when you come to

generate your data, we understand that the average African will see it as an issue of visit and there are ground rules for visiting – being made welcome and then getting what you need and being bid farewell. So sometimes, we ask researchers to tell us if they are going to traditional areas and how they intend to make ‘entry behaviour’. At times you find certain issues about making people welcome, in terms of greetings, presenting kola, and some other things. We let them understand that we appreciate the fact that they are going to participate in a study. Because if you do not do those, it’s not difficult for them to start thinking that you are exploiting them or that they are helping you to generate wealth, and they will want to participate in the wealth. So, we allow them to see the intellectual/academic bases of what the research is about.

Questions can be asked about how a research ethics committee leveraging on partialist moral considerations in the assessment of research protocols can be able to manage the thin line between what is intended to be good ‘entry behaviour’ not ending up as inducement of research participants, and consequently, ethics dumping in African research sites. The Secretary of the Faculty of Arts Research Ethics Committee, UNN, Dr. Ugwuanyi retorts thus on this query:

We are not very strict in this sense or the way that people in the United Kingdom, people in the US and people in the western world would be very strict about how your relationship with your researchers in terms of what kind of incentives you give. We consider the poverty level

within the society; we also consider how you will be able to access your community without having some level of apathy towards your research as a result of poverty. And that takes us to the global discussion about power and the level of agency and positionality that takes place in research in Africa. We are not very strict about that because we know that what takes place in many parts of Africa are not similar to things that take place in other places. So, in many cases in Africa, and in Nigeria here, you need to, for instance, impress a poor-ridden person [epistemic agency though] to be able to give you attention, to be able to attend to your questions. This is quite different from what you see from other parts of the world, especially in the West.

Dr. Oshodi reckons the principle of beneficiality as an important consideration in indigenous African moral cultures. Sharing his take on what such principle entails, he writes:

We must emphasise that beneficiary is arguably one of the most important considerations in thinking indigenously about research ethics within Africa. You can't write about me without giving me the benefit of knowing what you wrote about me and also being able to respond, and that leads us to the second principle, power relations. To decolonise is to give a voice to the voiceless. Rather than having the researcher being the beginning and the end, conducting the research and interpreting it the way he pleases, he should give it back to the participant for feedback. In addition to that, place is a major factor in decolonisation. If we want to solidify

decolonising the academia, we must encourage and support some of the most brilliant African minds. As a researcher, before conducting any research in any place, you must understand what is obtainable in that particular place. The respondent may not really be interested in the Consent Form; their system of consent may be different from the paper based. To elicit the concept, we need to understand the local culture of the place.

Related to the issue of beneficiary mentioned above is the issue of anonymising research respondents in research for objectivity and confidentiality's sake. Knowledge production in African Studies raises a quite peculiar moral issue of epistemic injustice when the intellectual identities of respondents who served in the co-creation of knowledge are either silent or unduly recognised. Dr. Kelechi reflected on the issues of anonymity and the questions relating to Intellectual property rights as ethical issues in African Studies requiring some indigenous moral appeals to address. According to him:

We approve people's applications to go to the field to acquire knowledge from local communities; we also expect that they anonymise the participants. By doing so, we hide their identities. Unlike in the western world where this will have to do with their kinds of philosophies and worldviews, here we all know that elders have certain levels of dynamics and recognition, which if you take it away from them and you refused or failed to cite them or make them part of your research like co-researchers or co-collaborators, then you are to an extent violating their intellectual rights [and if it is a

funded collaborative research from privileged societies, you have engaged in helicopter research, which is a moral wrong].

Concerns about anonymising the intellectual identity of respondents, with an ipso facto denial of their intellectual property rights have oftentimes results in trust deficit between respondents in African research sites and the researchers. Dr. Kelechi notes, disturbingly, that while on the ethics committee that he sits, “We freely align with the western concept of anonymity and confidentiality in our ethics committee approach; personally I began to question this. Though, I will say that I haven't brought this to the attention of the committee.” How this issue of anonymity is addressed is different at NIPRD Ethics Committee.

Dr. Peters Oladosu of NIPRD lends credence to how the ethics committee at the NIPRD encountered and addressed such moral mistrust in research relations between study's participants and the Principal Investigators:

If I am going to require your knowledge about certain things, I need to explain to you in that Consent Form what the study is all about and what is in there for you. We do that a lot in our relationship with traditional healers. For example, we did tuberculosis research with the NIH in the US many years ago. We interviewed TMP's (Traditional Medical Practitioners all over Nigeria) and one particular plant was very active in our research. In our Consent Form, we had it there, what would be the benefit of that herbalist. We specified that

if it would be patented, your name would be there, if any publication is made, your name would be there, but we also specified that you are also contributing to our struggle in eradicating tuberculosis using African medicine. We attended a conference and in the middle of the conference, one herbalist who was actually invited to the Conference came up and wanted to make sure his name was there on the poster and his name was there. He spoke out at the international conference that this is the first time his trust was not betrayed because we explained to him in our Consent Form that we publish and whatever we do, his name would be there and true to our words, his name was there. A stipend was given to him releasing his product to us, not that we bought it, but we just said, we are giving you this amount to compensate for your efforts in preparing this product for us, not that we bought it from you. We assured him that he was also part of the story.

In light of the above case, the ethics committee has an enormous task of engaged interactions with the researchers concerning the progress of the work and periodic verifications.

He should be carried along, you see, I think what is missing between the researchers and the owners of the knowledge is this procedure. You need to let them know from the beginning that there would be a procedure to even prove that their product is efficacious. If it is efficacious, we would want to patent. They need to be carried along. Once you patent, that has protected your intellectual property. You will make him understand that

nobody can work on this path in this area again without us. Whatever happens after that, studies are going on. It is one thing for a product to be active; it is another thing for it to be safe. You will let them know all the procedures. It is important to let them know from the beginning that you might not even benefit in your lifetime but you might be leaving a legacy for your family. Drug development is not a one-year job. I may start it, but the person that would end it for it to become an end product may not have even been recruited in NIPRID. So, these are the things we need to let them know. For example, NIPRID collaborated with one man in Oyo State, who was producing herbal medicine to manage sickle cell. The man in collaboration with NIPRID developed what we call sickle cell drug. The man is dead, but his family is receiving compensation from that sickle cell drug. It has become a drug now licensed by the Federal Government, given to pharmaceutical companies licensed to produce that drug and annually his family receives a certain percentage of the income from that licence.

The point in the above narratives is that while we embrace the Western principles of anonymity and confidentiality in Ethics Committee approach in African Studies, such practices seem to promote a moral wrong and thus deserving urgent rethinking in a decolonial frame of research ethics. While decolonising research ethics might be a disruptive exercise questioning current practices underpinning by uncritical acceptance of western precepts and principles in the mode of research, this study found out that less is being done at the constructive level

of research ethics decolonisation. At this level, decolonised research ethics will be more of system building and theorisation on research ethics, and capacity building on how to study Africa more ethically, from within and out.

8. How can African Studies be done without ethics dumping?

Though there is no statistical occurrence of concrete instances of ethics dumping in African Studies discovered in this study, this does not however necessarily preclude subtle, and unreported instances of ethics dumping in the study of Africa in Nigeria. This study sampled the views of how best African Studies can be done without ethics dumping. The fact that nearly all our respondents provided one suggestion or the other on what can be done to have ethical research in the emerging phase of reconfiguring African Studies, logically presupposes in the converse that ethics dumping is a possibility and its supposed rarity does not necessarily imply non-existence. This study found some very instructive insights on how the tide of ethics dumping can be stemmed.

Dr. Ayoola Olushola, suggests the digitisation of ethics application and approval process to allow for effectiveness, efficiency, and limit bias. His recommendation is that:

Digitalising the system makes it easy for everybody involved to get the information and to attend to it at the right and appropriate time. Not only speeding up the process, transparency and objectivity will be infused in avoiding ethics dumping.... But in a situation where as a result of lack of digitalisation, only one officer checks

every protocol as I have described before forwarding it, and when he forwards it, and it is coming back as approved, it would only come back again to one singular officer who would process it and forward to the researcher. I think that makes the process slow. We should look at global best practices and move the process forward.

While the above suggestion is applicable to research ethics committees in general at different levels in Nigeria, Dr. Olushola further adds that for ethics dumping to be avoided at the Federal Ministry of Health saddled with overseeing health and medical technology research in Nigeria, in particular, it is important that there is an improvement in the service delivery and the functionality of the Ethics Committee. He suggests further:

... if the Ethics Committee hold regular meetings according to the Act establishing it, which recommends that members should meet at least once in a quarter, it would be an avenue to look at the gaps within the National Research Ethics Committee (NREC) activities, the gaps within protocols that are submitted and approved, the gaps within regulation of research in Nigeria, the gap even around the digitalisation and capacity building and knowledge within research itself which I think are not optimal as we speak. But the solution is to make them have regular meetings, make them do what the Act stipulated that they do on a regular basis.

The docility of many research ethics committees may be a function of different factors ranging from poor finance, lack of

advocacy and awareness, bad research governance, coordination and synergies among ethics committees. Enage reinforces Dr. Olushola's point as she avers:

First, we need to start structuring the process of research in Africa; it is one thing to have proper documentation of an ethical committee and it is another thing for them to function. We should establish these committees and empower them to function, not just having them on paper. In this way, even researchers from the Global South can come into Nigeria and other African countries to follow the procedures laid down, and I think that is the only thing that can stop ethics dumping.

While Dr. Eleshin recommends that it is only through “developing our own African Studies-oriented institutions and ethics committees that will consider and approve ethical clearance for funded research” that African Studies can be done without ethics dumping, Dr. Omotoso is of the view that isolated actions at one or different African Studies institutes cannot lead to much change except there is a deliberate simultaneous effort across all institutes and centres of African Studies in the continent on voicing against helicopter and ethics dumping research on the continent. She expresses that:

We need the institutes and centres of African Studies on the continent to bring together a united front. We need to now come together and put up a common front and make our grievances known. Until we all see it as a problem and push for the solution, we are not going anywhere.

Dr. Omotoso's recommendation resonates more with the charge by Dr. Vitis:

If African intellectuals have theories that will promote African culture, if Africans can come together and say, this is how we want things to be done, if Africans come up with their own funding or research activities, they stand a better chance. When we develop our own concepts, it promotes our culture. We have to emphasise the fact that if you're coming to Africa to do research, you don't need to come with the knowledge itself. You don't need to come with the findings and then impose it on people, as it may not align with their own culture.

Accordingly, Dr. Victor thinks that it is only through building of our own institutions of research and infusing with good governance that chastises impunity that much progress can be made against dumping of foreign funded and exploitative research on Africa. He voices that:

Researchers in this part of the world must first of all understand that governance must be employed in everything especially in research, and such governance must be in the backbone of ethics. There are ways of doing things globally; ethics provides such a framework and if research bodies or institutions in Africa do not have ethics that govern their research, foreigners or westerners would not respect research ethical culture when conducting research here. We must make our own standard no matter how weak it may be and with time it will be standardised.

For Dr. Oshodi, the way to go in reducing ethics dumping is advocacy and education at all levels and not just at the tertiary:

To be aware of ethics dumping, we should begin to teach our children; we should be able to put ethics dumping as one of the elements of research methodology. The average African student should be taught decolonisation as arguably the most important course outline. If they don't do that, we have failed. The other thing is also to link up with the Global North and not disconnect with them, and their collaborative intellectuals. Finally, future proofing, which means that we should publish our methodology, for the future generation so we can go back, read through it and see how it can be improved.

Dr. Vitis emphasises the importance of ethics committees not having integrity deficit as it is the backbone of preventing ethics dumping in the study of Africa, her language, philosophy, history, environment, economics, technology, politics and affairs. Vitis recommends:

...it is the responsibility of every committee to make sure that the research processes are surely credible. It is different to have something on a paper; implementation of what is on the paper is another thing. That is where the credibility of the committee comes in. Secondly, as an international fund, you're laying out your project plan. How do you communicate with the locals on this plan? How are we sure the plan would eventually be executed in the way you laid it out? What language are

you going to use? All these things should be put into perspective, delivering the project without exploiting the participant of the research.

In the considered opinion of Prof. Oyeshile, the culture of ethics dumping will continue to be bred in so far as governments in Africa pay lip service to the funding of research and education. Without mincing words, he recommends:

Our government must live up to expectations. Institutions and philanthropic organisations must be able to fund research about Africa instead of putting our cap in hand and begging all over the world. They must be able to come up with research grants, helping the universities. That way, it will be difficult for an outsider to dictate: it will either be collaboration or nothing. Ethics dumping will still continue because governments in many African states are not ready to fund research. We must have internal funding of research, and second, scholars must also know what they want. Some African researchers have closed their eyes to certain conveniences to do authentic research without begging for grants. Authenticity matters in research... The scholar has to be determined, although it is very difficult without funding.

Besides the issues around funding identified by Prof. Oyeshile, Dr. Kudus is of the view that the horizon and diversity of research ethics committees in Nigeria need to be broadened:

Universities need to have ethical review committees and of course, ethical review committees that would be diverse. It is easy for Universities to establish ethical review committees and put such in the college of medicine, where the expectations that they are using follow a particular biomedical line, when in fact people coming from the humanities and social science don't need to follow that process. So, the point is that ethical review boards need to be diverse. The model of UI is interesting as it makes it easier for people across disciplines to look towards getting ethical approval and participate in the conduct of ethical research. Besides the right institutional frameworks, the Universities need to insist that their researchers get ethics clearance when they are doing collaborative works most especially. This may mean that they get multiple ethical approvals from participating institutions and countries. Universities need to embark on serious advocacy that will ensure that researchers take it as part of their responsibilities to get ethics approval. Also, related to that is the whole issue of research governance more broadly in the country. The assumption is that researchers know what the expectation is ethically and when it comes to research, but they don't know.

Following our findings on the basis of our (expanded) research questions and objectives, the question is what are the emerging ethical concerns from the study of African Studies without ethics dumping?

NEW ETHICAL CONCERNS

This study generally observed that there exists Ethics Committees in research Institutes. And the members of Ethics Committees are purposefully selected to meet the requirements of existing policies, these help policies and guidelines to define the nature of research that is possible and protect the subjects (animals or humans) involved in the research that are being done. Significantly, existing policies and guidelines cover universal ideals and principles that guide research engagement. This makes existing policies or guidelines cater for both local and international projects that have researchers in Africa collaborating with researchers from the Global North.

These observations may first give the impression that ethics dumping does not exist, but there are questions about the efficiency of ethics committees and the end result of their oversight duty. The seeming lax in the time and commitment to meeting by the ethics committees create opportunity for hurried approval without detailed scrutiny of research details. Although it appears that there is minimal ethics dumping given the establishment of Ethics Committees and the existing policies and guidelines, this project however, identified some ethical concerns that existing guidelines and policies do not attend to as they are presently structured. The concerns are:

(i) Equal partnership: The policies focus on research subjects and pay little attention to the relationship between researchers and or team members. The theory of *hu iwasii bí ènìyàn* queries the non-equal opportunities that may arise during and after projects. Using the demands of the theory of *hu iwasii bí ènìyàn* (act towards the other as one with flesh and blood).

“The theory of *Hu iwàsii bi ènìyàn ẹlẹran ara* is a development on the basic principle that, ‘the other person is a human being like me, and I OUGHT to ACT, FEEL and RESPOND to his or her pain as I know best. It asks the questions, who is THIS BODY (human being)? What OUGHT I do to him/her?’” (Akin-Otiko, 2022:18). This theory expects that researchers involved in projects as well as their institutions will treat each other as equal partners. The researchers in the Global North should respect and regard the researchers from the Global South as equal partners. That is, the other should be treated as persons with flesh, persons with the same goal and vision.

Taking advantage of the ineptitude of the institutions from the South, and the lack of equal opportunities of researchers from the Global South should be seen as unethical. Researchers from the Global South should not be treated with handouts; the policies should make room for sufficient development during and beyond the life time of the project. E.g., why not build an IT server that will be of service to the institution beyond the duration of the project?

(ii) Non-full disclosure of benefits to all parties: existing policies speak for research subjects and ensure that they are not taken advantage of, but it is quiet of possible benefits to the partners. It does not require researchers from the Global North to disclose full benefits that will accrue to researchers on the project. What the policies ensure is safety and consent. This project considers it unethical to hide or not to fully disclose benefits from the project to collaborating researchers from the Global South, especially when these benefits are known from the beginning of the project.

(iii) Imposition of positionalities: The findings of this study raise some concerns stemming from the realities of positionality and the need for multiplicity of views in project proposals. For example, the Global North has a visible position on the issue of gender and gender representation and this is imposed on the researchers from the Global South. The researcher from the Global South is silenced by Eurocentric perspective without the option for dialogue of gradual comprehensible perspective. The Global South never has a say around significant positionality stance when collaboration is envisaged. Views from the South are perceived from a positionality which takes away their right to be heard, understood, and evolved based on superior arguments.

(iv) After my consent consequence: the policies and guidelines give the impression that all is well once the subject gives consent to the research. When it comes to collaborative works, the researcher from the Global South also gives his/her consent once the proposal documents are signed. The policies do not speak to the rights and privileges of researchers beyond stipends and financial remunerations due to work done. Policies are not detailed about what happens after contracts are signed as well as issues of financial or subtle duress. Researchers from the South usually find grants as empowering financially and so overlook a lot of questions of right and privileges once the project has begun.

(v) Challenge to African way of life: There is an (un)intended imperialistic postures and positions when it comes to issues of interaction. The South is perceived as patriarchal and so mechanisms are in place to fight what the West perceives as

unjust without dialogue. Suffice as an example is the issue of anonymity that challenged the African way of life, which Dr. Ukonu clarifies, thus:

There are certain ways we apply ethics, someone wants to be appreciated for what they've done, somebody wants to be a co-creator or producer of the knowledge. The African worldview is against anonymity. In the African worldview, issues about truth telling and owning up to what you say are embedded in the African culture. So the African wants to be quoted for what he said. I think the definition of ethics dumping from the view of the participant needs to be broadened.

ONGOING TASKS IN THE PILOT PHASE

The pilot phase of the research on 'African Studies without ethics dumping' has a 12-months duration and so far, the project has progressed according to the work plan. There are still some tasks on the project's timeline that are ongoing and others will commence as planned. For instance, the organisation of the study's Focus Group Discussion is in its final phase as invitations have gone to the group of experts; however, a final consensually agreed date amongst them is still being negotiated. We are working closely with our doctoral researcher in the project to complete the Policy review literature, in preparation for a Policy Brief on Research Ethics in Nigeria. As we plan and organise a dissemination workshop on the study's research outputs, we also have as part of the plan to have a Call for Chapter on our proposed book project tentatively entitled - *African Studies without Ethics Dumping: Ethics Framing in African Studies Reconfiguration*.

NEXT PHASE OF THE PROJECT

This study is currently building on this empirical survey by carrying out theoretical exploration of content analysis, critical review of literature, and comparative evaluation of the data gathered to develop African inspired research ethics protocols. In ensuring that our theoretical exploration of African realities inspired research ethics is robust and most relevant for doing African Studies without ethics dumping and helicopter research, it would be necessary to consolidate the data gathered in the pilot phase of the study by moving to the next phase.

In this regard, we shall be exploring the multiple local contexts of research ethics review in Burkina Faso, Kenya, and South Africa with a view to harmonising overlapping ideals and research ethics standards. As the pilot phase of the project is being finalised, the ultimate goal of the project is to decolonise research ethics from a ‘one-size-fits all’ model to what we call an ‘African-multisite-inspired research ethics’ protocol for prescriptive use in equitable collaborative and transnational research in African Studies. Considering the growing wave of decolonising the disciplines and methodologies in African Studies, the proposed project aims at reconfiguring African Studies through a critical decolonised lens of research ethics.

Critical decoloniality of research ethics is an attempt “to be critical of the mainstream [of doing research in African Studies through funding] ... better ways of doing ethical, meaningful research which contributes to social [and epistemic] justice” by recognising the relational and situated contexts of studying Africa. To be able to do this, the next phase of the project shall consolidate drawing on the concepts of multiplicity, reflexivity,

positionality, and relationality in its critical inquisition into ethics dumping, research ethics, and indigenous knowledge production in African Studies. The research sites shall be Burkina Faso, Kenya, and South Africa. In calibrating such a new African research ethics model, the study shall leverage on the privilege of multiple comparative insights from each of the research case studies, while also collaborating with all the ACCs in this regard.

The findings of the next phase of the study are pivotal to understanding the expressions of multiplicities in the process of doing ethics in the context of research in Africa, and how decisions regarding research ethics clearance evolve among institutional and national ethics review committees in the investigated research sites. Ultimately, in consolidating the findings in the pilot phase, an approval of the second phase is key to unlocking the project's broader goal of contributing to the Cluster's overarching agenda of reconfiguring African Studies without ethics dumping.

Given the history of unethical and exploitative research in Africa, it is urgent and important to take seriously the question of research moralities in African Studies without ethical imperialism (Fayemi & Macaulay-Adeyelu, 2016). There is the need to develop African based ethical theories that will address gaps in ethical policies and ethical concerns highlighted based on the findings of this study and investigate if these concerns are unique to the Nigerian context.

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LIST OF RESPONDENTS

Respondents who are Members of Ethics Committees

1. Dr. Peters Oladosu, member of the Research Ethics Committee at the National Institute for Pharmaceutical Research and Development (NIPRD).
2. Dr. Muyiwa Akintola, Secretary of the Research Ethics Committee of National Open University Nigeria (NOUN).
3. Dr. Sambo Mamman, National Institute Librarian and Chairman of Ethics and Plagiarism Committee National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, JOS.
4. Dr. Michael Ukonu, the Chairman of the Faculty of Arts Ethics Committee, which oversees research at the Institute of African Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
5. Dr. Michael Ukonu, Chairman, Faculty of Arts Research Ethics Committee.
6. Dr. Kelechi Ugwanyi, Secretary of the Faculty of Arts Research Ethics Committee, University of Nigeria.

Researchers Working in African Studies Interviewed

1. Dr. Sharon Omotosho of Institute for African Studies, University of Ibadan.
2. Dr. Tobi Oshodi, a Political Scientist with many international research collaborations.
3. Prof. Olatunji Oyeshile, University of Ibadan.
4. Dr. Kudus Yussuf of the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan.
5. Anna Adamu Abui, an Archaeologist, and the current Acting Director of Archaeology and Museum Studies, Jos.
6. Dr. Abisoye Eleshin, a researcher at the Institute of African and Diaspora Studies, University of Lagos, Nigeria.

7. Dr. Victor Chinedu Eze, Researcher at the The French Research Institute in Africa, Ibadan.
8. Patrick Enage, Researcher at the The French Research Institute in Africa, Ibadan.
9. Nkoju Vitis, Researcher at the The French Research Institute in Africa, Ibadan.
10. Dr. Reuben Ocholi, Director of Bacteriology, Parasitology and Virology. National Veterinary Research Institute Vom, Jos.
11. Dr. Ayoola Olusola, Medical Doctor, Research and Knowledge Management Division, Federal Ministry of Health, Nigeria.

