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Globalisation in Africa: reflecting on Peter Jarvis's superstructure and substructure model

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ABSTRACT

This paper reflects on Peter Jarvis' book *Globalisation, lifelong learning and the learning society*, volume 2 – in which he describes human learning within a global context and factors contributing to globalisation. He describes the relationship of power between countries manifested as the superstructure and sub structure. The paper explores to what extent this model reflects the current situation in selected southern African countries such as Tanzania, Lesotho and South Africa and how the global forces have influenced adult learning in these African contexts. The paper adopts a postcolonial lens to critique the ways in which learning opportunities in African situations are facilitated and manipulated through the globalisation process and provides a speculative commentary on how adult and lifelong learning policy in South Africa is evolving as a political gesture towards positioning the country as a global player. It concludes by suggesting that the core substructure is perhaps not as impenetrable as first appears and that more recent superstructure responses may have had some impact on the core.

Introduction

From his contribution of more than 40 books over an academic lifespan of some 40 years, the greater part of Peter Jarvis's academic project has been to explore the nature of human learning. His trilogy *Lifelong Learning and the Learning Society* is in many ways a culmination of that project. Here he explores the nature of human learning from different perspectives. His second volume, the subject of this paper, focuses on sociological perspectives, particularly in relation to the impact that globalisation has had on how, why and what we learn. It was this topic that he presented to staff and students at the National University of Lesotho in 2008, where I was working at the time. In view of its particular resonance for the 'developing world' this book is a fitting subject for reflection in relation to African contexts.

Jarvis ([2007](#)) introduces the topic of learning in chapters 1 and 2 by highlighting that learning is a social enterprise whereby we make meaning out of our experiences and interactions through relationships. He emphasises, however, that relationships have a power
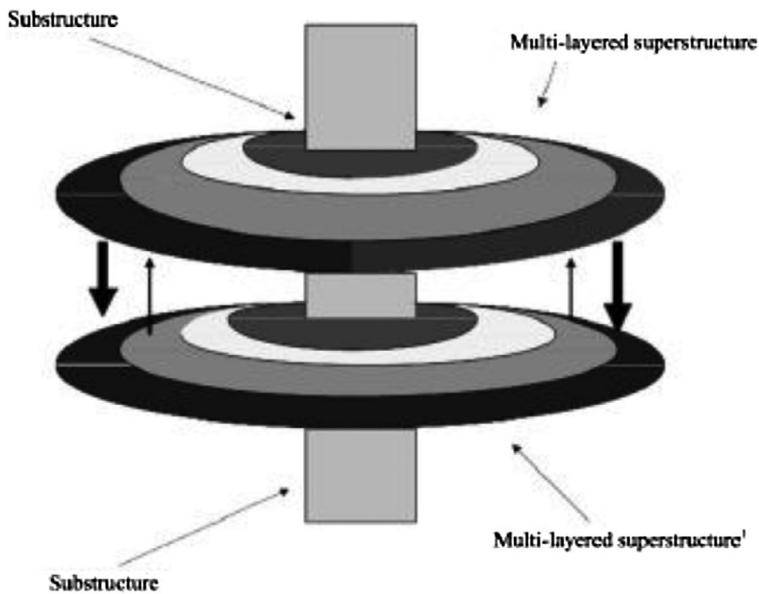

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Figure 1. A global model of societies (from Jarvis, 2007, p. 46).

dimension which influences our meaning making. Nevertheless, in spite of that power relationship, humans have agency and can engage critically with those power dimensions, although even this critical engagement is often confined to how we have internalised our culturally and socially determined relationship with our environment. In Foucauldian terms, it is the social environment and its discourses that impact on our sense of who we are and how we interpret the world. So we perceive and make meaning from a position of rationality that is to a large extent pre-determined. This pre-determination, however, can change, subject to our interactions and experiences, particularly if we move from one cultural context to another. Such experiences become disjunctures which force us to re-think, re-conceptualise and make new meaning.

Jarvis's argument is that globalisation has made such disjunctures more common. Although all communities and societies are dynamic, he makes a distinction between the two. Community is more static, localised, closed and homogeneous, relying on interrelationships (or social capital) for its continuity. Society is more transient and open to external influences. Society is more individualistic and its structures play a smaller part in maintaining continuity. Globalisation has played a large role in moving the world into a societal, rather than communal way of living. Since society is more dynamic there is a greater need for continuous re-learning. Although all humans have agency and can therefore resist or react negatively to imposed changes, the power of who controls the changes impacts heavily on our sense of how we can respond.

It is this concept of power as a core feature of globalisation that Jarvis then uses to explore the part that globalisation plays in defining and controlling how societies, or governments, formulate what counts as valuable learning in a lifelong context.

Globalisation

Among the five main theories of globalisation (see chapter 3 of his book), Jarvis (2007) has chosen to explore a neo-Marxist approach. He builds on the Marxist idea that most western societies have a core substructure characterised by ownership of capital which has power and control over a superstructure of social and cultural life. He develops this as a world model to illustrate globalisation as reflecting a substructure and superstructure for the whole world. In this model each nation (superstructure) is penetrated by the core substructure where ownership of capital lies. But capital is now not just financial, it is also technological and intellectual (and arguably political). The substructure in this model is owned by America as the, currently, perceived most powerful global force in the world. The sub structure flows through each superstructure as a power relation. A series of thick, downward pointing arrows between these superstructures reflects the influence of trade or aid and export of culture. The thinner upward arrows on his diagram reflect national or individual responses such as migration or efforts to retain cultural diversity. On a more global level there are also resistances, such as social movements or even international organisations such as UNESCO, but the model clearly delineates the downward might of the substructure, as his figure reproduced here, shows.

In Jarvis's words:

> The significance of the model in Figure 3.1 is that there is a global substructure represented here by the core running through all the different countries – it exercises a centralized power over each of the countries and, in this sense, it is a force for convergence between the different countries of the world. It consists, first, of the economic system but also of the technological one, especially information technology. (2007, p. 45–46)

Multinational corporations control the markets and flow of trade with the result that corporations are more powerful than state governments. Since the majority of corporations and trade agreements emanate from America, power resides in the substructure through the United States of America and its corporations. The effects of the substructure on national superstructures are varied, but the trend is towards convergence, although there remains a constant global-local tension while the superstructures struggle to accept or reject the substructure. The multicoloured rings of the superstructure represent different layers of influence or interaction between international, national, regional and individual or organisational forces in relation to the sub structure. Although there are potential competitors, articulated as India and China, and there are resistances, the nature of the substructure is such that there are many ways in which its power flows through the various superstructures: 'Power, then, resides in the global substructure but it can also be exercised between countries through political, trade, aid and other international mechanisms' (ibid, p. 46–47).

One of the most dominant power flows is through the role of the market and standardisation of culture. The substructure, protected by the political and military might of America, is often articulated through the impenetrable rationale of economic structures such as the IMF and the World Bank and world trade agreements. Education is a means for transmitting these rationales, and resistances are delegitimised by the dominant rationale of the market and other arguments that are justified through the hegemonically legitimising vocabulary of security, freedom, democracy.

The impact of globalisation in this model is persistent but uneven. Jarvis highlights, for instance, that resistances continue at a local and international level, so we experience

insurgencies such as civil war or fundamentalist groups as well as pockets of people who might 'opt out' and form self contained communes. But at a government level the state is vulnerable to capitalism and the needs of the market. The outcome is that some countries operate near the core of the sub structure and others on the periphery, depending on their economic resources. Also individuals and groups within countries may function in similar ways with consequences for equality and opportunities to lead the lives they have reason to value. Jarvis's (2007) argument – which is supported by many in the global south (for example African studies, 2002; Ayengbo et al., 2012, Chinnammai, 2005; Ibrahim, 2013; Sundaram, Schwank, & von Arnim, 2011) – is that this substructure of capitalism and free trade has gradually become universal in the light of historical events such as the fall of the Berlin wall so that there now seems 'no alternative' to capitalism and its politics.

Although there is not universal agreement about when or how the process of globalisation started, there is a greater consensus that its manifestation today is expressed as a heightened acceleration of time and space (Held & McGrew, 2000; Odora Hoppers, 2006; Preece, 2009). Technology, as Jarvis (2007) emphasises, is the main driver of this acceleration which has affected travel, cultural exchanges, communication, the marketing and consumption of products, access to raw materials and environmental changes. The need to go on learning quickly and frequently in order to keep pace with this fast moving world has become the driving force for lifelong learning agendas among those closest to the sub structure. Knowledge and information are now commodities to sell on a global scale. What counts as valuable knowledge or information is decided largely by the substructure and the competitive process of marketing learning content is a divide and rule process. A new vocabulary of learning content has been orchestrated to include such words as skills, competencies, knowledge society, learning society. Through this process of distilling what counts as lifelong learning, governments have been encouraged to develop policies that will facilitate a new approach to learning, skills, and competencies and what counts as valuable learning in order to accommodate and respond to capitalism and the market. International corporations seek out new markets and sources of cheap labour in order to sell their commodities as competitively as possible. Learning and education are now part of this market.

This, in short, is the basis of Peter Jarvis's (2007) argument. Countries around the globe have responded to the new lifelong learning agenda in different ways. National policies do reflect national priorities and cultural resistances, but the trend is towards a vocational skills based development agenda that narrowly defines learning as a transient commodity to serve the market. Although there are many individual academic resistances to this discourse (see for example Tikly, 2007) it is argued that they rarely dominate nation state agendas.

Jarvis also acknowledges that the world is a highly unequal entity. Within nation states, including America itself, statistics reveal extremes of inequalities whereby the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer (Jarvis, 2007). This happens at individual, social and cultural levels in spite of the lifelong learning agenda, implying that only those who have benefitted previously from educational opportunities are likely to benefit or take part in such opportunities in the future. The further one is away from the core sub structure, the less influence one has on lifelong learning discourses.

A number of reviews (Guo, 2010; Hunt, 2008; Mateuszkli, 2015; St. Clair, 2009) have broadly accepted Jarvis's description of globalisation. Some are pessimistic about Jarvis's suggestion that a more humanistic approach to learning would be sufficient to counteract or 'correct the fatal ills of globalisation' (e.g. Guo, 2010, p. 210). St.Clair (2009) comments on

Jarvis' lack of attention to gender or cultural perspectives. Mateuszkli (2015), on the other hand, is critical of his negative stance towards the focus of lifelong learning on employability, arguing that, in the European context at least, lifelong learning has opened doors for many young people in the labour market.

Furthermore, while many countries in Europe are identified as responding to the European Union's largely economistic and vocationally oriented lifelong learning, there is evidence that separate European interventions have also influenced this agenda so that a lesser, but nevertheless constant strand of embracing social inclusion and citizenship remains within the European lifelong learning discourse (Field, 2005). Individual European countries such as Finland have retained a cultural flavour to their lifelong learning policies (Jarvis, 2007). There have been many reflections in the International Journal of Lifelong Education and other journals regarding the way in which lifelong learning policy has been interpreted. In some cases, such as Japan, there is evidence of a prevailing national culture which initially resisted but finally complied with the dominant vocationalist agenda (Kawachi, 2008; Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2006). In other cases, it is clear that the sub structure power relationship is pulling national policy discourses closer to the centre, so that the market approach to learning prevails (BM für Wirtschaft, Familie und Jugend,2011 [Austria], Federal Government, 2008 [Germany] Norwegian Ministry of Education & Research, 2006).

Lifelong learning in Africa today

The literature from African writers suggests a more marginalised perspective. Africa is highlighted as economically one of the poorest continents in the world (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2014). Sub Saharan Africa has one of the lowest Human Development Index values (p. 33) and highest health and education inequality rankings in the world (p. 37). As such it is largely a recipient rather than a key player in the globalised world of lifelong learning. In that respect Jarvis's description of globalisation concurs with much of the African literature on this subject (see for example Ikeme, 2000; Ajayi, 2003; Akindele, Gidado, & Olaopo, 2002; Oyelaran-Oyeyinka, 2004). Of primary concern, for lifelong learning and education, is the exploitation of African education institutions and learners as customers to buy western educational materials. The digital divide between the 'north' and 'south' is one of the prevailing concerns of educationists in the 'south'. The limitations of ICT infrastructure across Africa have strong implications for accessibility to formal learning opportunities and the qualifications they present. While figures change significantly every year, the World Bank (2004) reported that in 2004 Internet users in Sub-Saharan Africa were just 1.5% compared with 11.7% in Europe and Central Asia. African Internet users in 2015 were 9.8%, but worldwide they were 90.2% (PEW Research Center, 2015). Even when ICT is available, as a learning tool, most information via the Internet is not culturally sensitive or relevant to the majority of learner needs in the South so that it becomes a new form of 'cultural imperialism' (Chinnammai, 2005, p. 19).

However, Jarvis's assertion (2006) that there 'has been a common movement to introduce lifelong learning in order to provide an educated workforce to take its place in the global knowledge economy' has not yet concurred with the reality of the lifelong learning discourse in most of Africa, or, more generally 'the south'. The 'south' in this context refers largely to those nation states that have been in receipt of development aid since their former colonisers

withdrew direct control over the countries' affairs during the 1960s and 1970s. (South Africa has a different timeframe due to its apartheid history but is included in this nomenclature).

Although there is evidence of ongoing within-country and pan-African discussions about lifelong learning since the 1970s (Nyerere, 1967; UNESCO, 1998 for example), lifelong learning as a fundable concept was slow to emerge in the South. While the 1990s and early part of the new millennium produced a flurry of policies and literature in Europe that addressed this topic, countries in the South were grappling with more restrictive development aid criteria that contradicted the notion of learning throughout life. The emphasis throughout the first 15 years of the twenty-first century was on attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which were constructed by the World Bank and IMF and ratified by member states in 2000. These goals focused on universal primary education and basic literacy (Medel An˜onuevo, 2006; Preece, 2009; Torres, 2003). These were identified as the basic requisites for the first MDG which aimed to reduce poverty by 50%. Funding for development aid dependent countries ignored the broader discourse of lifelong learning that was gathering momentum in other parts of the world. As a result, few African policies or development plans paid attention to lifelong learning. Where the concept was included in policy statements, this was in the context of literacy or, at best, post literacy (Aitcheson & Alidou, 2008; Government of Lesotho, 2005; Openjuru, 2011).

Although few countries in Africa have formally recognised adult education, non-formal education or lifelong learning policies, they are often evident in draft format, as is the case in Lesotho (Braimoh, 2000; UNESCO Commission Lesotho, 2008). The Government of Namibia rather more exceptionally produced an adult education policy which positioned adult education within lifelong learning (Ministry of Basic Education, Sport & Culture, 2003). But here the term is given a general sweep without reference to the multitude of contexts and associated parameters such as issues of equity, civic participation, understanding of the globalised world, etc.:

> Adult learning is part of the wider concept of lifelong learning, which refers to all learning activities undertaken throughout life, in many different venues. The concept covers the continuum of early childhood development, primary and secondary school, higher education, vocational training and adult learning. It provides the basis for comprehensive policies for the development of education and training systems. (p. 3)

In spite of the above trends, the South African Development Community (SADC) established a committee for lifelong learning as early as 1994. It formed a definition which reflected the contextual needs for lifelong education (significantly education, rather than learning was the focus of this definition) which included basic literacy but which also endeavoured to respect a more communitarian (as opposed to societal, in Jarvis's terms) notion of what learning was for. The way in which its humanistic philosophical differences compared with the European Memorandum and the European Union's subsequent documents on lifelong learning have been highlighted previously (Preece, 2006, 2009). However, the SADC definition had no policy mandate and the committee itself had no funds so that the definition and its implications received little attention outside of academia. Nevertheless, it will be seen later that the recent South African White Paper (Department of Higher Education & Training [DHET], 2013) offers a new impetus for lifelong learning that reflects this broader definition.

The substructure and its influence on African lifelong learning policy

A postcolonial perspective provides a lens to analyse selected African Government development plans and policy statements which reveal the tensions described by Jarvis (2007) as a push-pull power relationship between governments and the Americanised sub-structure. Postcolonialism has been described by Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2000), among others, as an approach to deconstruct the colonial narrative so that it is exposed for its dispossession, oppression, control and cultural exploitation of formerly colonised lands. Colonialism is now seen as 'coterminous with the development of a modern capitalist system of economic exchange' (p. 46) whereby the colonies were established primarily to supply raw materials to their colonisers. Imperialism can be seen as a modern form of colonialism without the physical settlement of one country into a distant territory (Tikly 2007). The postcolonialist project draws heavily on poststructuralism, such as Foucault's (1980) notions of power, discourse and knowledge, and concept of historicity which focuses on the re-telling of history by those whose voices have been silenced in the past. Jarvis (2007) also refers to Foucault in his discussion of the role of power in globalisation. The postcolonial lens, therefore, is a tool to re-narrativise the experience of colonisation or imperialism from the viewpoint of the colonised. In terms of the postcolonial era, that is the era when, ostensibly, nations in the South are self governed, the postcolonial lens can de-construct dominant narratives to show how colonisation is continuing, albeit in a more subtle way. So, for example, texts that speak in the name of development and assistance by using words such as 'beneficiaries' can be exposed for their textual silences which fail to recognise the impact of globalisation on poverty creation rather than its reduction (Biccum, 2005).

Two examples are briefly mentioned here. They illustrate how tensions between the global substructure and superstructures are played out in policy documents at a national level. They have been discussed in more detail in an article in the International Journal of Educational Development (Preece, 2013). As a background explanation, all African Governments in receipt of development aid have been required to develop national visions, poverty reduction strategy papers and Education Sector Plans, particularly since the year 2000.

The Tanzanian response stands out because of its historical grounding in Julius Nyerere's seminal Arusha Declaration of 1967 where he outlined his adult education vision of 'ujamaa', for self reliance and social cohesion through a socialist philosophy of national development. In the face of ongoing structural adjustment policy demands by the World Bank during the oil crisis of the 1970s and 1980s which impacted on development aid to African countries, Tanzania's policies were radically altered. By the new millennium the text of the government's Vision 2025 (United Republic of Tanzania [URT], 2002) was unashamedly neo-liberal:

> We are standing at the threshold of the twenty-first Century, a Century that will be characterised by competition, … advanced technological capacity, high productivity, modern and efficient transport and communication infrastructure … we must, as a Nation … withstand the expected intensive economic competition ahead of us (United Republic of Tanzania [URT], 2002, Foreword).

In this vision document the words 'competition' and 'competitiveness' occur at least 11 times in the first section alone. The document openly dismisses and rejects past practices because of their failure to embrace a market led economy. The aspired for 'well educated and learning society' must now embrace 'the competitive spirit' (Section 1.2.3). This is the strategic

document that was written in order to attract development aid. However, it is interesting to note that subsequent, government led Education Sector Plans (Ministry for Education & Culture, 2004; Ministry of Vocational Education & Training, 2008) provide a more holistic vision for lifelong learning within the context of adult and non-formal education. The challenges to address are not articulated so much in competitive or market led terms, but rather as social concerns. So the aims of education are to address gender, environmental issues, citizenship, health and governance, as well as economic development. The articulated strategy for making this provision draws once more on Nyerere's communitarian heritage of village committees and community ownership of lifelong learning (Preece, 2013). This suggests that the Tanzanian state agenda is complex. While it appears to play to the discursive demands of the substructure, at local (superstructure) level, it shifts its aims and priorities to accommodate national discourses, thus reflecting the localised 'passive' resistances that Jarvis (2007, p. 47) referred to in his description of the global sub and superstructure.

We can see similar challenges of purpose vis a vis the demands of development aid agendas in Lesotho. In this case, Lesotho's Vision 2020 document (Government of Lesotho [GOL], 2001) barely disguises its cultural resistance to neoliberalism. Although the Vision includes reference to a 'healthy and well-developed human resource base' with a strong economy (p. 1), it retains strong references to its: 'cherished norms and values that will enhance a sense of belonging, identity and pride in every Mosotho … [and its] common cultural heritage' (p. 5). These values include concepts such as 'living in harmony' 'love' and 'fair distribution of income and wealth'. Concepts such as 'donor conditionalities' are openly discussed as threats: 'It is a challenge for Lesotho to sustain internationally accepted prudent levels in terms of debt service ratio' (p. 16), thus leaving the reader in no doubt that the vision document has been subject to externally imposed rationalities. Furthermore, there are indications that Lesotho's draft non-formal education policy document was also de-railed by the World Bank, thus contributing to the failure to ratify it as a formal policy (Preece, 2013, p. 102):

> Such examples of donor interference mean that policies for lifelong learning are minimized and de-culturalised in these contexts, even when there is evidence of internal country resistances. The inevitable effect is to weaken governmentality of policy, potentially raising new spaces for subversion, disorganization and subsequent implementation failures.

The effects of the substructure are visible, therefore, at a textual and implementation level in these examples. However, in spite of Jarvis' pessimism as articulated in 2007, and these examples of fettered cultural resistance by the superstructure to the forces of convergence and control by the substructure of globalisation, there are indications that resistances within and across the superstructures can make a difference, albeit in a distilled fashion, so that the sub-structure is not entirely impenetrable. Since 2015 a new global focus for lifelong learning is emerging slowly. This is a result of a complex interaction of international players who have capitalised on the very information technology resources of globalisation itself. Jarvis highlights (2007, p. 49, citing Habermas) concerns of 'forced adaptation' to external pressures by national politics – as reflected in the above documents. He emphasises that economically poor countries cannot refuse to cooperate with dominant influences because of the threat of withdrawal of economic or other investment support, although governments may try to modify global pressure within their nation states. Although he does, three pages later, recognise that there is potential for international resistance in the form of social movements that can seek to work against cultural standardisation from the core, this potential

is referred to as a tension and the argument is not expanded. The power of technology as a re-unifying force, therefore, is not fully explored in this respect. An example of one resistance which arguably impacted on the new globally affirmed sustainable development goals is discussed below.

New resistances

For the post 2015 development agenda a substantive consultation process took place during 2012 and 2013 via the United Nations with the establishment of a High Level Panel of Eminent Persons (HLPEP) and eleven thematic discussions, one of which was Education, resulting in a report to the United Nations Secretary General in May 2013 (UN, 2013).

Parallel to these discussions there were campaigns to raise the profile of lifelong learning and sustainable development issues. The 2012 world conference on Sustainable Development (SD), Rio+20, which followed the UNESCO World Conference on Education for SD in 2009, resulted in a new call for a global agenda (UNCSD, 2012). During the same period the UNESCO institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) produced its second Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE). This report monitors progress since the 2008 UNESCO CONFINTEA VI world conference on adult education. It highlights the role of adult education, from literacy as a foundation for lifelong learning upwards, in contributing to sustainable development (UIL, 2013). The International Council of Adult Education (ICAE), a key international non-governmental organisation, played a major coordinating role in organising relevant civil society responses to these UN activities and documents through conferences and virtual exchanges. The ICAE focus was on the role of education and LLL as a central feature of all development goals in contributing to the world we want to live in (Icae2.org, 2013). Lifelong learning is recognised here as an overarching framework for continuous learning, in which adult education plays a major role. Education is the means through which lifelong learning is nurtured, and the concept of sustainability is dominating many international agendas (UN, 2013; UNESCO, 2014).

Africa focused publications also played their part. UNESCO's (2006) Draft Strategy of Education for Sustainable Development in Sub Saharan Africa emphasised the need for 'critical thinking' (item 23) and 'endogenous' content, drawing on 'culture and positive local values' (item 16). Hoppers and Yekhlef (2012) prepared a paper for the Association for Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) meeting in Burkina Faso. They drew heavily on a working paper by Walters, Yang, and Roslander (2012) on lifelong learning and skills which was prepared for the same event. They also emphasised the need for interdisciplinarity and a holistic curriculum, thus taking us once more away from an economistic focus for learning. In addition to critical thinking, recommended pedagogical practices included recognition of 'local wisdom and experience' (2012, p. 18). Many of these debates can be interpreted as resistances but they do not always filter down into policy agendas of course. Nevertheless there are small indications of some impact on the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The new SDGs which came into being in 2016 to replace the timed-out MDGs have, after considerable lobbying, adopted new goals. One of these is a goal for lifelong learning (goal 4). Although the targets are heavily weighted towards vocational skills learning, one target provides a more holistic vision:

> By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development (UN.org, 2015).

The above publications (e.g. Hoppers & Yekhlef, 2012; UNESCO, 2006) illustrate that the multidimensional development needs of a continent such as Africa cannot afford to focus on purely economistic agendas in the face of broader social welfare and governance issues. This new SDG has inserted a chink in the armour of the dominant, economistic and vocationalist discourse of the core sub structure for lifelong learning. It can perhaps be argued that this chink is enabled by another core substructure discourse of security and the market. Only stable and peaceful nation states are useful outlets for market expansion, but the opportunity to re-narrativise the needs of the 'south' in order to address these market needs has created new discursive spaces for a more humanistic agenda. Some African governments are now developing adult and lifelong learning policies, often linked to sustainable development goals. South Africa is a case in point.

South Africa and recent lifelong learning policy

In the context of South Africa this shifting substructure agenda (through the SDGs) has provided a window of opportunity to develop a broad and holistic framework for learning that moves beyond the purely vocational agenda. Within the African continent the country is comparatively well resourced with a road infrastructure and industrial base that provides opportunities for external investment. But South Africa is contextualised by its apartheid legacy which still prevails at all sectors of society, 22 years after the introduction of democracy. It is one of the most unequal and crime-ridden societies in the world with levels of unemployment approaching 40% for young people (Department of Higher Education & Training [DHET], 2013; The Presidency, 2012). As a consequence its National Development Plan highlights the need for an active citizenry alongside economic growth, drawing on the notion of capabilities – to lead the lives that people have reason to value (Sen, 1999) as a driving force for development. Welfare and the economy are thus partnership concepts in the Development Plan. Although the Plan unashamedly complies with a neoliberal agenda of competitiveness, increased trade and diversifying its commodities, this is framed within a context of efforts to address crime, corruption, inequalities, poor accountability, uneven health and education systems and community empowerment.

The government's subsequent White Paper on Post School Education and Training (Department of Higher Education & Training [DHET], 2013) provides an interesting comparison to the policy focus of lifelong learning strategies of other countries such as Mauritius and Kenya (See the strategy papers listed by UNESCO UIL, 2015). There are similarities of intent to develop a coordinated lifelong education framework with seamless qualification articulations between the different sectors. Issues of inclusion in terms of ethnicity, gender and disability are supported by efforts to expand learning opportunities and diversify modes of provision, including the expansion of e-technology and sharing of institutional resources. The emphasis in the South African context is now on developing 'home-grown' materials, rather than importing from overseas institutions, with a view to building a relevant curriculum and avoiding exploitation by foreign institutions. The significant departure

from the dominant lifelong learning agenda for this White Paper, however, is the focus on community as a learning resource and a learning activity.

> Communities also have learning needs which are not catered for by the current public education and training institutions. These include areas such as: community health care; parenting and childcare; early childhood development; care for the aged; care for those with HIV/AIDS and other diseases; citizenship education; community organisation; making effective use of new consumer technologies for various purposes such as seeking information or marketing local products; skills for self-employment in a range of areas, from market gardening to small-scale manufacture, arts and crafts. The state has a responsibility to meet these needs to the best of its ability. (Department of Higher Education & Training [DHET], 2013, p. 20)

South Africa's tradition of popular education during its apartheid years to raise critical consciousness has created a space of resistance to the substructure which picks up some of the discourses of ICAE and other aforementioned debates: 'Following on this tradition, the post-1994 education and training framework embraced the concept of lifelong learning, recognising that learning takes place throughout a person's life and in many forms.' (ibid, p. 20). A new institutional type, called the community college is envisaged, whereby adult learning is facilitated in all its forms, but with a primary focus on youth and adults who may never have attended formal schooling. Community engagement and graduate community service are also enshrined in higher education as part of its core mission. So the non-formal sector and its focus on citizen and social education are embraced in the White paper as part of a drive for cooperation between institutions and providers to deliver a broad range of learning opportunities.

As with all new policies, the implementation of such ambitious schemes has yet to be realised. But in the face of the neo-liberal and economistic drive for convergence, this development plan and the earlier influences on the new sustainable development goals, suggest that there are still effective cultural resistances in the superstructure – at national and cross-national levels – that are able to localise the globalisation discourses. South Africa sees itself as an influential player on the African continent. If its policy aims succeed in being implemented they have potential for widening the window of opportunity for other African nations to follow suit.

Peter Jarvis wrote his book before the end of the first decade of the new millennium. There is plenty of evidence to show that many of his concerns and arguments have been realised. For instance, his concern that resistances may emerge in the form of fundamentalist terrorist activities (p. 51) is evident in the escalation of attacks in France such as the Charlie Hebdo shooting in 2015. Within Africa, such acts of terror continue to plague the continent (Swart, 2016). Similarly the standardisation effect of on-line courses, and even universities that are imported from advanced industrialised countries into the 'south' is evident in international agreements such as the Masters Degree in Health Care Management provided by the University of Luton in the UK with Regent College, South Africa. It is also evident that incentives for foreign investment in economically less self sufficient countries benefit the investor at the expense of autonomy for the 'beneficiary' (Chinnammai, 2005).

Nevertheless, there are also indications in this second decade that resistances can still make a difference, albeit somewhat filtered. From a postcolonial perspective, discourses for change are often reinscribed by the hegemonic filter of benevolence. The lifelong learning SDG that argues for global citizenship, respect for diversity and a culture of peace is potentially susceptible to re-interpretation so that it only serves a market agenda. Indeed,

Jarvis himself re-iterates this point when he states that previous aspirational changes of adult educators only 'emerged when the social conditions were right for them, which was when advanced capitalism needed them' (2007, p. 63). However, the wording of that SDG is also a reflection of the potential power of a resistant discourse that builds on the needs of advanced capitalism to position more humanistic agendas. The fact that the market requires a stable and educated workforce, and wider populations that can afford to buy an extended range of products, can be turned to advantage in the struggle for change. The South African White Paper has reintroduced a community education focus into the national platform for skills and business development by drawing on the discourse of equity and redress. Agenda setting international donor agencies such as the World Bank are unable to sustain an exclusviely economistic agenda in the light of these concerns because security (in terms of conflict and the effects of environmental disasters, for example) is now a global threat to that most protected of agendas for multinational companies. The International Council for Adult Education is one example of a global alternative voice for adult learning which uses both virtual and physical space to infiltrate these opportunity cracks in the substructure. It is argued here, therefore that the substructure power can be subverted; resistances, if used strategically, still have the potential to make a difference.

Summary

This paper has outlined Peter Jarvis's substructure and superstructure model of globalisation and commented on how it reflects, to a large extent, the views of African academics. It has also provided two text-based illustrations of how the power relationship between the two structures can manifest themselves at national policy level. However, the paper also argues that the superstructure forces can use the very resources of globalisation to mobilise for change. The indications are that for lifelong learning, there has been some enhancement of scale that has contributed to shifting discourses about the role and purpose of lifelong learning to include a more humanistic response to contemporary issues. Such responses may not have eroded the hard core discourse of capitalism, but they may have softened the intent at the edges. It remains to be seen whether the new rhetoric can be sustained at implementation levels.

Disclosure statement

Notes on contributor

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