



The History of Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR) and her Place in the Study of the Social Sciences in Africa

Stanley Baluku Bakahinga Mbalibulha*¹

Abstract

Following the research steps of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute which started in 1937, three new research institutes were formed in the British Empire viz. The East African Institute of Social Research (later re-named Makerere Institute of Social Research [MISR]); The West African Institute of Social Research (WAISER) and the West Indies Institute of Social Research (WIISR). This expansion in knowledge production had its own logic and history as well as links to the deepening studies in social sciences, especially anthropology. Over the years, the Institute at Makerere has continued with a fledgling relationship with Makerere University with which it shares a history since 1948. We attempt to place the institute within a history; a history of social science knowledge production; a history of an endogenous institute attempting to attain indigeneity and space.

Résumé

Pour emboiter le pas en matière de recherche à l'Institut Rhodes-Livingstone qui a vu le jour en 1937, trois nouveaux instituts de recherche ont été créés dans l'empire britannique. Il s'agit de l'Institut Est-africain de recherche en sciences sociales (plus tard rebaptisé l'Institut de Recherche en Sciences Sociales de l'Université Makerere [MISR]); L'Institut ouest-africain de recherche en sciences sociales (WAISER) et de l'Institut des Antilles pour la recherche en sciences sociales (WIISR). Cette expansion de la production de la connaissance a sa propre logique et sa propre histoire et contribue à l'approfondissement des études en sciences sociales, en particulier l'anthropologie. Au fil des ans, l'Institut Makerere a continué à entretenir un

* Researcher, Italian Ethnological Mission to Equatorial Africa based, University of Turin, Italy.
Email: stanbal2002@yahoo.com

début de relations avec l'Université Makerere avec laquelle il vit une histoire commune depuis 1948. Nous essayons de placer l'institut au cœur d'une histoire : une histoire de production de connaissances en sciences sociales ; l'histoire d'un institut local en quête d'indigénéité et d'espace.

Introduction

Social Science research appeared in Africa around the same time as colonial rule and often, the earliest amateur researcher who documented African custom and community life were either traders, explorers or colonial rulers. The research landscape remained disorganized until the founding of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute of Social Research (RLI) [now the Zambia Institute of Social Research]. The RLI became a model of research success and influenced the Colonial Social Sciences Research Council to push for more of such institutes across the waning British Empire (in East Africa, West Africa and the West Indies) eleven years after the founding of the RLI. On the Makerere hill, just on the outskirts of Kampala, a research institute, dealing with social sciences, was started in 1948. The hill was also the site of Makerere College (yet to become a University College in 1950 and later University College for East Africa in 1963 [after Independence] and finally Makerere University in 1970). Thus, MISR shared the same geographical as well as academic space with Makerere University but with the latter educating Africans at home while the former provided space for 'expatriate' researchers whose products were less consumed in Africa than in the metropolises. We sought to interrogate whether the institute was really African by merely being located in Africa or whether it measured (through its history) to the gold standard in research. That the institute weathered independence and its attendant Africanisation rhetoric as well as the post-independence upheavals [such as Idi Amin) makes MISR an important area of study on its own merit. Besides, current efforts at MISR to resuscitate its life underlines the impetus of social research as it negotiates away from non-conventional cultures of research. However, the changing political situation in East Africa also affected the institutes' changing fortunes and posed constant challenges to its progress and existence. We therefore undertake a review of the institute's existence since 1948.

Observations and Reflections: A Research Institute/Institution as a Space

After World War II, social science research institutes emerged in the colonial world (Schumaker 2001; Werbner 1984) possibly as a gamble in the refiguring of the empire. The spectacle that sparked off the development of research institutes as a 'fashion' and African studies programmes within African universities and the west was occasioned by the spontaneous need for in-depth research and the desire to spur higher education in colonial territories (Onwauwa 1993). There ensued a discourse on the depth of engagement of

the institutes in both teaching and research; two core elements that define a university. The role of the university in newly independent African states (Sicherman 2005; Wandira 1977; Yesufu 1973) became debatable as well. This article seeks to examine the history of the institute within the ambit of its relationship with Makerere University in the light of research work and the extent of its relationship with the state (colonial and neo-colonial) [Mills, 2006]. An argument can be posed over attempts by MISR to claim autonomy from Makerere and the desire to control the 'shrinking' geography where field sites were located; sites that had no contact with the university. The challenges that affected Makerere affected the 'marginal' MISR (Macpherson 1964; Mamdani 2007) over the mutuality of identity and intellectual territory such as the formation of the University College of East Africa and, its subsequent break-up in 1970. The paper also interrogates the category of 'African' and argues that research institutes in Africa as well as universities carry this tag based on an archaic colonial stereotype. We shall argue, using MISR as a case study, that the critical space of the research institute in African Universities is often a misconceived and ambiguously [mis]understood allowing such institutes to remain starved of critical support from donors leading ultimately to low productivity and an eventual collapse into the knowledge-irrelevant sphere of consultancies.

After months of research at Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR), I started to question the location of a research institute in an 'African' University. The term 'African University' has become dominant in the postcolonial intellectual discourse and, in simple terms, refers to a University that has increasingly become sensitive to the needs of the individual state [at least in Africa], the African nation and also the African 'community'; hence nothing more than a nationalistic entity. This meaning could also refer to a *quality*, synonymous with Africa that in Europe and America could mean 'inferior in global standards'. Authors were quick to point out the sense of pride associated with an African university (Wandira 1977; Yesufu 1973), more as a champion of the African cause (liberation, promotion of African culture, Africanisation of western knowledge systems etc.) but less to the furtherance of African knowledge systems and achieving parity with universities elsewhere. The University in Africa had played heavily in promoting what Ibrahim Abdullah has termed 'silences' over African knowledge systems (Depelchin 2004, preface). The question therefore is whether there is an 'African University' as a distinct category with a unique and a typical knowledge system that, without its frailties, measures against a global system and therefore renders pride to this term. Taken in the light of what Sicherman (2005) has referred to as 'Becoming an African University' referring to Makerere's development over the decades and yet making peripheral mention of MISR, I examine the question of 'African' in the light of the principal pillar of the University as a knowledge

producing space and therefore premised on *research* with a research institute as the pivot of research efforts. Research can be contained within a broader University curriculum (theses and dissertations, occasional papers, publications in peer-reviewed journals, public lectures, seminars, workshops, dissemination lectures, journals, books, publishing, colloquia etc) or be a specialized field, located within a research institute such as Makerere Institute of Social Research where a cohort of specialized researchers (visiting professors, readers, fellows, affiliates, associates etc.) work on topical and thematic fields with less encumbrance of constant teaching occasioned by mainstream university work.

It is the former that has shrouded the later due to the ever changing national aspirations and the shifting interpretations over the roles of universities in addition to the politicization of knowledge production in the postcolonial state (Government of Uganda 1970). Consideration of research at Universities has been largely confined to the main line of curriculum embedded research without due thought about it as a distinct professional field, replete with an institution, a space where research knowledge is assembled, produced and disseminated. This has relegated the products to nothing more than plagiarized pieces with little originality. Of course, the information is collected from the field and therefore the institute has to have a field (Schumaker 2001) with isolated entities and informants that are basically the source of knowledge (often considered as raw data) and, besides a library for purposes of referencing, bibliographic research, corroboration and a reserve for researches conducted earlier on. The institute/centre provides a space for critical thinking, stimulating debates in sharing research experiences, dissemination of organized knowledge and planning further research into territories hitherto unknown or needing new interrogation or correcting and filling up gaps in earlier researches. These institutes also become repositories for the knowledge gathered and also as bases for affiliated researchers with intentions to carry out deep research and produce monographs or theses to complete their advanced degrees. Why do they appear as silent spaces in the discourse of the University in Africa?

The current African landscape is related to every university having a research centre, albeit weak, in one or more of the disciplines, be it social sciences, natural sciences or pure sciences etc that has become a checklist for contemporariness. The visibility of the university is currently related to how much output, in knowledge terms, a University sends out. For instance, the 2010 Webometrics ranking provided a space for pride as well as self-reflection for universities in Africa. Apart from being on the marginal fringes of knowledge production, a ranking that put African universities at a distance from their Western counterparts, the rankings showed where in Africa knowledge was a serious consideration; South Africa and Egypt. The university's 2009 African rank of 15th caused celebration at Makerere with such poignant claims of 'the

Harvard of Africa' (<http://www.jamiiforums.com/jukwaa-la-elimu-education-forum/52886-makerere-university-goes-top-in-the-region.html> 09 Sep., 2011), which alludes to the shadow image, low, palpable and remote ranking African universities have had to accept. The ranking, based on internet visibility of publications, became euphoric when in 2010; the ranking improved to eighth position with questions such as 'how has your unit helped Makerere to achieve the lofty rank?' (<http://newvision.co.ug/D/8/13/751088>, 09 Sep., 2011). This brings us to another question, whether the concept of 'African University' does mean competitiveness in terms of global standards that will finally see an African university ranked better than most of her western counterparts or with African or national counterparts. The survey ranked 500 African universities and globally, Makerere positioned 2,685th out of 8,000 universities ranked! In exploring the university, it is without question that the earliest universities were located in Africa. Earlier African knowledge systems still awe many scholars but the modern university is and remains a colonial project, not the continuation or renaissance of the ancient 'golden age' of Timbuktu (Jeppie and Diagne 2004).

Makerere Institute of Social Research

Makerere University Institute of Social Research (MISR) in Uganda started as the East African Institute of Social Research (EAISR) in 1948. This name was changed to Makerere Institute of Social Research in 1967/8 (Makerere Institute of Social Research 1968). It was the second colonial research institute in sub-Saharan Africa after the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute in Northern Rhodesia. This emphasized the deep desire for social research and its impetus to the colonial authorities (Worthington 1968:40). In subsequent years numerous other institutes have been established in Africa, including the West African Institute of Social and Economic Research (WAISER) at Ibadan and the West Indies Institute for Social and Economic Research at George University in the Caribbean which has since closed plus other institutes at various universities formed after decolonization.² In recent years in particular there have been a growing number of social research institutes established at universities all over Africa. Similarly, centres and institutes of African Studies have become hallmarks of major universities in the Europe and America dealing with African studies. It remains interesting to understand why Africa continues to form an important subject of study, a field from which 'raw' data is collected and 'analysed' in 'research' centres located in the west. In effect, Africa constitutes the field and the west the research and knowledge producing centre. The position of the African university as well as the research centres is therefore space for mere knowledge outposts for the west.

The East African Institute of Social Research/Makerere Institute of Social Research was the pioneer in the institutionalising of social research in sub-

Saharan Africa and was graced by prominent social and political scientists as well as historians such as Audrey Isabel Richards, (Ardener 1992; La Fontaine et al.1972), Lloyd A. Fallers, Aidan Southall, Derek Stenning, and Ali Mazrui, etc.³ The attainment of independence in East Africa critically occasioned a divide moment between the 'golden' and ebbing phases of the institute in terms of research productivity. The presence or absence and the role of such an institute in a postcolonial dispensation formed a not so important question for former colonial territories as research was not a national priority, especially the social type indulging in disciplines such as anthropology. Kuper (1999:143) has rightly observed that such institutions underwent cataclysmic transformations upon the attainment of what Sicherman (2005, preface) has termed 'flag' independence by new nations. Kuper's observation stresses the changes that came with the dawn of independence, but these were not the only changes as the entry of American financing of social research with a cohort of American anthropologists had already marked an important scholarly and disciplinary shift during the late colonial period (Goody 1995:26-52; Mills 2006:94; Shumaker 2001:28). These changes have largely been neglected in narratives of African scholarship.

The vision of starting the institute remained an ambiguity to many. Already, the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) was having complications related to the post-war dynamics when Turner, the Principal of Makerere suggested that the University needed a social studies research institute to cater for both the pedagogical needs of the college, and to provide the much needed information about the different cultures spread all over East Africa. Besides, the Colonial Social Sciences Research Council became interested in institutes in a post-war colonial project in which the empire was at stake given the decline of Britain and emergence of the USA as a super power (Nwauwa 1993). The colonial system desired an alternative think-tank to provide and generate ideas on how best to govern and therefore preserve the hegemony over a former empire as a strategic imperative. Colonial research institutes were to provide the missing intellectual gap. Audrey Richards⁴ and Max Gluckman⁵ visited Makerere College in 1944 and endorsed the starting of the institute, giving it a lifeline of direct funding from the colonial research funds under line R.85 and R.144 within the budgetary allocations for Makerere University (Stanner c.1949). The institute was therefore to develop ambiguously within Makerere University but the research needs and the immediacy thereto aroused questions from Dr. Stanner, the first director who eventually resigned in early 1950: questions that remain of resounding and critical value till date.

Stanner questioned the rationale of having the institute at Makerere rather than Nairobi, with the latter having a more ambient 'pro-white' climate and more so, having a huge regional research consortium to which social science research would be an addition. He exposed the underlying gaps in the proposal

to have an institute at Makerere *vis a vis* the research needs of both the East African territories as well as Makerere University's pedagogical needs, the possibility of having the well trained researchers, the slow development of the institute in tandem with Makerere's development plan, the lack of basic facilities such as accommodation as well as the research needs of the CSSRC which were not at all tenable with the earlier two. The idea of the institute had not been hers but Audrey Richards', who had been denied a directorship at RLI on account of being a woman, became the suitable replacement in 1950.

Re-orientation of the Research Landscape

Quick changes emanated from the colonial policies that were closely linked to the global geo-political situation that geared towards decolonisation in the post-World War II years. They were also related to the individual and official dispositions of colonial administrators towards social research generally. The Institute was started under the directorships of active anthropologists such as Audrey Richards and Lloyd Fallers, busy in the field and producing large quantities of hitherto unknown information, remapping the ethnological map of East Africa and running very productive inter-disciplinary and cross-institutional conferences.⁶ At the dawn of independence, the institute was made to take up the outlook of the new state, as well as to assume the new role of becoming a beacon of African nationalist political thought, closely allied to political economy and agricultural development plus economics, a circuit referred to as Marxist thought. Six years after independence, African directors took over from their departing white counterparts at MISR and an increasing number of African scholars were sought. The former were not anthropologists but mainly sociologists, political scientists and historians. Scholarship was thus transformed or according to Schumacher (2001:8), 'Africanised'. Along this line, disciplinary outlines/syllabus at Makerere changed from anthropology to sociology, economics and political science, which the MISR fellows offering teaching services were made to adopt (Sathyamurthy 1973:557-579).

There was degeneration in research output that can be approximated to 1967. This development was closely related to geo-political and educational developments in East Africa, a development that had not been envisaged at the start of the Institute. This included but was not limited to individual state philosophies and research needs in which Makerere, which had hitherto been a University of East Africa saw the emergence of former constituent colleges in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam as independent universities seeking to establish their own research agenda and thus their own independent institutes. Besides, sensing that independence may affect research, the British established an alternate British Institute in East Africa that finally settled in Nairobi after stints at the Uganda Museum and at the University of Dar es Salaam from 1958 to 1963. The British Institute in East

Africa's agenda remained at the service of largely European (British) scholars with a deep orientation towards archaeology and not anthropology.

There remains a need to explore the wider fieldwork hinterland and the networks of the Institute and present a deeper history through documenting its rich and productive life.⁷ This hinterland diminished with the changes in the regional politics. Over time, fieldwork sites were concentrated, more and more, near the institute. The lesser the concentration of fieldwork in areas distant from the institute the more evident it became that the original geographical extent which covered much of present East Africa and Nyasaland had been gradually reduced. Rich bi-annual conferences were rotated amongst institutions in the three East African colonies and also benefitted from occasional presentations from IRSAC, a social research institute based in francophone Rwanda.⁸ Thus without considering the ambivalence of the other East African colonies (not excluding Uganda and, Makerere University itself) towards the institute, major studies were in the centre of Uganda, closer to the institute. The institute can therefore be considered as more than a mere outpost of colonial social science research, but as an important African knowledge producing institution with social research centrifugally and centripetally arranged around its *topos* location at Makerere.

MISR'S research history did not escape what came to be called 'the South African Paradigm' (Bart-Gewald 2005:460) when, not only fleeing scholars from South Africa found home at the institute, but brought a South African influence in research systems in Africa beyond South Africa.⁹ Thus MISR was not only a Makerere space or an East African one but African and global in a sense.

Early Developments

As early as 1943,¹⁰ the idea of starting a social research institute was already being mooted. This coincided with both the increased interest in colonial social science research and the influential bearing of Dr. Audrey Isabel Richards at the Colonial Social Sciences Research Council. Without doubt, her field experience in Northern Rhodesia, of thrusting into a deep field without close supervision; occasioned by the distance between the fieldworker and her mother institution as well as her perceived relevance of anthropological studies to colonial administration were also pivotal factors. Fieldwork was a near-cult Malinowskian anthropological method and its close coordination and supervision through an institute of MISR'S calibre was of immense value. Seen through this, the institute over-concentrated on anthropology as a discipline at the expense of other social sciences.¹¹

The Institute's development at different stages was closely linked to the careers of its directors and this relationship remains important in understanding a research institute, especially in setting the research agenda. Take the example

of the career of Audrey Richards, the founding Director, and the memory of her is more vivid than those of subsequent directors. Richards was among the first generation of women graduates from Cambridge and later became a dedicated student of Malinowski in London, becoming a disciple of his functionalist anthropology, first in her own research among the Bemba and then as a lecturer at the University of Witwatersrand and other subsequent works.¹² She was an important member of the 1940s Colonial Social Sciences Research Council (CSSRC), the originator and key brain behind MISR, becoming its second director in 1950. With excellent results at EAISR, she was asked to take up a teaching job at Cambridge where she founded an African studies centre, dedicated to the study of Africa.¹³ She is an excellent example of many of the earlier directors and women anthropologists.¹⁴ Richards' directorate at MISR is remembered more than any other largely because of the deep impact she had on shaping the earlier philosophy and trajectory of research that the institute came to undertake.

Beginning in Richards' period of directorship and the 'golden years' that followed, the Institute held conferences and published widely.¹⁵ These often neglected conference papers, correspondences with Makerere and other stakeholders and, publications remain the important sources of information about the field, research methods, and sense of direction and cultures that developed at the institute, as they developed, shifted and changed over time. They constitute the most important source, together with annual reports, from which the history of the institute can be reconstructed. In this case, early research networks, when revisited; the 'field' in which its workers collected the information and organised and re-produced it at the institute serves a very important *memory* on the field cultures, viz the perceptions and observations upon a researcher by the informants who were being observed by the latter. What I argue here is that field observations are usually a multi-directional, multi-dimensional process rather than the assumed observation only from the researcher. When revisited, a memory sense of what knowledge the informants built about the researcher is also recaptured to form a new body of knowledge hitherto unknown. A visit to Lloyd Fallers' field sites in Busoga in March and April 2011 with new interviews with young men whose parents were Fallers' informants revealed rich information about field behaviours of researchers from MISR.¹⁶

It is fair to treat the connotation of 'Africanisation' primarily as a relational one: an exploration of the contribution of researchers (African or Africanist) and institutional affiliates to research, knowledge production and fieldwork. As earlier noted, the institute had framed three African assistants. Not only were they assistants but they worked on research projects of their own, often mentored by the senior colleagues. By 1952, both A.B. Mukwaya and E. Mulira were gracing EAISR conferences with well written and highly regarded papers

on Buganda. If this was Africanisation of knowledge production, MISR was way ahead of the other sectors of Makerere who were clamouring for Africanisation of the curriculum by 1962 (Sicherman 2005). This trend of 'Africanisation' continued in the life of MISR. Testimonies of fertile 'fields' for anthropological research even during the Buganda crisis (1952-1955) abound.

Later Years

Makerere Institute of Social Research remained a key social research centre at Makerere and in Africa, hosting both local as well as expatriate researchers. However, only partial work at the institute by both early and contemporary researchers is 'archived' and largely remains unstudied grey matter (Mbembe 2002; Stoler 2002:87-109), much of it having been repatriated to researcher's home institutions, denying Makerere the primacy over information collected in what could be regarded as its territory.¹⁷ The history of the institute remains obscure more than the disciplines for which it was committed. It needs be pointed out that the political upheavals that rocked Uganda during the burdensome rule of Idi Amin (1971-1979) and the political turmoil that followed promoted a malaise that led to institutional decay and a downturn in research work whence the institute together with its mother university ebbed (Kajubi 1993).¹⁸

In 1987, a donor's conference to give a new life to Makerere was convened while by 1994; the university had fully embraced the World Bank's reform programs that turned the University into a virtual 'marketplace' (Mamdani 2007:13). Both events never took cognizance of MISR. The second development has been the incessant staff and student strikes that have rocked the University since the early 1990s, a reaction to the radical reforms emanating from the World Bank sponsored liberalisation programmes. Makerere became both the largest public and private university in Uganda (Muriisa 2010; Muriisa and Bacwayo 2010). Again, the implications this change had on the institute in particular and on social research generally, since the university was more based on private funding, gravitated MISR towards consultancies in order to survive. Consultancy deals were made with both Non-Governmental Organizations as well as government departments for reports that were widely rewarding. MISR researchers were more into wealth rather than knowledge production agents. Research and research centres were of limited priority in the university and 'research-phagy' was not far off.

Makerere University

Perhaps what is unique about MISR, unlike RLI was its location within the university space. But there was always a desire for autonomy *vis à vis* integration within the Makerere University (Stanner c.1949). While the institute opened its doors in 1948, Makerere university had started in 1921/22 as a technical school well within the general schema of colonial education for the 'natives' in the

territories, which in Africa was called African education. It need be pointed out that following the Orms-Gore Commission of 1924, the Hilton Young Commission of 1927, the de la Warr Commission of 1937 and the Asquith report of 1945, Makerere College, hitherto at a level of a 'secondary school' and without satisfactory numbers of recruits was taking in students from all over East Africa and destined to become a University (Ashby 1964:19). Efforts were made to standardise the curriculum to match the standards in Britain and elsewhere in the British Empire from 1939. By 1949, the institute was in full gear but the College's negotiation with the University of London over the conferment of the latter's degrees at Makerere did not integrate the institute and research as an entity. There was initial acrimony relating to whether MISR was autonomous or part of Makerere University as the institute and research appeared 'marginal'.

The reason for this is clear. MISR neither enrolled students nor conferred any degrees, let alone running academic courses. The culture of research was regarded as a 'colonial trapping' and was not well developed at Makerere. MISR therefore occupied both the geographical and intellectual fringes of the university space. In order to cement this, MISR became a department in the Faculty of Social Sciences, with a Director and a committee selected by senior faculty staff and the earlier excitement and vibrancy was no more there by 1972. Yash Tandon resigned on 21 October 1971 due to the lack of the institute's autonomy just like his predecessor V.F Uchendu had done seven months earlier.¹⁹ The latter had even contemplated buying land and building a new MISR, severing it from Makerere! The resignation was mentioned in a report for USAID authored by John D. Blumgardt in which inter alia he stated that:

A major consequence of these changes has been the decline of social science research in Uganda. Research activities lost momentum with the loss of a fulltime Director and lost coherence as the programme became discipline-oriented rather than problem-oriented. Research work took on an individualistic character of a part-time activity which faculty members carried out as an adjunct to teaching – almost as a "hobby" as one informant put it. Another consequence was the inability of MISR to continue to attract foreign scholars to work in Uganda to the same extent as before. At the present time, social sciences research at the university is minimal and such economic analyses as are now being conducted are largely centred in the government ministries and in the central bank (ibid).

Blumgardt went on to state that "in East Africa the linkage between research institutions (the producers) and government (the largest consumers) is very close, except in Uganda". This was the premise of constant frustration at Makerere in relation to Makerere Institute of Social Research. Simply put, MISR had no local consumers of academic research products, not even Makerere University, and a new nexus had to be found.

It is important to pick a few lines from Tandon's resignation as it would be erroneous to assume that MISR's relations with Makerere were relaxed. Tandon wrote:

I am convinced, nonetheless, that the present structure of MISR is completely inadequate to regenerate MISR. MISR's appalling degeneration since about 1967 is a well known fact.... That MISR's institutional structure inhibits its regeneration was known to us long ago.... We had thought that the best way for a MISR renaissance was to recreate the pre-1967 structure: an autonomous MISR, independent of Faculty control. However, we didn't think this formula would be acceptable to certain vested interests in the Faculty. Refusal to grant independence to prestigious appendages (even if the prestige lies in the past glory) is not a colonial phenomenon only! My predecessor, Dr. Victor Uchendu,... those who know him well will know that by the time he left he felt frustrated that his attempts to regenerate MISR hadn't succeeded (ibid) [emphasis in original]

Thinking the Institute or Marginalizing it?

Writing institutional histories remains a difficult undertaking, especially in view of Uganda's turbulent past as rightly pointed out by Sicherman (2005:xvi), literature on research institutes as well as the 'work cultures' that ground such institutions remains of limited availability. Schumaker's (2001) path-breaking study of the social and intellectual history of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, MISR's only predecessor in Africa is exemplary. She examines the agency of both the 'field' and the institute in the production of knowledge with a culture of work interposed in-between. She argues that: 'The field often appears as an important context in social histories of anthropology. Rarely however have scholars taken the field site as the central context for a social history of anthropology.' Just like her study argued for a fieldwork-oriented approach to knowledge production, MISR took a similar approach like RLI. Researchers were pushed into the field at ferocious speed after initial induction in methodology and basics of African custom, followed by supervision by the director or a mentor from the institute. Path-breaking studies were made by MISR in the 1950s and 60s. Thus, the institute cut its own niche in the academy gravitating around fieldwork, fieldwork networks and the central control by the institute itself. The niche was established through increased engagement with a localisation process which Schumaker calls 'Africanization'; and such other processes that took place therein, including the interaction between stakeholders, the link between the institute and its 'publics' and knowledge production processes. Additional factors include the agency of the MISR researchers as well as the connections they made with the field and the close relationship that developed with the research assistants (Werbner 1984:157-185).

In examining the latter (African research assistants, ‘culture brokers’, informers and guides), it is fair to dig into the relatively narrow history of social science development in East Africa. A sizeable number of scholars had attained high level training overseas by the time MISR started but there was widespread belief that a western curriculum including research was not a suitable activity for ‘natives’ which permeated Makerere at this time. In retrospect, the elite ‘rebelled’ against the very disciplines they had trained in and the works they produced (such as Akiki Nyabongo 1936 and also Okot P’ Bitek 1972) being epic criticisms of western knowledge systems. Writing in *Africa’s Cultural Revolution* (1973:43, 102), P’ Bitek made the following critical observation.

I have learnt very little from my literature tutors in school and universities. What they are teaching was irrelevant to my experience – the Shakespeares and the Shelleys.... In the educational section, break down the walls that surround our schools and universities and let the people who know our culture teach our people. Let us Africanise our curriculum in a meaningful manner. Let African culture be the core of our curriculum and foreign culture be at its periphery...

In effect, few East Africans could produce a home grown anthropology using a western rubric. The institute was at crossroads at the wane of the empire and retreat of colonialism. Nationalism and its desired independence attracted scholarly activism that became the basis of much of the literary writing and critique of social science. But it needs be stated that the structure of the institute provided for three African assistants against an unlimited number of European and American researchers or better, ‘culture brokers’ whose main role was to guide, negotiate acceptability and interpret for the researchers from the local dialect and vice versa. They were also to ensure that the researchers were safe in their field locations, although most researchers stayed at *gombolola* (sub-county) headquarters, rode around on motor cycles and in case the informants were within reach, walking; often clad in Khaki, typical of ‘white man’s’ power, never dined with local people except tea with chiefs and, are fairly remembered for ‘recording traditions’.²⁰

It is important to better understand Schumaker’s insights, especially around the notion of the ‘cultures of work’ occasioned by not only lengthy fieldwork but also developed in institutional spaces like seminars. The networks and comradeship established around the personality of Max Gluckman, just like Audrey Richards are instructive in demonstrating the importance both of the institute, its directors and the individuals who used it as a springboard for their careers. In this, four ideas drive the argument: ‘networks, cultures of research, the coproduction of scientific knowledge, and the field as a negotiated space for the production of knowledge rather than a mere source of data’ (Schumaker

227). Audrey Richards pointed out the developing culture of field work around MISR by mapping the active field sites in 1950 spanning the whole length and breadth of East Africa:

The Jinja survey has started and the Sofers are doing quite well but it takes Batsons social survey people six months to realize that it is a waste of time to do a statistical count of marriage etc until you know something about marriage. I have had to let them follow their training and an interested to watch the doubts now beginning! Elizabeth Colson was here for a week and gives them three months more to realize that the random sample is o use here!.... Fallers arrives at the end of October to start the on the Soga. Taylor is going to do the Zinza in the Biharamulo area. A Chicago lady, Priscilla Copeland is to do the Bahaya. A Dutchman is just coming to do the Ha. And we have very many out-patients. (Taylor among the Toro. Very weak in the field as you prophesied. (When I tell you that his first attempt within the first three weeks was to make all school children write an article on witchcraft and writes to tell me he has now mastered the subject!). Ed Winter and his wife doing well among the Konjo where there is a real tropical stuff – all swinging monkeys, parakeets and a fringe of pigmies along the roads. Southall is finishing up among the Alur. Girling dong a random sample of clan membership from the tax registers among the Acholi. (What things people do!) Middleton rather unhappy among the Lugbara. People can leave their field so easily by car that they never get over their initial depression as we had to.²¹

Africanisation, the African University and the East African/Makerere Institute of Social Research

Sicherman (2005) has defined the process of ‘Africanisation’ as an exploration of how:

... to find the best ways for universities in Africa to cope with the immediate and urgent demands made of them for the improvement of African society and at the same time [to] remain loyal to the world standards of higher educational institutions ... Africans thought that in order to achieve the purpose of any university – train[ing] individuals for national development and conducting research both of an applied and pure nature – there must be emphasis on African content in course structures and a conscious fashioning of training and research to respond sympathetically as possible to the expressed needs of governments and national populations (Sicherman, p. 2).

Already, such ‘Africanisation’ processes had been the gist of demanded reforms at and after Uganda’s independence in 1962, in the sense of the curriculum, the relevance of the university to the community, the non-cultural alienation of university products and personnel as well as research. Wandira (1977); Yesufu (1973); ESAURP (1982), each dealt with the various roles of an African University and its African functions. In doing so, they failed to realise the ascriptions to primordialism and political penetration that Mugerwa (2002) realised had been the bedrock of inefficiency in delivering service at Makerere

University, just like Mamdani (2007) used the model of a 'marketplace' that Makerere has portended lately. This was the question Ashby (1964) asked as to whether a university in Africa can subscribe to a global role while trying to populate its African (individual state) agenda. Suffice it to state that the African University as a distinct category still has a task to adjust to a global 'gold' standard, let alone defining what is uniquely African. Zeleza and Olukoshi (2004); Alemu, Halvorsen and, Mwiandi (2010 vols. I and II) contend that universities in the Nile Basin need to 'shape' and 'reshape' as to meet the research criteria on which high grade universities are adjudged. Similarly, Musisi and Muwanga (2003) contend that Makerere is in 'transition'. It is this transition that should accommodate the centrality of a research agenda that is both institutionalised and curriculum based.

Although the East African Institute of Social Research was a colonial research facility and was a theoretical midwife of the late colonial system, it adjusted to serve the postcolonial system equally; hence its location within Makerere remained a centre of ambiguity. It was not wholly instrumentalised politically, drawing a distinction between the state and knowledge production, while the state was more concerned with the mainstream university. While Gladstone (1986:338-363) argues that research in Africa enriched knowledge systems in the West and produced new areas of knowledge, MISR became a hive of government activity in the 1950s and 1960s and the Department of Rural Development was entirely dependent on EAISR for the design of community development efforts.²² However, the EA/MISR remained as an *exotic* piece at Makerere, whose contribution in knowledge production was collapsed in the 'precious baby' of Audrey Richards.²³ MISR was located on the same hill-campus with the University but fluctuated between being part of the University and semi-autonomy, parameters that have dogged it in its history (Mills 2006).

It is fair to state that the early work at the institute not only enriched social sciences where large volumes were produced (Parkin 1990) but also the knowledge about East Africa which formed the basis of the pedagogical knowledge used for teaching and Africanising the curriculum at Makerere and universities elsewhere. Besides, due to increasing lack of qualified staff at Makerere, the rubric for EA/MISR was changed to ask researchers to teach in their respective fields/departments as part of their tenure at the institute. The situation reached critical levels in 1973 when, due to heavy brain drain occasioned by state-inspired insecurity, Pakistanis were brought in as lecturers and the skeletal staff at MISR were pushed to teaching. The relative security offered by the university campus forced what had been researcher's accommodation known as MISR flats to be changed to lecturer's homes till 1994. It is often unimaginable how MISR doubles as a research centre and operates lodge-like flats, which offer accommodation to visiting researchers without leaving a university environment.

Table A: A checklist of directors since 1948 and their disciplinary orientations

Period	Name	Gender	Discipline
1 1948-1950	W.H. Stanner	Male	Economics
2 1950-1956	Audrey Isabel Richards	Female	Anthropology
3 1956-1957	Lloyd Ashton Fallers	Male	Anthropology
4 1957-1968	Aidan Southall	Male	Anthropology
5 1968	Ali A. Mazrui	Male	Political Science
6 1968	Yoweri Z. Kyesimira	Male	Economics
7. 1968-1969	D.G.R. Belshaw	Male	Agric. Economics
8 1969	J.J. Oloya	Male	Agric. Economics
9 1969-1970	Uchendu	Male	Agric. Economist
10 1970-1971	V.F. Aman	Male	Agric. Economics
11 1971-1972	Yashpal A. Tandon	Male	Political Science
12 1972-1974	Gincyera Pinchwa	Male	Political Science
13 1974-1977	Frank Karugire	Male	History
14 1977-1982	Benon Rukyema	Male	History
15 1982-1992	Benon Muguwa Mudoola	Male	Political Science
16 1992-1996	Appolo R. Nsibambi	Male	Political Science
17 1996-1997	James Katorobo	Male	Political Science
18 1997-1999	J.C. Munene	Male	Psychology
19 1999-2010	Nakanyike B. Musisi	Female	Gender Studies
20 2010-	Mahmood Mamdani	Male	Political Science

Source: <http://misr.mak.ac.ug/Past%20Directors.html> (accessed 10/03/2010).

There is also a case to be made for exploring the work of those who were linked to Makerere and the Institute though not formally employed. In the MISR structure, they were referred to as research associates such as Archie Mafeje whose ideas about knowledge production and anthropology became highly significant in shaping social science debates for several decades.²⁴ Mafeje's doctoral study was on commercial farmers in Uganda and he was closely linked with the Institute during his fieldwork years (1965-7). Credited for not referring to a 'tribe', the kingpin of anthropological study, Mafeje's work marked a shift in the discourse on African people by African scholars, by rejecting the western disciplinary canon of 'tribe' as the ultimate African condition. Mafeje also taught courses at Makerere during 1967 alongside conducting his doctoral research in Buganda while based at EA/MISR.²⁵ His

turn to sociology was era-marked as anthropology largely lost agency in the postcolonial landscape as pointed out by Galtung:

A painting used to hang in the ante-room of former president Kwame Nkrumah. The painting was enormous, and the main figure was Nkrumah himself, fighting, wrestling with the last chains of colonialism. The chains are yielding, there is thunder and lightning in the air, the earth is shaking. Out of all this, three small figures are fleeing, white men, pallid. One of them is the capitalist, he carries a briefcase. Another is the priest, he carries a Bible. The third, a lesser figure, carries a book entitled African Political Systems: he is the anthropologist... (Kuper 1996:94) [emphasis in original]

Although anthropology was 'fleeing', researches continued to flock into East Africa with MISR as a staging post.

Conclusion: The Institute, the University and Social Research

Whereas EAISR/MISR was housed within Makerere College, it has continued to claim a semi-autonomous status; a position which is rather ambiguous and its relations with the Makerere University remained tumultuous (Sicherman 2005:30). All scholarly works on Makerere University give a peripheral treat to the institute (cf. Sicherman 2005; Mugerwa 2002; Mamdani 2007; Macpherson 1964) lending it an isolated 'Ivory Tower' and 'alien' and exotic status. Our argument here is that although Makerere Institute of Social Research is geographically located at and within Makerere University, the study of the institute, reveals greatly how MISR attempted to establish its own research and work culture, chart its own history and attempted to attain autonomy. We have attempted to document the ups and ebbs of an institution and the roles played by key actors using MISR and its often ambiguous location within Makerere University as both a geographical and intellectual space during the formative and later years.

The history of the Institute is deeper than can be completely documented here. Serious attempts are needed in studying the critical role of the institutes of research; assess their roles in shaping the University research; in career development and, in helping universities attain a 'global' value towards attaining centrality in knowledge driven systems. The institute at Makerere started in 1948 but social research had been around since colonial times. Newer institutes appeared in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam as well as a number in Makerere (such as the Economic Policy Research Centre). Later (current) efforts are more aimed at scoring the centrality of the institute and research within Makerere through both developing a new research agenda as well as recovering lost glory.²⁶

Notes

1. Material of this article was assembled when I was a Doctoral Fellow at the Centre for Humanities Research, University of the Western Cape (2010-2012). I thank Prof. Premesh Lalu, the Director of the Centre as well as Prof. Andrew Bank, my doctoral supervisor plus all Fellows and colleagues at the Center for the stimulating environment and guidance.
2. An OECD survey in 1972 reported returns from 23 institutes of social and economic research in African Universities where MISR was leading the pack with 111 teaching and research staff plus 12 administrative staff.
3. See Table 1.
4. Secretary for the Colonial Social Science Research Council (CSSRC) known for her forceful nature on her initiatives.
5. Then Director of the Rhodes Livingstone Institute and therefore very experienced in colonial research institutes.
6. The very first conference held 17-23 Dec., 1950 was a marker of academic prosperity of the institute. Lucy Mair reported in *Man* what suggests to be a variety in the research menu: Lloyd Fallers and Mrs. Chave Fallers on Busoga; Dr. Fisher on Kikuyu; Mr. Phillip Gulliver and Mrs Gulliver on Turkana and Karimajong; Prof. E. Hoyt, a Fullbriht Fellow and Dr. Jacques Maquet (IRSAC) on Banyarwanda; Mr. John Middleton on Lugbara; Mr. Mulira on Buganda(Luganda); Mr. Philip Powesland, Mr Cyril and Mrs Rhona Sofers on Jinja; Mr. Aidan Southall on Alur; Mr. Brian Tylor on Batoro; Mr. J.W. Tyler on the Zinza; Mr Edward and Mrs. Winter on Bamba-Konjo; Mr. Wilfred Whiteley (government anthropologist, Tanganyika) on Makua; Dr. A.N Tucker and Mrs.E.M Chilver (Secretary of the CSSRC); A.I. Richards and J.M. Fortt on Buganda.
7. The subsequent conferences held annually were even richer than the first one till 1968 when matters began to change. The institute had entered the circuits of knowledge production and was the most well known section of the University beyond East Africa, already producing its own Journal, *Nkanga* which circulated widely.
8. Rwandaphones in Uganda became one of the earliest research problems to be examined by the institute.
9. Many South African scholars, wary of the growing influence of political anthropology came to MISR, such as Peter Rigby, Adam Kuper and those who could not carry out fieldwork in South Africa such as Archie Mafeje.
10. J.H. Hutton to Monica Wilson Hunter, 23/12/1943, ref. 27/46, UCT Archives, Box 880, file B. 4.12.
11. There was overconcentration on anthropology and other social sciences received little attention. However, the intensity of field research is evident in a letter by Audrey Richards to Monica Wilson, dated 15.ix.50, Box 880, file 4.12, UCT

- Archives, indicating as many as 12 researchers from the institute deployed in various areas of Eastern and Central Africa. In a edited volume, *Social Change in Modern Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), Aidan Southall richly details the results of an international seminar held by the Institute in 1959.
12. Richards has been described as a woman of deep passion for research. Her work in Nyasaland became a subject for re-research by Henrietta L. Moore and Megan Vaughan in *Cutting Down Trees: Gender, Nutrition, and Agricultural Change in the Northern Province of Zambia, 1890-1990* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann; London: James Currey; Lusaka: University of Zambia Press, 1994) where they find the *citemene* shifting cultivation system still alive but are awed by the geographical extent covered by Richards, and therefore ascribe to her path-breaking exploits.
 13. Adam Kuper. *Anthropologists and Anthropology: The British School, 1922-1972* (London: Allen Laver, 1973), p. 91.
 14. This career can be seen through what Nancy Lutkehaus has described as ‘very Cambridge’ a cohort of women who graduated from Newnham college and went on to LSE for Malinowski’s classes and dominated anthropology.
 15. At its golden time, David Mills has pointed out that an institute conferences lasted a week! In the 1966 conference for instance, 50 papers were delivered besides the 33 volumes of the *East African Book Series*. See David Mills, p.95.
 16. Interviews with Yosiya Mukupya 72, 27/2/2011, Iganga; Tabingwa 81, 26/02/2011, Naigobya; both children of Fallers’ informants. The present status of Busoga, studied by Fallers sixty years ago reveals deep socio-political changes of widespread nature that contrasts with his accounts.
 17. The state of the archive did not reflect any academic activity related to its existence and was being ‘ordered’. Beyond this, with the exception of Peter Rigby, few significant past associates had deposited their collections here, preferring to deposit them in metropolitan universities. The state of the archives in Uganda reflects what Mbembe has called ‘prisons’ or ‘graveyards’ of documents.
 18. This period is particularly noted for the fleeing of scholars and the decline in institutional output of publications and annual conferences as well as reports.
 19. Yashpal Tandon ‘Letter to members of the Faculty of Social Sciences and other interested members of Makerere’, 21 Oct., 1971, available at the MISR archives, Makerere University.
 20. Interview with Yosiya Mukupya, Busambira, ...
 21. Audrey Richards to Monica Wilson, 15.IX.50, BC 880, University of Cape Town Manuscripts and Archives.

22. Yusuhu Lule, the Minister of Rural Development in the 1950s came to the institute weekly for meetings over a framework for rural development in Uganda, meetings that were attended by the Director, senior researchers and involved further work for the Department. The case was similar for the Ministry of Education dealing with researchers at the institute in Primary education, dealing with such social problems as 'school drop-out' at primary and secondary levels.
23. Audrey Richards to Monica, 6.VI.54, Box 880, UCT Manuscripts and Archives.
24. Mafeje was a student of Monica Wilson and later Audrey Richards. His doctoral research in East Africa was carried out using the EAISR as base, taught lessons at Makerere University. Many other liberal minded South Africans 'fleeing' the reification of racial difference in South Africa also found home at MISR and, Makerere. Later, Mafeje preferred Dar es salaam to Makerere where he taught sociology.
25. It was in this year that the change from East African Institute of Social Research to Makerere Institute of Social Research was debated.
26. From 2012 for instance, MISR introduced a 5-year doctoral course, re-oriented from the consultancy and NGO culture and aimed at training a new cohort of social science researchers at 'home'.

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