The enemy within: The legitimating role of local managerial elites in the global managerial colonization of the Global South

Aurélie Toivonen
Tampere University, Finland

Tapiwa Seremani
IÉSEG School of Management, France

Abstract
This paper contributes to the drive to decolonize management and organization knowledge by unpacking the role played by indigenous managerial elites in the global managerial colonization of the Global South. We focus on the narratives managerial elites construct to legitimate managerialism to a dissenting population. We conducted an ethnographic study of efforts by members of the city council of Yaoundé, in Cameroon to implement and legitimate a global managerial intervention. Our findings show that to successfully legitimate the imposition of managerialism to a dissenting populace, managerial elites construct hybrid narratives. These hybrid narratives are not ignorant of the local context and are particularly potent because of the manner in which they factor in some local concerns, making the managerialist intervention more palatable to locals and yet continuing to impose a foreign way of life.

Keywords
Decoloniality, hybridity, narrative, sense making/giving

‘But he [the white man] says that our customs are bad; and our own brothers who have taken up his religion say our customs are bad. How do you think we can fight when our own brothers have turned against us? . . . Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart’.

(Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart, 1958)
Introduction

Chinua Achebe’s highly influential novel *Things Fall Apart*, not only highlighted the nature of early colonial encounters between Africans and Europeans through the eyes of its local protagonist Okonkwo. It also highlighted how the success of Europeans’ colonial project often rested upon the successful co-option and participation of local elites. The roles played by some indigenous elites in supporting colonial regimes are well documented (e.g. Fanon, 2007; Garrett, 2005; Thiong’o, 1989). Not only did colonialists actively co-opt existing elites, they also embarked on creating a new form of indigenous elite, educated and trained in the mother countries (Fanon, 2007). These newly minted administrative elites became key cogs of the colonial machinery (Garrett, 2005). Describing these elites, Fanon stated, ‘these walking lies had nothing left to say to their brothers; they only echoed. From Paris, from London, from Amsterdam. . .’ (Fanon, 2007: 6).

Despite this central role played by indigenous administrative elites during the colonial era, the formal end of colonialism did not result in their disappearance (Raychaudhuri, 2001; West, 1992). In fact, many re-emerged as part of a ‘postcolonial’ managerial elite class, occupying seats once occupied by colonial masters (Brissett, 2013). The emergence of this postcolonial indigenous managerial class was on the foundations of an increasingly hegemonic western managerialism, a pillar of a modernity anchored in capitalism. In effect, this was a process of re-colonization (Imas, 2005) under a monologic and unifying discourse of a modernity embodied in market principles and rational management, in which all other alternative discourses and expressions of society are repressed (Jameson, 1984). Indeed, this managerial recolonization of the Global South is not only a matter of impositions by arms and incentives of aid by the Global North but also implicates local managerial elites who advance managerialism in different localities of the Global South (Yousfi, 2014). The horrors committed under Pinochet in Chile, who was ideologically nourished by University of Chicago trained Chilean economists are a reminder to the decolonial scholar of the dangers of ignoring this dynamic (see Imas, 2005). After all, it is not only what the ‘Chicago Boys’ learnt in classes at the University of Chicago that drove the managerialist colonization of Chile, it is also how they advocated and legitimated these ideals, in conjunction with Pinochet’s guns to an often dissenting Chilean population.

Populations do not simply accept impositions by managerial elites and other importations of western management knowledge. Because managerialism often discounts the realities that the average person has to live, overt and covert resistance are not uncommon (Banerjee, 2003). As such, there is an important decolonial struggle between local managerial elites and the general population that needs to be unpacked to understand (and challenge) the managerial colonization of the Global South. Central to this struggle are narratives (Ashcroft, 2002). The narrative approach suggests that the world is constituted of narratives, which provide tools to explain and give meaning to events, experiences, identities and the world around us (Czarniawska, 2004; Ifowodo, 2013; Riessman, 2008). Narratives are not simply story telling performances but give and impose meaning to different realities (Bruner, 1991). Research has shown that elite actors often instrumentally construct narratives that function hegemonically, allowing them to legitimize and normalize their policies, actions and inaction in relation to different issues (Abolafia, 2010). This is especially important in contexts of contestation and resistance.

But, narratives are not exclusively the domain of the elite and may also serve as tools of liberation for the colonized, allowing them to re-construct and re-narrate their experiences, realities and identities (Boukhris, 2017). Bhabha (1994) emphasizes the importance of narratives in the postcolonial context, insisting on the need to factor in the hybridity that characterizes such settings. In summary, there is an important role played by local managerial elites in the diffusion of western managerialist ideologies that often subject former colonies to new forms of colonialism. Narratives
play a central role in this. Thus, in this paper we ask, what is the nature on the sense-making nar-
atives local managerial elites construct to legitimate managerialism in the face of contestation
from the general population?

To unpack these narratives, we study the efforts to implement and legitimate a development
plan by the city council of Yaoundé, in Cameroon. We conducted an ethnography in the city coun-
cil as it sought to implement the Yaoundé 2020 – Master Urban Plan. We understand the city offi-
cials pushing this initiative as local managerial elites seeking to advance managerialism packaged
as development in line with arguments of scholars such as Dar and Cooke (2009) and Murphy
(2007). As such, this was an ideal setting to interrogate the sense making and sense giving nar-
ratives constructed by the council in attempts to legitimate this initiative in the face of resistance.

Our findings contribute to the push to decolonize management and organizational knowledge
(MOK) in a number of ways. We respond to the calls to pay greater attention to the roles played by
local managerial elites in the managerial colonization of the Global South (Brissett, 2013; Derrick,
1983) and their roles in the overall colonial matrix of power (Dussel, 1993; Mignolo, 2014; Quijano,
2007). We show that the legitimating narratives constructed by local managerial elites are
hybrid in nature. They do not totally ignore local realities but incorporate them into an overall
legitimating narrative despite underlying tensions between the different conceptions of the mana-
gerial elites and pushbacks from the local populace. This gives these narratives a particular potency
and makes them more palatable to the resisting local population. This serves as an important
reminder that whilst hybridity is often a resource for resistance for the colonized, it can also facili-
tate the managerial colonization of the Global South (Lugones, 2010). Equally important, we found
that resistance from the local population is not futile and can push managerial elites to dilute the
versions of managerialism they impose.

This paper proceeds as follows. First, we present the extant literature, followed by the methods
and findings sections. Then, we discuss the implications of our study for ongoing conversations on
decoloniality in management and organization.

**Literature review**

*Indigenous elites and (post)colonialism*

Critiques of colonialism emerged from all parts of the globe that were and continue to be subject
to overt and covert forms of colonial power relations with the Global North. For example, scholar-
ship collected under ‘postcolonial theory’, anchored in the work of scholars such as Edward Said
and Homi Bhabha, drew from reflections on the colonial experience in India and the Middle East,
with a strong emphasis on language, culture and representations (see Bhabha, 1994; Bhambra,
2014; Said, 2003). From Latin America, the ‘decoloniality’ scholarship adjusts the time period of
focus, placing importance on the initial colonization of the Americas and role played by ‘moder-
nity’ in the different waves of colonialism (e.g. Dussel, 1993; Lugones, 2010; Quijano, 2007).
Equally, in Africa, the middle of the twentieth century saw a concerted drive to break from the
colonial chokehold ideologically, politically, culturally, and economically. The thesis of Kwame
Nkrumah was particularly important in that regard (see Nkrumah, 1966). Today, much of this work
is grouped together within the decoloniality movement sharing concerns of the role of Eurocentric
modernity and the material consequences of continued colonial domination. Decoloniality warns
us that the rhetoric of modernity is constantly updating, hiding the logic of coloniality – war,
destruction, racism, sexism, inequalities and injustice (Mignolo, 2014). It points to the multifac-
eted structures of colonial domination that implicate representations, knowledge, ideology and
violence, in what has been labelled the ‘colonial matrix of power’ (Mignolo, 2014; Quijano, 2007).
Throughout the history of colonialism, the justifications for colonial domination have been anchored in ‘modernity’ (Quijano, 2007). In the early stages, modernity translated in religious terms but today it is embodied in neo-liberal capitalism. Importantly for this study, this modernity has always required local elites in implementing it and maintaining its domination. For example, Garrett (2005) shows how indigenous elites were crucial for the reproduction of Spanish rule in the colonial Andes in Latin America, whilst Derrick (1983) highlighted the indispensable role played by local bureaucratic elites in the functioning of the colonial state in Cameroon. As such, the role of these local high priests of colonial modernity is a key component of the colonial matrix of power that needs to be unpacked, exposed, and challenged.

Managerial elites and managerial colonialism

In the African context, like in other parts of the Global South, the formal end of colonialism did not result in the end of colonial domination but saw an emergence of forms of domination framed and justified in the in the name of economic development and progress anchored in neoliberal capitalism and global managerialism (Dar and Cooke, 2009; Imas, 2005). Scholars have called this a ‘managerial re-colonization’ (Imas, 2005; Murphy, 2007). This new version of colonial domination also saw the rise of an indigenous managerial class tasked with overseeing this modernization and development (Murphy, 2007). Many elites previously working with the colonial masters were particularly well placed to occupy seats of power (Burney, 2012). Many would go on to be key elements in perpetuating colonial dynamics in the name of a capitalist modernity and the global managerialism it necessitates (Turner, 2017). In some cases, indigenous elites perpetuate colonial era dynamics out of calculation and instrumentality, seeking to benefit materially (Chaturvedi, 2012), something sometimes signalled as the root of rampant corruption in the Global South (Mulinge and Lesetedi, 1998). Other times, local elites subjugate their nations to the will of former colonial masters out of the conviction of the superiority of western modernity and its universal relevance (Moodley, 2000).

Consequently, the phenomenon of global managerialism is understood as colonization because of the way it centres the Global North and management and organization knowledge produced within it; placing all other forms of knowledge in the periphery, thus deeming them irrational or inefficient (Alcadipani et al., 2012; Banerjee and Linstead, 2001; Imas, 2005). Global managerialism roots the knowledge production of management and organization within western traditions of managerial thinking that define what should be studied and how (Imas and Weston, 2012), seeking to make everything the subject of rational management; people, nature, cities, development and all aspects of organization. Furthermore, often, global managerialism demands the blood of those of in the Global South in a means-ends rationalistic logic that sees them losing their lands, liberties and livelihoods in the name of modernity, economic progress and development (Banerjee, 2003; Faria and Hemais, 2017; Imas, 2005). For example, Domínguez and Luoma (2020) highlight how ‘modern’ environmental development policies and land tenure in India and Kenya resulted in the loss of land for those on the ground. Similarly, Stetson (2012) shows how in the Peruvian Amazon, the government’s development ambitions centered on oil extraction resulted in indigenous people losing access to natural resources as well being excluded from defining Peru’s natural resource agenda.

Yet, the imposition and legitimation of global managerialism is not a straightforward affair. Locals often resist (Banerjee and Linstead, 2001; Yousfi, 2014). If managerialism continues to colonize schools, universities, governments and lives of those in the Global South, it is not because of an absence of resistance. In fact, resistance is common, and the question is how managerial elites navigate this resistance and succeed to impose global managerialism in different localities. A number of
scholars have argued that the key to addressing this question is unpacking the role of narratives (Alexander, 2016; Bruner, 1991; Young, 2001).

**Indigenous managerial elites and narratives as sense-making/giving**

Narratives are accounts that seek to give and make sense of events, experiences and identities (Boukhris, 2017; Bruner, 1991). Narratives may function hegemonically to impose a particular version of reality that is in line with the interests of elite actors (Brown, 2004), facilitating the legitimation of contested policies or practices (Abolafia, 2010). The narratives constructed by managerial elites predominantly seek to make global managerialism the ideal and norm (Srinivas, 2008). Narrative construction is not only to sell managerialism to the local stakeholders. It is also crucial internally to those implementing these policies, giving meaning to their actions. However, narratives are also a weapon that can be commandeered by the general populations (Boukhris, 2017). They may construct counter narratives that oppose dominant ones, seeking to impose different meanings and interpretations of events, actions, policies and identities. Thus, there are important narrative struggles between indigenous managerial elites and the general population that are essential to understanding the managerial colonialization of the Global South.2

Drawing from Bhabha (1994), Yousfi (2014) cautions that any attempt to disentangle this narrative struggle must take into account the hybridity that is a central feature of the postcolonial context and identities from which the agency stems. Bhabha (1994) argues that those in the colonies exist in liminal spaces, shaped by the Global North as well as their local realities. Hybridity is the outcome of translation and negotiation of identities in liminal spaces that characterize the colonial setting. This produces identities, cultures and practices that emerge from the interweaving of elements of the colonizer and colonized, thereby challenging the validity and authenticity of any essentialist narratives (Bhabha, 1994). Key for the emergence of hybridity are mimicry practices, which occur as members of a colonized society seek to imitate the culture of the colonizer. However, such a process is always incomplete, and its outcome are practices that seek to mimic those from the mother country but that also reflect a distinct local dimension (Bhabha, 1994). However, importantly, scholars such as Lugones (2010) have also cautioned of a potentially dark side of hybridity that masks the underlying the colonial domination matrix. Equally important, Yousfi (2014) calls for exploring the different ways in which this plays out in different localities of the Global South.

In this paper, factoring in the concerns on hybridity, we ask: What is the nature of the legitimating narratives constructed by managerial elites to legitimate managerialism to a resisting population?

**Methods**

**Context**

Cameroon’s colonial history is emblematic of the manner in which European nations sliced and shared territories in the colonization of Africa. First, the German Empire claimed the territory as the colony of ‘Kamerun’ in 1884 and ran it as a commercial enterprise. After defeat of Germany in the First World War, most of Cameroon was given to France and a smaller territory to England as the spoils of war. Colonial domination under the British and French saw an increasingly important role for native elites. The Germans had been actively involved in constructing a new form of elites by appointing locals who showed allegiance to Germany into positions of influence such as chieftainships and mayors. The French actively continued with this pattern of governing and local bureaucratic elites became central to the functioning of the colonial state (Derrick, 1983). Many indigenous elites working with the French passed through the French Colonial School (École nationale de la
France d’Outre-Mer) which trained administrators in the colonies based on ‘true’ administrative sciences. With the formal end of colonialism in January 1960, such local elites from this administrative social class became prime candidates for positions of power in postcolonial Cameroon (Atangana, 2010: 40).

In the context of managerial colonialism, a key event was an economic crisis between 1987 and 2006. As the Cameroonian state faced bankruptcy, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank became particularly influential, demanding governmental restructuration. Local managerial elites well versed in western neo-liberalism and located in development organizations as well as various agencies of the state came to the fore. With the re-emergence of Cameroon from the crisis, these local managerial elites became even more prominent in driving the nation forward. This has been further pushed by Cameroon’s eligibility for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries’ special assistance that allowed it to access debt relief from the IMF and World Bank. As ever, this ‘aid’ came with requirements for broad reforms that local managerial elites would need to oversee.

**The urban development plan**

In 2008, the Yaounde City Council launched an urban development plan, consisting of a series of initiatives to ‘modernize’ and ‘bring order’ to the city, the Yaoundé 2020 – Master Urban Plan (Yaoundé 2020 – Plan Directeur d’Urbanisme). This modernization included the destruction of informal housing and marketplaces and their replacement with ‘modern’ infrastructure. This involved evictions from shantytowns/homes, destruction of urban farms and buildings deemed not meeting ‘modern construction regulations’. This was followed by construction projects such as new roads, modern marketplaces, administrative buildings, monuments parks and gardens.

**Contention between city authorities and population**

The evictions of ‘illegal occupants’ rendered about 3000 people homeless and involved the destruction of the economic activities of an estimated 10,000 informal vendors. While some praised the improvement in infrastructure, fluidity of traffic, as well as the modern and clean look of the new Yaoundé, many worried about the consequences of this managerialist approach on the city and the impact on the poor. Such concerns were extensively discussed in the media by local tribes and their representatives who sought to veto the usurpation of their land, and the street vendors association which resented the gentrification of marketplaces and their unaffordability to the poor. Similarly, representatives from the human rights and civil society forum, were against the destruction of slums without any compensation for the people.

In summary, the populace perceived the actions of the city as not serving their interests but disrupting the very essence of their reality. The goal of this study is to explore how city officials and employees make sense of these controversies via the narratives they construct in the face of opposition as they execute and translate the urban plan in their daily activities.

**Data collection and analysis**

To understand how local elites construct narratives that seek to legitimate managerialist ideals in the face of contestation from the local population, we adopt an ethnographic approach (see Cunliffe, 2010; Van Maanen, 1988). Our research process was driven by the desire to understand the people involved in the implementation of the urban plan and the narratives they construct through close proximity with their everyday life activities (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2015; Cunliffe, 2010). By closely examining the everyday activities of city council members (Van Maanen, 1988), we were
able to gain a deep understanding of how they construct legitimating narratives. One of the authors was a participant observer at the Yaoundé City Council for three periods: July 2014 (21 days), February 2015 (24 days) and May 2015 (2 days), amounting to 47 days in the field (8 hours a day). As such, the primary data consisted of observation notes and 37 interviews with city officials and employees, lasting 90 minutes on average. Our informants were the city councillor (1), vice-delegate in charge of all markets (1), secretary of vice delegate (1), finance and taxation director (1), directors of technical affairs (2), head of sanitation (1), communication and documentation experts (2), project managers (3), market administrators (8), tax collectors (3), raid and patrol agents (4), hygiene and sanitation agents (3), secretary for social groups and associations (1) and vendors’ representatives (6). We also had secondary data which consisted of over 1000 pages of documents and reports from the city, historical documents as well as newspapers articles.

Reflexivity

It was particularly important to evaluate our role as researchers within the field, recognizing our own subjectivity (Dar, 2018; Prasad, 2014). The dangers of an absence of such reflexivity are well documented by (e.g. Weston and Imas, 2019). Both authors are from Africa but trained and based in the Global North. This created a certain discomfort about which extent we could speak on an African setting in a research format that is shaped by western canons of knowledge. If anything, this pressed on us an even greater sense of urgency based on our positions of relative privilege to make these accounts of our people known to a wider audience and in so doing advance the decolonial agenda. Indeed, our identities exist in fluid interstitial spaces (Bhabha, 1994). This hybridity is reflected in our paper which draws on decolonial literature, speaks to an African setting and has an analysis influenced by thought in the Global North.3

The analysis involved many conversations between the authors based on their experience as Africans. Indeed, there were many differences and yet there will still many common reflections. This allowed us to try to nuance our analysis. The Cameroonian author originates from Yaoundé but had lived in Europe for 10 years prior to the fieldwork, which afforded us an outsider/insider perspective. Being Cameroonian and speaking the language of the Yaoundé’s natives enabled her to create connections with the participants. Her observations focused on the reporting on the various projects the city was engaged in, coordination of the work of project managers, and coordination of claims on expropriation and indemnity as well activities in offsites such as marketplaces. However, because she resided in Europe, she often felt pressured to bear witness to the significance of modernity ideals. For instance, during an informal discussion with a group of employees on street vending and traffic congestion, a market manager expected her to confirm his argument that ‘even in Europe there are flea markets but nothing like we have here. You know these things. . .’ he said, waiting for her to acquiesce and everyone else looked at her, expecting a first-hand knowledge on modernized flea markets. Due to this assigned position as an expert and an elite, she struggled to adjust her posture in the field. In some instances, she was directly scorned by street vendors and referred to as one of the ‘thieves’ ‘corrupt individuals [from the municipality]’ as she was participating in a raid where merchandises were confiscated, and makeshift stalls destroyed. Consequently, the researcher kept pondering her position as an insider/outsider but more importantly as ‘part of’ or ‘against’ the violence she perceived in some of the interactions between the elites and the populace.

Analysis

We adopted a ‘hybrid liminal approach’ (Weston and Imas, 2019: 127). An approach that captures how the colonized may appropriate theoretical and analytical tools forged in the Global North to
make them speak to issues of the Global South. We used a narrative approach (see Czarniawska, 2004; Riessman, 2008) in our attempts to unpack the stories constructed by indigenous managerial elites to legitimate hegemonic managerial discourse that the local population was resisting. We adopted narrative structural and thematic analysis (Riessman, 2008) in order to explore how activities and processes were discussed, paying attention to the verbal and non-verbal utterances as well as what stories are told. First, we structurally analysed each individual interview, while paying close attention to time and place as well as the role and possible personal politics of the informants. This analysis was also supported by secondary data such as newspapers articles and documents, which provided an important background and contextualized the stories being told.

This structural analysis gave rise to the first round of thematic analysis, which consisted in listing revealing key issues that affected the day-to-day efforts to construct a coherent narrative that normalized the imposition of managerialist ideals in the face of a dissenting population. This process led to a long list of potential themes linking the interviews. We then engaged in a more thorough thematic analysis of the interviews, which was explorative, creative and reflexive (Braun et al., 2016). We coded and collated the data by applying specific colour codes to text extracts, words or sentences that appear significant for our identified themes while paying attention for other emerging themes or collapsed previously identified themes into new ones.

This process took several rounds, consisting of reading each theme with its related data extracts, searching for a coherent pattern within that theme and exchanges between the authors and subsequently modifying the theme or its supporting data accordingly. We ended up with six final themes (Mobilizing a western vision of development, mobilizing ‘modern’ legislation, Acknowledging dys-functionalities, Accommodating local demands, Acknowledging local voices, Highlighting success). Next, we evaluated our themes in relation with our whole dataset, paying attention to the secondary data and our observation notes. This also involved further in-depth exchanges between the authors about interpretations of these themes. This process allowed us to further organize our themes into a hierarchy of themes and subthemes as well as their description (Braun et al., 2016). We then went back to the literature to help with fine-tuning and aggregating our understandings of the data. This process saw the emergence of aggregate dimensions such as selective instrumental mimicry, mimicry’s ambivalence, and mimicry’s incommensurability, which are sub-narratives that form the overall organizational hybrid narrative.

**Indigenous managerial elites and the construction of a hybrid narrative**

Our analysis shows how managerial elites in the city council of Yaoundé construct a hybrid legitimating narrative in their attempts to legitimate the contested Yaoundé 2020 urban plan. Rather than sticking to the well-established arguments of rationality and efficiency that often legitimate managerialism, the hybrid narrative allows managerialism to be coherent despite pushbacks from the local population. Since, the narrative is not totally ignorant of local realities, it is more palatable to the local populace, and thus legitimates managerialism precisely because of this hybridity. This hybrid narrative reflects the contours of the power struggles in mimicry practices in this specific locality as different actors engage in deployment, disarticulation, and rationalization of western ideals. However, the hegemony of global managerialism remains, and the development plan is still imposed on locals, albeit in a diluted form. We tie the dynamic of mimicry practices to the ambiguities and polyvalence of sub-narratives that mutually construct the legitimating hybrid narrative. We shall elaborate on these sub-narratives (selective instrumental mimicry, mimicry’s ambivalence and mimicry’s incommensurability) below.
Selective instrumental mimicry

This sub-narrative describes the deployment of colonial ideals to make claims regarding the appropriateness of actions while purposefully editing out important details on local realities to impose a regime of truth that justifies the intervention. This sub-narrative heavily relies on the existing hegemony of global managerialism and its positioning as superior to indigenous forms of organizational knowledge. It problematized the existing state of affairs in relation to what they ‘should be’. This opened a space allowing council administrators to justify the need for their managerial intervention. Managerial elites deployed a calculative form of mimicry by selectively drawing from western development indicators and mobilizing legislation in their construction of a sub-narrative around the desirability to be more western, more ‘organized and efficient’. We elaborate on this sub-narrative through two main story threads.

Mobilizing a western vision of development. This story thread captures how a number of western indicators were used to highlight perceived development gaps and justify the managerialization of the city and its affairs. Managerial elites insisted on the need to mirror western capital cities. They problematized how the urban poor organized their life and work in urban spaces; in streets or from their slums claiming this was outdated and impeding progress. Consequently, they construct a need to take strong action embodied in managerialism: evictions, demolitions of houses and expropriations of land. In the excerpt below, a market administrator problematizes street vending that is common in the city by drawing comparisons to how he believes things are in the Global North:

> When a white man [in the Global North] leaves his home, he knows what he is going to buy, he heads to that specific store, buy something and returns home. That is how it is done! [. . .]There are no street vendors pulling him right and left, disturbing people from shopping. You come to the market with a purpose, there are not people trying to disturb you from everywhere, you shop, you return to your car and then you go home.

In the same vein, some of the city officials discussed their admiration for the French Baron Hausmann who undertook vast public work between 1853 and 1870 in order to transform Paris. Additionally, in public speeches, the Council explained its goals to make Yaoundé a capital of reference, ‘not unlike Paris or Geneva’.

Equally important, the managerial elites mobilized the examples of other African cities, claiming how adopting western managerialism, implicit in their own development plan, had led to the development of those cities. This suggested to locals that managerialism was not only good for them but had in fact been good for many other African countries. As explained by a project manager:

> The majority of African cities are undergoing similar projects . . . Yaoundé is following suit. Accra (Ghana) did so in the 90s. Ouagadougou has the big ‘Ouaga 2000’ project (Burkina Faso), Dakar in Senegal. In Egypt, demolitions had to occur for the construction of the ‘New Cairo’.

Mobilizing a western development vision is a story thread that reinstated the superiority of the managerialist intervention and legitimated controversial practices by highlighting their necessity for the development objectives.

Mobilizing ‘modern’ legislation. This is a story thread that argued for the need for a managerialist intervention in legalistic terms. This relied on laws written during the colonial era, although the colonial origins and oppressive contexts in which the laws had been authored were acknowledged.
These laws are a bricolage of German and French land law, the former colonial masters (German Crown Lands Acts of 15 July 1896 and French Act of 12 of January 1938 were the pillars used to establish current legislation, Cameroon’s Land Ordinance No.1 of July 1974). This land law ignores all claims to land not supported by ‘modern’ instruments. As such, we see that the colonial era laws were valuable resources in the attempts of local managerial elites to destroy the informal arrangements of city dwellers and impose ‘modern’ management practices deemed necessary for modernizing the city. As explained by the head of a raid team:

Our laws recognized only people who have a land ownership certificate, those are the only ones that are protected, nothing else matters . . . Here the people have to face the state in all its powers. The state will use all its powers to evict such people.

The land laws also defined the marshy lands that were to remain unoccupied due to their high risks. This meant that the shantytowns that were often built on these wetlands were to be destroyed and land was to be repurposed for the creation of green spaces. As the evictions, demolitions and expropriations of land were organized, the local administration justified their actions by explaining the necessity to follow the modern law in a press release:

The eviction and demolition work by the municipality are lawfully justified. The 6 of July 1974 law directly states that ‘no compensation is required for illegal construction that defy the rules of urbanism/urban planning’. Damages required to be paid only in the case of expropriation.

Thus, by mobilizing a western vision of development and legislation with its origins in the colonial era, the selective instrumental mimicry sub-narrative justifies the managerialist intervention by selectively and instrumentally emphasizing aspects of modernity without acknowledging the context.

**Mimicry’s ambivalence**

Our analysis also showed that, whilst the narrative constructed around selective instrumental mimicry sought to impose a regime of truth that marginalized other voices (Boje, 2001), there was another narrative reflecting ambivalence that emerged internally within the city administration after meeting resistance. It captures how, after meeting resistance on the ground, managerial elites were pushed to acknowledge the problematic nature of the managerial intervention and needed to tinker and edit the primary sub-narrative. The accounts associated with this narrative were common (but not exclusively) among local elites responsible for the practical implementation of the urban plan who had to face the resistance of locals on the ground. Their interpretation shows discursive instabilities in selective instrumental mimicry, which ignored important contextual considerations. We saw that this tinkering made the managerialist intervention more palatable to locals. This narrative is constructed through two story threads.

**Acknowledging dysfunctionalities.** This story thread reflects how managerial elites acknowledge inconsistencies and dysfunctionalities within the city as an organization, as well as its managerial approaches. It emerged from discussions with some of the administrators who questioned the implementation of the managerialist intervention. Their accounts included reflections on the apparent hypocrisy implied in the internal disorder in the management of the city affairs in contrast with the order and ‘rationality’ demanded from the populace in the name of modernity. Some in the administration understood the pleas of the victims of evictions and expropriations, acknowledging
the corruption of earlier administrations, misunderstandings surrounding some of the regulations, and their improper application. As a project manager explained:

People have certain documentations and they have paid a lot of money for the land and their houses but they are suddenly told that all that is meaningless [. . .] a lot of misinformation but also many are victims of some of the officials that had used their positions to create illegal schemes. . ., and most times the state has just re-appropriated its land for public use.

Furthermore, the administration was also perceived as being too slow and ineffective in issuing building permits, which allowed corrupt officials to develop schemes to 'speed up' the process or simply take advantage of landowners. The inaction of other sectors of the government (e.g. social services and public housing) was also mentioned. It was perceived that despite the restructuration of the space, true development could not be achieved without any regards to the plea of the population.

While the primary sub-narrative sought to suppress and derogate local stories by promoting a modern management of city infrastructure and way of life, this story thread shows an internal struggle to construct another interpretation and representation that tinkers with the initial grand narrative. The accounts of dysfunctionalities in the administration bring to light contextual references that desacralizes the assumption of supremacy of the managerialist intervention from within. Consequently, acknowledging dysfunctionalities is a story thread that disarticulates some of the contingencies of the modernity ideals. As such, it creates possibilities for dissident stories and voices to emerge between the contours of the hegemonic representation of the dominant discourse of selective instrumental mimicry.

**Accommodating local demands.** This story thread captures how implementers of the managerial interventions sometimes give in to resistance in order to pacify the populace. It encapsulates instances of everyday challenges to the managerialist intervention, as well as, the fracturing of the power of the modernity ideals by local realities. This reveals slight alterations in accordance with choices perceived to be 'more sensible' in the face of resistance. This accommodation of resistance enables the incorporation of local voices as it prevents the complete disenfranchisement of locals by preserving some of their means of survival. This account shows ambivalence in the implementation of the organizational vision, and how a sense of reality was added as the abstract concepts of the managerialist intervention were reified. Moreover, it shows bridges that are created among certain members of the lower echelons of the organization in collaboration with the local population. This particularly pertains to evictions and surprise raids undertaken against recalcitrant street vendors and squatters. Such raids often resulted in confiscation of merchandise, fines or arrest, which many perceived to be inhumane given the reality of the urban poor and the inaptitude of the local administration to provide affordable alternatives. These interviewees expressed concerns over the consequences of the raids and reveal the internal sabotages undertaken to mitigate their effects. For instance, the schedules of the secret and surprise raids that were meant to catch illegal vendors were disclosed by whistleblowers whose identities remain unknown as explained by a division director:

They [street vendors] are often warned by people from here! Our own agents. When we arrive on the spot, there is no one. . . but the next day if you return to the same spot you find everyone well settled [. . .] there are many that feel some sympathy towards them, other that make some deal with them. The only thing that we can do is to switch the patrol teams frequently, that way they would not have the chance to build some ties with the vendors, because once familiarity sets in, one starts to close their eyes on certain things.
Warnings allowed vendors to develop flexibility, moving their activities to more secure places, or taking a break and resuming their activities after things have settled down. The reality of poverty and unemployment, and the indignation of the population did not escape the raid teams sent to evacuate the ‘illegal occupants’. As explained by a raid team member:

‘Well, sometimes one is left wondering whether it is that bad if people are there [illegally occupying public space] . . . It is not as bad as people doing nothing, because many of those street vendors are graduates from universities’.

Other perceived the necessity to mitigate the stringency of the eviction to prevent an uncontrollable uproar. Thus, it was important to temper the raids, not for the sake of rebelling against the authority but to ensure a certain working relationship with the local population. This also implies turning a blind eye to certain infractions, which as explained by a marketplace administrator is necessary:

‘I have observed something . . . you can arrest these vendors . . . use water cannons, confiscate or burn their merchandise. On the first day, they will leave, will not sell anything and go home. Maybe one still has a thousand francs at home from the sale of the previous day. But on the fourth subsequent day, when the raid team will pull over, the vendors will directly start throwing rocks, the tension is high. They don’t have any money left and they are thinking about their children, they need to feed them and don’t think much of your water cannons’.

This account shows the realization that the expected transformation of people’s behaviours was unlikely because of either poverty or the unsuitability of the modernity ideals for local realities. The daily encounters with the disenfranchised enabled the implementers of the evictions to form different kinds of meaning and experience of the managerialist intervention. For these people the illegal vendors were individuals with faces, with lives, and who fought for their survival.

During our fieldwork, none of the people interviewed openly admitted to warning the ‘illegal occupants’ regarding the raids despite it being a common knowledge. However, they admitted to often ‘let some situations go’ or ‘look the other way’ because of the perceived futility of the intervention: As explained by a division director:

Few weeks after the construction of the new boulevard, there were some young people; cars washers that we caught breaking some of the slabs in order to access the water from the Mfoundi [a river ] in order to operate their car washing business [on the street]. All these young guys were evicted from the Kennedy Avenue and we tried to relocate some of them. But everything that we have done has remained insufficient. You relocate a thousand today, tomorrow two thousand arrive.

Consequently, accommodating local demands, is an account of the implementers of the intervention, who relaxed the stringency of the rules, which allowed the urban poor to continue operating in the shadows of the managerialist intervention. This reinterpretation of the managerialist intervention was driven by their sense of the types of actions that would not alienate local realities but would disarticulate the intervention to render it slightly more palatable. As such, mimicry ambivalence denaturalizes the deployment of managerialist ideals in specific localities.

**Mimicry’s incommensurability**

While mimicry’s ambivalence was a counter-narrative that exposes the instability of the dominant sub-narrative (selective instrumental mimicry), mimicry’s incommensurability shows the negotiation
and rationalization that seek to reconcile the controversies between customary beliefs and the managerial intervention. It is a mildly progressive sub-narrative that negotiates polarizations between modernity ideals, and resistance from the ground without necessarily attempting to challenge the modern vision or traditional beliefs. Unlike the internal resistance reflected in mimicry’s ambivalence, which was manifest in subterfuge or misappropriation of the rules to help informal dwellers, this sub-narrative acknowledges local voices but highlights current achievements, thereby attempting a stabilizing account of the dichotomy between traditional beliefs and modern ideals.

**Acknowledging local voices.** We see an acknowledgement by the managerial elites that rational management of the city and people’s way of life may never completely come to fruition. This reflects the difficulty in selling the values of a project that is perceived to be exploitative and in convincing people to transform their traditional self to fit the modernity ideals. Among the indigenous communities, resistance was common in subversive small acts that did not lead to any apparent resolutions but rather the acceptance of the fact that some of the ideals will never be fully realized. For instance, the head of sanitation explained his personal experience with defiance in these words:

> You will never imagine how stubborn those people are. I am going to tell you a story. . . In front of my home, there is a young lady who sells food just in front of my gate, I have told her several times to free my entrance but she is still there. . . . Sometimes I cannot enter my home with my car when the garbage truck is there. So, when she was officially summoned to leave and her makeshift stall destroyed, I was happy to get rid of her but that same evening, she came to my home with her mother crying, saying she has no job, her only means of survival has been destroyed. . . . I asked her the values of her goods and she said 30 000 francs. I removed 30000 francs from my own pocket and I handed it to her. I asked her to find a space in a market and she said yes. But, I am telling you that the next day; she was sitting exactly in the same place. . . . WHAT is one supposed to do in such situations? I gave up, especially because my kids play out there and I didn’t want to create a situation that could hurt them. You, so do not want to raise a whole neighbourhood against you.

Although the interviewees appeared convinced of the importance of abolishing street vending and transferring vending to well-organized marketplaces, they opted to avoid direct confrontation with indigenous communities who made claims for their rights to occupy their ancestors’ land based on customary beliefs. Unlike the petty vendors who often originated from other cities and villages and dwelled on the streets and slums, and thus could not make the same claims, this resistance could not easily be quelled by the elites who also understood the roots of these beliefs. As one representative told us in an interview:

> Many people feel robbed. They think Yaoundé does no longer belong to its indigenous population and people are unhappy, desperate[ . . . ]many collectivities have been dispersed just like that[ . . . ]Others have been dispossessed of their ancestors’ lands because they have no land titles, but they don’t want to give up, they are still fighting. They are trying to change things.

Encounters with this resistance signalled the incommensurability of the modern vision with customary beliefs. This further reified how the managerial intervention became a social reality that the elite plays out distinctly in different encounters and thereby constitute their hybridity.

**Highlighting success.** This account reflects efforts from the administrators who acknowledged local voices to draw attention to and praise projects that were successfully completed. This view argues that despite the continued polarization of the foundational ideals of the intervention and the claims of the resisters and people who acted in solidarity with them, progress had occurred as a result of
the managerial intervention. These managerial elites insisted on what they considered to be ‘very important achievements’ for the city and the country. They reflected on ‘how far the city has come’ by praising its new outlook and the behavioural change of the population. These elites were not oblivious of reality but rather, they chose to view the glass half full as explained by a director during an interview:

This is a discussion we constantly have here [. . .] many of my colleagues consider that we can never change things. The vision, our plans for this city can never be achieved. They are very pessimistic because they don’t think all our efforts have led to any real change [. . .] They think this city is not ready but I often remind them of how things were before, we have come a long way and we should not forget that.

For these elites, the landmarks constructed under the intervention were the signifiers of ‘a more modern Yaoundé’ and a beacon of hope not only for all Yaoundé’s communities but also for all Cameroonians. This sentiment is expressed below by an administrator explaining the significance of a clean capital city:

The parks and gardens contribute to the embellishment of the city, sometimes it is hard to remember how things were before. For the last ten years, we have developed some of those marshy lands and transform them into these beautiful green spaces. [. . .] Yaoundé is the display window of our country.

The city officials also celebrated the many works of arts built to embellish the cityscape. One of which was the important Monument of Independence, which was recently renovated. This landmark was perceived to be a reminder of how far ‘we have come as Cameroonians’. That is, an autonomous and independent country relieved from the chains of colonization. The realization of such a project reflected a significant path forward as explained, by this official:

The Monument of Independence is very important to people, to our city and our country. For years it looked like a ruin. . .This is our history, but it is also our future. We are autonomous beings; we can manage our own affairs and create a future for ourselves. This is about moving forward despite everything, creating a new path for ourselves. [. . .] It has become a nice attraction site for our people and foreign visitors. It was always one of our top priorities and we did that.

Other officials also sought to undermine the polarization by praising the business success of street vendors who relocated in the formal marketplaces. These gentrified marketplaces were celebrated for their organization, sanitation and food safety. Thus, highlighting success is a story thread that seeks to de-emphasized failures and other irreconcilable differences that were inherent in the implementation of the managerial intervention. By acknowledging local voices but highlighting success, mimicry’s incommensurability dilutes the significance of resistance by focussing the narrative on claims of progress for all citizens.

In summary, our findings show the legitimating narrative constructed by managerial elites to be hybrid in nature. We presented three sub-narratives that reflect the contours of the power struggle in (re) interpreting the implementation of a managerialist intervention. First, selective instrumental mimicry is a dominant sub-narrative that appropriates and deploys western ideals of modernity to assert a logic of appropriateness and justify the need for a radical intervention. However, this first sub-narrative excludes significant contextual considerations, thereby igniting the emergence of the counter sub-narrative, mimicry’s ambivalence. This second sub-narrative challenges the superiority of the dominant narrative due to its alienation of local realities and engages in minor tinkering to accommodate local demands. Finally, mimicry’s incommensurability emerges out of efforts to rationalize the perceived polarization between the managerial ideals and customary beliefs. We
argue that these sub-narratives intermingle to produce a hybrid narrative, which despite its fragmentation legitimizes the implementation of the managerial intervention.

Discussion

Based on the understanding that local managerial elites play an important role in the managerial colonization of the Global South and the adaptability of the colonial matrix of power (e.g. Quijano, 2007; Yousfi, 2014), we sought to unpack the narratives they construct to legitimate global managerialism to a resisting population. Indeed, global managerialism and neoliberal capitalism are the last incarnation of colonial modernity. Our study finds that local managerial elites in Cameroon construct hybrid narratives that give global managerialism a local face, making it appear less alien to resisting populations, which awards it a particular potency. We believe that by analysing the transformation and management of the colonial matrix of power in the context of global managerialism by local managerial elites, our study expands the space of inquiry as well as the broader conversations within the decolonial movement on how to decolonize MOK in a number of significant ways. We discuss these below.

First, whilst in the broader anti-colonial movement, hybridity is often framed as a resource that allows the colonized to resist, our study reiterates the increasingly loud calls from scholars such as Lugones (2010) and Mignolo (2014) who warn that hybridity anchored in the ‘colonial difference’ does not necessarily lead to a pluriversal world. In fact, it risks masking the underlying colonial power matrix in which all ‘hybridities’ remain anchored in western modernity. Any hybridity anchored in western modernity and whose taken for granted place is not questioned, ultimately facilitates coloniality (Lugones, 2010; Quijano, 2007). Our analysis shows a distinctly local dimension to the hybrid narratives managerial elites construct, making the modernity they advocate appears less colonial and thereby masking the colonial designs of the modernity. Here, the analytical importance of the colonial matrix of power in attempting to unpack coloniality becomes clearer. Whilst in many cases hybridity has aided the colonized in efforts to resist, our study concurs with the reflections that emancipation from the colonial chokehold can only come from de-centring the Global North and carving spaces that fully integrate and respect alternative perspectives. We found that despite compromises by local managerial elites, the centrality of western modernity and managerialism remained axiomatic and unquestioned.

Furthermore, this also reiterates the calls made by scholars such as Yousfi (2014), to explore further, in different localities of the Global, how such dynamics of hybridity play out. Yousfi (2014) points out that it is likely that managerial colonization has different versions in different localities, suggesting a diverse and creative agency involved in the reification of hybridity in different localities of the Global South. In our study, we were able to draw attention to a Cameroonian version of managerialism that is shaped by an adaptation work consisting of a dynamic (re)interpretation of mimicry practices by local managerial elites. It is likely that this may play out in a different manner in other locations of the Global South. These local struggles with global modernity are important in unpacking and understanding how struggles with managerialist modernity play out in the pluriversal struggles against coloniality.

More broadly, our study highlights the importance of the role of local elites in allowing the colonial matrix of power to be adaptable in its impositions on the Global South. As such, our study responds to the call made by scholars such as Mignolo (2014) to pay greater attention to how coloniality is often supported by institutions created in tandem with the structure of knowledge, requiring actors and institutions to adapt when required but remaining within the colonial matrix of power (Mignolo, 2014). We capture the role of local managerial elites in Cameroon. Our study points out that the adaptability of global managerialism (e.g. Alcadipani et al., 2012; Imas, 2005;
Murphy, 2007) is largely the result of hybridization and the adaptation work undertaken by local managerial elites. Put differently, we show that hybridity risks making the colonial matrix of power less discernible through the adaptation work of local managerial elites.4

In addition, our study also shows that an important factor was managerial elites being able to use the examples of other countries in the Global South that adopted managerialism in their efforts to legitimate their managerial intervention. This is an important reminder of the concerns raised by Nkrumah (1966), when he placed significant importance on dialogue and cooperation amongst the colonized if the decolonial project is to be successful. There is an important domino effect that Srinivas (2008) also picked up on in his study of attempts to ‘modernize’ marketplaces in India. A key element in the legitimating narrative were examples of other countries in the ‘east’ that had adopted a similar approach. Thus, whilst there have been important warnings raised about an over insistence on collectivity among the colonized and how it blurs the nuances and differences in their colonial struggles, since imposing a homogeneity has roots in colonialism (Cherniavsky, 2007; Spivak, 1988), our findings suggest that it remains crucial that the colonized are able to coordinate and present a common front. This suggests that the decolonization drive is made more challenging when other members of the Global South embrace neo-colonialism and western ideals, since, in the case of our study, this serves as a valuable resource for managerial elites seeking to narratively legitimate global managerialism.

However, we also saw that resistance on the ground was not futile (Bandyopadhyay and Yuwanond, 2018; Nyongesa, 2018), rather it pushed managerial elites to compromise. Resistance allowed a degree of moderation in the imposition of managerialism on the population. Consequently, the global managerialist ideals were iterated through discursive agency that legitimated its hegemonic representation but also a resistance that opened the possibilities for a more inclusive modernity. This perspective echoes, the work of Dussel (1993), which suggests the possibility of a different modernity, one that builds ‘a pluriverse (not a universe) in which every culture can conserve its own identity and, at the same time, assimilate the developments of this globalizing modernity’ (p. 505). Our findings suggest that resistance is a key element to achieving such plurality.

The findings of our study join calls for a greater degree of reflexivity when attempting to decolonize western development ideals and policies (e.g. Kapoor, 2003). In line we this view, we also felt necessary to return to our reflections on our role in the field and how it may have shaped our interpretations and the overall format of this study. Whilst we cannot say exactly how our own positions have shaped this study, after all many of these influences are taken for granted, as Steedman (1991: 55) put it, ‘knowledge cannot be separated from the knower’. We can only say that our study reflects the positions of scholars from the Global South based in the Global North seeking to highlight the coloniality of modernity in an African context. We believe it important to open this black box as part of the decolonial agenda. This is particularly important in the context of the decolonial agenda in which a significant number of the pillars of our field are or have been scholars based in the diaspora, trained, or influenced in the Global North. We believe that our study and interpretations shed light on a particular dimension of managerial colonialism, which joins the push to expand the space of decolonial and postcolonial examinations of the mainstream MOK and its diffusion.

**Conclusion**

In this paper, we have sought to contribute to the drive to decolonize knowledge in management and organization by unpacking and highlighting the potential roles played by managerial elites in the managerial colonization of the Global South. Our findings highlight the hybrid nature of the legitimating narratives local managerial elites construct to legitimate western managerialism. This
hybridity results in a form of managerialism that is more digestible to locals but none the less imposes an alien way of life. Paying greater attention to this hybridity is important for the decolonial drive. Rather than western managerialism being a single entity, it takes on different forms in different localities, making it particularly elusive to those trying to challenge its hegemony. This also implies moving beyond binary depictions of the decolonial/postcolonial struggle that sometimes position the Global North versus the Global South. There are in between, spaces of hybridity that need to be unpacked, questioned and challenged.

**Funding**
The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

**ORCID iD**
Aurélie Toivonen [https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0679-2681](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0679-2681)

**Notes**

1. We use the terms Global South to signify parts of the globe that were and continue to be subject to colonial domination and power relations. Global North refers to those sections of the globe that subjected and continue to subject others to colonial power relations.
2. It is important to keep in mind that narratives are not simply legitimating story telling accounts, but often accompany violence, disposessions and colonial domination, having material consequences for the colonized.
3. Indeed, this is the dilemma of many postcolonial scholars. How do we advance the decolonial agenda whilst walking this thin line?
4. This is not a call to abandon the idea of hybridity but rather a cautioning that is may also facilitate coloniality.

**References**

Abolafia, M. Y. (2010) ‘Narrative Construction as Sensemaking: How a Central Bank Thinks’, *Organization Studies* 31(3): 349–67.

Alcadipani, R., Khan, F. R., Gantman, E. and Nkomo, S. (2012) ‘Southern Voices in Management and Organization Knowledge’, *Organization* 19(2): 131–43

Alexander, P. (2016) ‘Marikana Commission of Inquiry: From Narratives Towards History’, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 42(5): 815–39.

Alvesson, M. and Sköldberg, K. (2015) *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.

Ashcroft, B. (2002) *Post-Colonial Transformation*. London: Routledge.

Atangana, M. (2010) *The End of French Rule in Cameroon*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Bandyopadhyay, R. and Yuwanond, P. (2018) ‘Representation, Resistance and Cultural Hybridity of the Naga Indigenous People in India’, *Tourism Management Perspectives* 26: 164–71.

Banerjee, S. B. (2003) ‘Who Sustains Whose Development? Sustainable Development and the Reinvention of Nature’, *Organization Studies* 24(1): 143–80.

Banerjee, S. B. and Linstead, S. (2001) ‘Globalization, Multiculturalism and Other Fictions: Colonialism for the New Millennium?’, *Organization* 8(4): 683–722.

Bhabha, H. K. (1994) *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.

Bhambra, G. K. (2014) ‘Postcolonial and Decolonial Dialogues’, *Postcolonial Studies* 17(2): 115–21.

Boje, D. M. (2001) *Narrative Methods for Organizational & Communication Research*. London: Sage.

Boukhris, L. (2017) ‘The Black Paris Project: The Production and Reception of a Counter-Hegemonic Tourism Narrative in Postcolonial Paris’, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 25(5): 684–702.

Braun, V., Clarke, V. and Weate, P. (2016) ‘Using Thematic Analysis in Sport and Exercise Research’, in B. Smith and A. Sparkes (eds) *Routledge Handbook of Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise*, pp. 191–205. Abingdon: Routledge.
Brissett, N. (2013) ‘Reading Conformity, Resistance, and Hybridity in Jamaica’s Educational Policy Reform Approaches’, *Journal of Postcolonial Cultures and Societies* 4(4): 82–116.

Brown, A. D. (2004) ‘Authoritative Sensemaking in a Public Inquiry Report’, *Organization Studies* 25(1): 95–112.

Bruner, J. (1991) ‘The Narrative Construction of Reality’, *Critical Inquiry* 18(1): 1–21.

Burney, S. (2012) *Pedagogy of the Other: Edward Said, Postcolonial Theory, and Strategies for Critique*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Chaturvedi, V. (2012) *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial* (*Mappings Series*). London: Verso Books.

Cherniavsky, E. (2007) ‘The Romance of the Subaltern in the Twilight of Citizenship’, *The Global South* 1(1): 75–83.

Cunliffe, A. L. (2010) ‘Retelling Tales of the Field: In Search of Organizational Ethnography 20 Years On’, *Organizational Research Methods* 13(2): 224–39.

Czarniawska, B. (2004) *Narratives in Social Science Research*. London: Sage.

Dar, S. (2018) ‘De-Colonizing the Boundary-Object’, *Organization Studies* 39(4): 565–84.

Dar, S. and Cooke, B. (2009) *The New Development Management: Critiquing the Dual Modernization*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Derrick, J. (1983) ‘The “Native Clerk” in Colonial West Africa’, *African Affairs* 82(326): 61–74.

Domínguez, L. and Luoma, C. (2020) ‘Decolonising Conservation Policy: How Colonial Land and Conservation Ideologies Persist and Perpetuate Indigenous Injustices at the Expense of the Environment’, *Land*, 9(3): 65.

Dussel, E. (1993) ‘Eurocentrism and Modernity (Introduction to the Frankfurt Lectures)’, *Boundary* 2(3): 65–76.

Fanon, F. (2007) *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York, NY: Grove/Atlantic.

Faria, A. and Hemais, M. (2017) ‘Rethinking the Bottom of the Pyramid: A Critical Perspective from an Emerging Economy’, *Marketing Theory* 17(3): 271–87.

Garrett, D. T. (2005) *Shadows of Empire: The Indian Nobility of Cusco, 1750-1825*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Ifowodo, O. (2013) *History, Trauma, and Healing in Postcolonial Narratives: Reconstructing Identities*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Imas, J. M. and Weston, A. (2012) ‘From Harare to Rio de Janeiro: Kukiya-Favela Organization of the Excluded’, *Organization* 19(2): 205–27.

Imas, M. (2005) ‘Rational Darkness: Voicing the Unheard in The Modern Management Discourse of Chile’, *Administrative Theory & Praxis* 27(1): 111–33.

Jameson, F. (1984) ‘Periodizing the 60s’, *Social Text* 9/10: 178–209.

Kapoor, I. (2003) ‘Acting in a Tight Spot: Homi Bhabha’s Postcolonial Politics’, *New Political Science* 25(4): 561–77.

Lugones, M. (2010) ‘Toward a Decolonial Feminism’, *Hypatia* 25(4): 742–59.

Mignolo, W. D. (2014) ‘Spirit Out of Bounds Returns to the East: The Closing of the Social Sciences and the Opening of Independent Thoughts’, *Current Sociology* 62(4): 584–602.

Moodley, K. (2000) ‘African Renaissance and Language Policies in Comparative perspective’, *Politikon* 27(1), 103–15.

Mulinge, M. M. and Lesetedi, G. N. (1998) ‘Interrogating Our Past: Colonialism and Corruption in Sub-Saharan Africa’, *African Journal of Political Science/Revue Africaine de Science Politique* 3(2): 15–28.

Murphy, J. (2007) *The World Bank and Global Managerialism*. London: Routledge.

Nkrumah, K. (1966) *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*. London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, Ltd.

Nyongesa, A. (2018) *Cultural Hybridity and Fixity: Strategies of Resistance in Migration Literatures*. Chitungwiza, Zimbabwe: Mwanaka Media and Publishing.

Prasad, A. (2014) ‘You Can’t go Home Again: And Other Psychoanalytic Lessons from Crossing a Neocolonial Border’, *Human Relations* 67(2): 233–57.

Quijano, A. (2007) ‘Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality’, *Cultural Studies* 21(2–3): 168–78.
Raychaudhuri, S. (2001) ‘Colonialism, Indigenous Elites and the Transformation of Cities in the Non-Western World: Ahmedabad (Western India), 1890-1947’, Modern Asian Studies 35(3): 677–726.

Riessman, C. K. (2008) Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences. London: Sage.

Said, E. W. (2003) Orientalism. London: Penguin Classics.

Spivak, G. C. (1988) Can the Subaltern Speak? Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Srinivas, N. (2008) ‘Managerialism and NGO Advocacy: Handloom Weavers in India’, in N. Srinivas (ed.) The New Development Management: The Dual Modernization. London: Zed Books.

Steedman, P. (1991) ‘On the Relations Between Seeing, Interpreting and Knowing’, in Research and Reflexivity, pp. 53–62. London: Sage.

Stetson, G. (2012) ‘Oil Politics and Indigenous Resistance in the Peruvian Amazon: The Rhetoric of Modernity Against the Reality of Coloniality’, The Journal of Environment & Development 21(1): 76–97.

Thiong’o, N. (1989). Matigari. Johannesburg, South Africa: Heinemann.

Turner, J. (2017) ‘Internal Colonisation: The Intimate Circulations of Empire, Race and Liberal Government’, European Journal of International Relations 24(4): 765–90.

Van Maanen, J. (1988) “Tales of the Field”, On Writing Ethnography. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

West, M. O. (1992) ““Equal Rights for all Civilized Men”: Elite Africans and the Quest for “European” Liquor in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1924–1961”, International Review of Social History 37(3): 376–97.

Weston, A. and Imas, J. M. (2019) ‘Resisting Colonization in Business and Management Studies: From Postcolonialism to Decolonization’, in C. Cassell, A. Cunliffe and G. Grandy (eds) The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Business and Management Research Methods, pp 119–35. London: Sage.

Young, R. J. C. (2001) Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Yousfi, H. (2014) ‘Rethinking Hybridity in Postcolonial Contexts: What Changes and What Persists? The Tunisian Case of Pouлина’s Managers’, Organization Studies, 35(3): 393–421.

Author biographies

Aurélie Toivonen is a post-doctoral researcher at the faculty of management and business at Tampere University. Her work focuses on institutions and entrepreneurial processes.

Tapiwa Seremani is an assistant professor in corporate social responsibility at IÉSEG School of Management. His work focuses on how different actors with diverging interests attempt to influence institutional infrastructures around them with different exercises of power.