Academics on the move? Gender, race and place in transnational academic mobility

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Background: This article contributes to the literature on gender and academic mobility by contrasting how postcolonial knowledge relations are played out in Swedish, Mozambican and South African academic workplaces. More specifically, it explores the experiences of gendered and racialised inequality in everyday academic working life in the three countries.

Sample and Method: The respondents are Mozambican scholars who have participated in a Swedish development-aid-supported PhD training programme in which mobility is mandatory. Using an online survey and interviews, their experiences of gendered and racialised inequality are theorised through the lenses of postcolonial knowledge theory and feminist translocational intersectionality.

Results: The results point out the importance of highlighting the complex ways in which bodies and spaces are mutually produced and how these change in different postcolonial translocal academic settings and create differing conditions for academic work. In this context, the concept of ‘embodied discursive geographies’ is suggested as a way forward.

Keywords: discrimination; race; gender; academia; transnational mobility

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Inequality on the grounds of gender and race is common in everyday academic working life, regardless of where a person lives and works (Mählck & Thaver, 2010; Law, Philips, & Turney, 2004; Mirza, 2009; Morley, 2005; Muhs, Niemanns, González, & Harris, 2012). We know that gendered and racialised inequality in academic organisations affects how black and minority ethnic (BME) female academic staff experience everyday academic work, shape their career opportunities and advance in their careers. These processes exist alongside equality interventions and other processes that reshape higher education institutions (HEIs) and the working conditions of academics in the direction of more audits, more competition and more internationalisation (Kogan & Teichler, 2007). In this context, the increasing attention paid by policy-makers and researchers to the international mobility of PhD holders in HEIs is of key interest. This article focuses on how intersectional racialised and gendered inequality is constructed through everyday academic work relations – both during and after periods of transnational academic mobility – and how these processes move and shift across different postcolonial academic workplaces. This is done by empirically analysing the mobility narratives of transnational researchers. At the same time, these narratives can also contribute to the existing debate on equality in higher education from a transnational gender perspective by interrogating the in-between spaces of the local and the global and how power relations inside and outside a nation state are reflected in its institutions and people (Mayuzumi, 2008, 2015).

Situating the research

Despite policy-makers’ growing interest in international academic mobility and, especially, in its scope, direction and consequences, research on the topic is sparse (Hoffman, 2008). The majority of research focuses on how researchers move within the Global North (Lykogianni & Van Den Broeck, 2010; OECD, 2007). There is currently a growing literature that highlights the heterogeneity of internationalisation and unequal conditions for academic mobility, though its focus is mainly on Asia and Latin America (Jacob & Meek, 2013). Tremblay (2009) notes that longitudinal studies of the lived experiences of researchers from the African continent are practically non-existent. Despite a growing interest in the relation between highly skilled migration and academic mobility (Mavroudi & Warren, 2013), the lived experiences of researchers supported by development-aid agencies are rarely analysed. When research focuses specifically on gender, the results indicate that the direction and scope of academic mobility – as well as the possibilities for and hindrances in its transnationality – are highly gendered.
Aim and research questions
The aim of the article is to explore how Mozambican PhD graduates experience discrimination in different translocal and postcolonial spaces – in this case, academic workplaces in Sweden, Mozambique and South Africa – by analysing the process of discrimination as one based on racialisation. In this context, racialisation implies connecting physical characteristics with character traits and origin, thus creating an amalgam which produces a naturalised – in other words a racialised – image that forms the basis of discrimination if this image is one of either inferiority or threat. The three specific research questions for which I seek answers to are set out below.

- How are experiences of discrimination articulated in the different HEIs in Sweden, South Africa and Mozambique?
- Are there any gender differences in these experiences?
- What bearing does the theoretical concept of embodied discursive geographies have on comparatively researching intersectional gendered and racialised inequality in HEIs?

The article is organised as following: The first section outlines the PhD training programme in question and the main theoretical concepts used in the article. The second section describes the study’s methodology and presents selected empirical findings from previous research on the same group of researchers (Fellesson & Mählick, 2013). This background information is provided because it reveals why the current research focuses explicitly on experiences of intersectional gendered and racialised inequality in everyday academic work and how these experiences shift across different postcolonial workplaces. The third section ‘Results and analysis’ presents empirical findings from Sweden, South Africa and Mozambique. Finally, the ‘Concluding discussion’ section follows. Here, the main research findings of this article are outlined and the concept of embodied discursive geographies is introduced as a possible way of comparatively analysing intersectional gendered and racialised inequality in HEIs.

Context
Sida has supported research capacity-building in low-income countries for many years by providing PhD training programmes. These programmes are designed to sustain links with the home institution, which means that the PhD candidates move regularly between their home universities and their host university departments in Sweden. The operationalisation of the training programme is determined by Sida (the programme’s funder), the HEIs providing the PhD training in Sweden (contributing supervision, office space and research facilities) and research institutions in low-income countries which provide the candidates and office space at the home universities.

In some of the low-income countries, Sida’s support of PhD training has been in operation since the early 1970s, and it is estimated that about 800–1,000 African scholars have graduated. The majority of PhD training programmes are directed towards universities in Africa. The reason for choosing the Mozambique PhD training programme for my analysis is that it is one of the oldest to be funded by Sida and, in comparison to the agency’s other PhD training programmes, has the highest number of participating researchers.

Theoretical conceptualisation of ‘racialisation’
The theoretical understanding of processes of racialisation in this article is influenced by one of the core researchers on the topic, Robert Miles. According to Miles, racialisation is understood as a dialectic process by which meaning is attributed to particular biological features of human beings, as a result of which individuals may be assigned to a general category of persons which reproduces itself biologically . . . . The process of racialization of human beings entails the racialization of the processes in which they participate and the structures and institutions that result. (Miles, 1989, p. 76)

1The Swedish support for PhD training programmes is global and directed towards research departments in universities in Africa, Asia and Latin America although, recently, a number of PhD training programmes in certain countries in Asia and Latin America have been phased out.
2No information is currently available about the overall number of participants who have been involved in Sida-funded PhD training programmes. The estimated figure has thus been constructed through oral communication with Sida’s research officers, an analysis of Sida’s lists of participants at alumni meetings in some of the PhD training programmes and an analysis of the different PhD training programme budgets.
Importantly, racialisation can also refer to processes constructing privilege – in other words, white people can also be racialised; feminists have compared these processes to the ways in which men are privileged by their gender and how this involves ‘taken for granted processes’ (Frankenberg, 1993). Moving beyond a white-black dichotomy, Miles and Torres (2007) emphasise the importance of analysing processes whereby taken-for-granted attributes are constructed/ascribed meaning and naturalised. Here, skin colour has been highlighted as a particularly important ‘taken-for-granted phenomenon’, which can be focussed on when researching processes of racialisation:

Skin colour is one such phenomenon. Its visibility is not inherent in its existence but is a product of signification: human beings identify skin colour to mark or symbolise other phenomena in a historical context in which other significations occur. When human practices include and exclude humans in the light of skin colour, collective identities are produced and social inequalities are structured. It is for this reason that historical studies of the meanings attributed to skin colour in different historical contexts and through time are of considerable importance. (Miles & Torres, 2007, p. 71)

Developing the concept of racialisation further, Philip Cohen (1997) puts forward a cautionary note on the importance of avoiding a monolithic understanding of processes of racialisation:

[...] it is supposed to have impressed itself in much the same way on the USA as in ‘the third world’. The history of racism becomes the story of white Europeans oppressing black non-Europeans on the basis of skin colour; whites are intrinsically racist and a black European is a contradiction in terms. En route, racisms and histories which do not fit into this simple binarism become marginalised and ‘othered’. (Cohen, 1997, p. 244)

This article makes a contribution to research on processes of racialisation in geopolitical contexts (i.e. in Sweden, Mozambique and South Africa) outside the Anglo-Saxon research canon on research into racialisation (i.e. UK, US, Canada and Australia) by comparatively discussing how the same group of individuals experiences discrimination based on skin colour, as an effect of racialisation, in these different postcolonial university contexts. Accordingly, the research in this article makes three contributions to theories of racialisation: (1) it challenges the nature/culture divide of racialisation (i.e. racialisation refers only to skin colour or only to cultural identity), (2) it challenges the view that processes of racialisation are constructed in identical ways in different postcolonial contexts and (3) it contributes to theories of racialisation which have often overlooked the role of gender relations. The following section provides a more detailed explanation of the theoretical framework of intersectional gender relations used in this article.

**A theoretical conceptualisation of translocal intersectionality**

As intersectionality research in the last decade has tended to focus on identity formation between groups, people or subjects, Anthias (2012) suggests that there is a need to reconnect intersectional theory to social contexts, including both structures (economic, political and institutional) and processes (discursive and representational). While this approach to intersectionality has made possible an analysis of the highly differentiated nature of advantage and disadvantage, there are few studies on how these processes shift across different social and geographic spaces. Anthias suggests the concept of translocal positionality as a way forward. From this framework, it is possible to analyse how power relations in different ‘spaciotemporal’ contexts are mutually constituted – and mutually constitute – differing conditions for variously situated subjects, at the same time highlighting contradictions and complexities.

In this research, intersectional translocal positionality is represented by the translocal university workplaces in Sweden, Mozambique and South Africa and the researchers’ shifting experiences of racialisation and gender relations in these different locations. The analysis will therefore be sensitive to the ways in which privilege and disadvantage are represented in the different spacio-temporal contexts as well as the contradicting representations and subject positions (simultaneous privilege and disadvantage) this produces.

**Methodology**

In this study, I apply a multi-method approach (Allwood, 2004) using an online survey and interviews to explore not only how experiences of discrimination are played out in workplaces in Sweden, Mozambique and South Africa but also the shifting and complex character of these processes. I have related the patterns of discrimination from the survey to the interviewed researchers’ narratives, which has allowed me to explore the complexities of discrimination from different angles and at different analytical levels (Allwood, 2004).

The questions asked in both the survey and the interviews were related and some of the themes overlapped – for example – personal experiences of mobility and/or stickiness, supervision and research collaboration during training, current work situation and discrimination experienced during training and in the current work situation. The survey was also used to collect basic data on the participants’ individual dispositions and on sectorial, social and geographical movements over time. Although

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See also Binnie and Skeggs (2004) for a discussion on how and why certain bodies can move through certain spaces.
being an important topic in its own right, the research presented in this article does not analyse the time dimension. The author and research colleague conducted all interviews over a 3-week period in Mozambique in 2013. The individual interviews were semi-structured, which meant that I was flexible about how much emphasis was placed on the respective themes.

Sample
The total research sample is based on a survey of 159 individuals who had either graduated from the Swedish–Mozambican PhD training programme or were involved in it in 2013. The response rate was 51.6% (82 individuals). Women represented 40% of the survey sample. The respondents were drawn from a variety of scientific disciplines, including the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, medicine and technical sciences, and were included in the survey with a view to mapping their mobility and career rationales. The statistical sample covers the period 1990–2013.

In total, 20 interviews were conducted (7 women and 13 men), representing the social, natural and medical sciences. The positions of the interviewees ranged from Senior Lecturer and Head of Department to national experts, and their ages varied between 40 and 60 years: the majority were married and had grown-up children.

Analytical design
The analysis is presented according to a post-structural research design. This means that the interviews and survey patterns will be presented in a joint ‘Results and analysis’ section, where selected empirical findings will be continuously discussed in relation to gender theory and previous research on racialisation in HEIs. The analytical design is also inspired by transnational feminist research on border crossing. Here, the space of subject-making, that is, how subjects manage and negotiate norms, cultures and values in particular contexts, is the site of analysis (Mayuzumi, 2015; Mohanty, 2003). Finally, the analytical design is inspired by recent social constructivist grounded theory (see, e.g., Charmaz, 2008). In this context, this means that, based on the empirical findings in this research and previous theory, the concept of embodied discursive geographies is introduced as a possible way of comparatively analysing intersectional gendered and racialised inequality in HEIs.

Definition of ‘discrimination’ and limitations of the study
In the survey, the definition of discrimination was inspired by the legal framework on sexual and gender harassment in Swedish working life. This definition has informed previous statistical research on the topic in a Swedish higher education context (Eliasson, 1998; Jämo, 2006; Pernerud, 2004). Accordingly, discrimination includes a number of events ranging from unwanted attention to physical violence. A common denominator is that it is the person who is exposed to the act who defines whether or not the act is unwanted.

In the interviews, discrimination was conceptualised through a critical reading of the interview as a whole, rather than through separate answers to individual questions. This means that, when the interviewees described patterns of silence, isolation, discomfort, loneliness, grief or anger, separately but often together, I have defined these patterns as discrimination. In this context, I am inspired by research into ‘hidden discrimination’ in higher education. The phrase ‘hidden discrimination’ is used to theorise patterns that are subtle and hard to grasp. These patterns could be intentional or unintentional. When these patterns work singularly or simultaneously over time, they impact negatively career development (see Högskoleverket, 2005).

Here the definitions and operationalisation of ‘discrimination’ on the basis of skin colour are based on a broad investigation of perceived discrimination. The analytical focus is on experiences of discrimination based on skin colour and how these processes are constructed in different transnational contexts. In future research, perceived discrimination could be triangulated with other parameters of discrimination and could add another layer of knowledge to this body of research. A limitation of the research presented in this article is that it does not deal with how discrimination is resisted. This does not mean that resistance was not articulated in the interviews or that it is not an important research topic, but simply that space does not allow me to cover this aspect here.

Why focus on discrimination?
From previous research with the same group of interviewees, it is well known that the participants perceived themselves as belonging to a privileged group and that participation in the programme was important for their career development. Many of them also hold leading positions in universities and in other sectors (Fellesson & Mühlick, 2013). Interestingly, despite their mainly positive experiences, they had also experiences of gender and race discrimination. As shown in Fig. 1, the experiences of discrimination varied across university contexts. Hence, I was surprised to learn that discrimination on the grounds of skin colour topped the discrimination categories in South Africa (45%) and Sweden (21%). While BME staff in the UK and the USA experience more difficulties in finding employment and more discrimination based on race compared to their white peers, the discourse in Sweden is one of ethnicity or culture (Hübnette & Lundström, 2011; Leathwood & Read, 2009; Mirza, 2009; Muhs et al., 2012). This is one of the reasons why, prior to the research presented in this article, no large-scale studies on discrimination on the grounds of skin colour, as an effect of racialisation, have been conducted in Swedish academia.
South Africa and Sweden are usually portrayed as polar opposites in the dominant discourses on democracy and discrimination. Therefore, the strong occurrence of experiences of discrimination based on skin colour in both countries is noteworthy. In Mozambique, skin colour was attributed less value. Here the dominant pattern was perceived discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity (9%) and family situation (22%). These patterns were also highly gendered; overall, the survey showed that women experienced more discrimination in almost all the social parameters that was tested for.\(^4\) The survey results also indicated that, in their current position, women had lower academic status than men, had fewer career possibilities and less time for research (Fellesson & Måhlck, 2013).

Results and analysis
In this section, I show how experiences of discrimination were articulated by women and men in different workplaces.

**Discrimination at the intersection of nationalism and post-apartheid racial formations in South Africa**

The English and Dutch shaping of the colonial history of South Africa is also reflected in the development of HEIs. When higher education was developed in South Africa, it was modelled on the English system, with English and Dutch as the languages of instruction. Dutch was replaced by Afrikaans in 1916. Higher education was also only intended for whites and their children. Due to the lack of access and the policy of racial segregation, blacks\(^5\) were obliged to look overseas for their education. The first opportunities for blacks to enter higher education in South Africa appeared in 1916, when missionaries established the South African Native College. This institution became the University of Fort Hare in 1951. In fact, most universities in South Africa practised racial segregation in the early 1920s, long before apartheid was established as a policy in 1948 (Sehoole, 2006).

Many of the HEIs that were labelled as ‘white’, ‘coloured’ or ‘black’ during the apartheid era have merged in recent years. This has led to tension among academic staff and helps explain the contemporary institutional discrimination against black academics (Potgieter, 2002). In this context, gender relations play a significant role in the production and maintenance of gender and racialised inequality in South African higher education, although gender still receives less attention than race in equity work (Bennett, 2002). In addition, contemporary international collaboration between universities and among staff overlaps somewhat with old colonial and current trade relations, thereby privileging research relations with European countries and the USA (Sehoole, 2006). Presently, South Africa is at the forefront of affirmative action work and policies for transforming HEIs.

Of particular importance for this article is the growing racism against black Africans in South Africa (Hickel, 2014). Explanations both include perspectives that put economic relations at the forefront of the analysis and emphasise identity formation processes and nationalism (Hickel, 2014). Regardless of these different approaches, it is clear that racism against black Africans is par for the course in contemporary South Africa. Against this backdrop, how are experiences of racialisation in academic work situations articulated in South Africa and are there gender differences? The following quotation by a

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\(^4\)In the survey, there were questions on experiences of discrimination on the grounds of skin colour, family situation, position in the workplace, age, socio-economic background, ethnicity, gender and sexuality. The only parameter in which men reported higher levels of experienced discrimination than women was that of ethnicity (Fellesson & Måhlck, 2013, p. 55).

\(^5\)Note on language: in South Africa, the ‘black’ population consists of Blacks, Coloureds and Indians.
female respondent is chosen because it is in line with how many women described their experiences in a South African university context; their descriptions were very different from the ways in which male respondents talked about racialisation in South Africa (this will be looked at in more detail later in the article). The quotation supports the survey results (see Fig. 1). The university context referred to in the quotation is that of a highly ranked and historically white university:

Respondent: The issue of apartheid still has consequences today. I was a Mozambican, you know, a foreigner but, at the same time, a black woman. In addition to all this I was doing a PhD. If I had been doing an honours’ or a master’s degree, it wouldn’t have mattered. But when you are on a PhD programme they make your life difficult … I’m not sure how to say it … being in South Africa is not easy. Being a black woman in South Africa, they make your life hell! [...] I secured funds from abroad but I didn’t receive my funding. Somebody took it!

Interviewer: Took it? Here at this university?

Respondent: No there, in South Africa. Somebody took it or gave it to somebody else. This is what I’m saying. Studying in South Africa is tough.

(Woman researcher and lecturer)

In this interview excerpt, the female respondent stresses how intersections of nationality, skin colour, academic position and gender construct experiences of discrimination. Doing a PhD implies climbing the academic ladder and crossing status boundaries. For academic women, this means breaking the unwritten rules and cultural understanding of what feminine activities are ('In addition to all this, I was doing a PhD. If I had been doing an honours’ or a master’s degree, it wouldn’t have mattered'). From previous research on gender in HEIs worldwide, it is well known that, for women, these boundaries are more difficult to cross (GUNI, 2008; Kwesiga & Sendiwa, 2006; Morley, 2005). So how did men experience racialisation in South Africa?

Recognising that the legacy of apartheid still made academic life difficult for black staff in South Africa, a black male interviewee talked about the ways in which intersections of skin colour and nationality created different conditions for him compared to other black staff members at one South African university. As a black academic, he had felt the expectation to talk in one of the local languages, since English was seen as the language of the oppressor. With his black skin and broken English, he felt marginalised without access to his white colleagues and, since he did not speak any local language, he was not included in the community of black colleagues. Everyday life outside the university had also been difficult, making him feel isolated, and he had sometimes experienced hostility just by walking on the streets. However, experiencing discrimination based on gender was very unusual among our male respondents. This situation was largely different from the way in which women talked about their experiences in South African academia, as already seen in the earlier quotation and from the results from our survey (see Fig 1. under the heading Why focus on discrimination?). How can the narrative presented above be understood?

Although there is surprisingly little research into the social construction of Mozambican masculinity in South African universities, there are research results from nearby fields. The following section will outline examples from research into labour migration.

Previous research in the area of work relations reveals how Mozambican men are made to feel inferior when moving to South Africa to work instead of work migration constructing a form of rite de passage into adult masculinity (Agadjanian, 2005). Importantly, this research refers to work in low-income sectors. However, it would be reasonable to assume that the mechanisms of the inferiorisation of masculinity are likely to happen in academia as well. This argument gains further coherence when related to research into violence against migrants and processes of ‘racialising nationality’ in South Africa (Steenkamp, 2014). Here, among both black and white populations, white Europeans and North Americans are seen as the most desirable migrants, and migrants from Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland as more desirable than Zimbabweans and Mozambicans. The latter groups are identified and hierarchically organised on the basis of the languages they speak, their supposedly darker skin colour and possibly even the clothes they wear and the accent with which they speak (Steenkamp, 2014).

In the context of this article, I suggest that the narrative presented above implies that the translocational position held by the man includes dual positions of both privilege and disadvantage: of embodying a male corps in a gendered institution while, at the same time, being a black man with a minority nationality (Mozambican) in post-apartheid South Africa.

Thus, mobility indicates a change in positionality for our male interviewees. This means that, while in South Africa, skin colour and nationality are intersecting and outnumbering the masculine privilege held in Mozambique. How are experiences of discrimination in academic work articulated in a Swedish university context? The following section looks further into this.

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6In keeping with the wishes of this participant, the interview was not recorded and only notes were taken. It is therefore not possible to quote directly.

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7In the survey, the variable ‘ethnicity’ was used because I also wanted to map ethnic relations within Mozambique. In the context of South Africa and Sweden, this variable is analysed as ‘nationality’.
Isolation and exclusion in a Swedish colour-blind context

Despite about one fifth of Sweden’s population having a ‘foreign background’,9 and many of these being black or coloured, the general discourse in Sweden is that of colour-blindness (Hübínnette & Lundström, 2011). According to this discourse, Sweden is now a post-racial society. The concept of race is seen as highly controversial and discrimination on the grounds of skin colour as obsolete. Scholars of critical race theory in Sweden have theorised this as a specific form of Swedish colour-blind antiracism (Hübínnette & Lundström, 2011), which can be understood from the perspective of Sweden’s geopolitical history. Let me expand on this line of thought; up until the 1960s, Sweden led the development and export of ‘race biological’ research in a global scientific community: the creation of the National Institute for Race Biology in Uppsala and ethnic registration are landmarks in this process. Since then, research on discrimination on the grounds of skin colour and/or which uses the concept of race has been surrounded by a discursive silence.9 Against this background, it is pertinent to ask how academics experience their stay in Swedish academic workplaces.

As the survey results indicate, experiences of discrimination on the grounds of skin colour are pronounced (21%) in comparison to experiences on the grounds of ethnicity (5%). In the interviews, a common theme was feelings of being ignored. This theme needs to be related to the survey results on experiences of discrimination due to skin colour and to previous international research into the practice of ignoring an individual in order to express racialisation (see, e.g., Puwar, 2004). The next section will develop this in more detail. The following quotation by a female academic is chosen because it demonstrates how many interviewees talked about their stay in Sweden. Because being ignored is central in the quotation, it adds a layer of complexity to the survey results on experiences of racialisation:

You see, there are two kinds of Swedes: those who have been abroad and those who have never been abroad. The first group made me feel very welcome, but the other group? Oh, they ignored me, made me feel like a thing. (Woman researcher and lecturer)

The different aspects of ignoring are crucial for our analysis. Although it is difficult to theorise ignoring and what it symbolises and produces, this does not mean that it is unimportant in research on the social construction of unequal social relations. In the following, I elaborate on ignoring with regard to (1) how racialisation is repre-

9In the national census and in everyday language, the phrase ‘foreign background’ is used. This refers to people born outside Sweden or people born in Sweden with both parents born outside Sweden (SCB, 2009).

10Here Henry (2015) builds her understanding of ‘disconscious racism’ on the work of King (1991).

11This does not mean that whiteness is not a colour or a position but, as Richard Dyer has indicated, whiteness is rarely recognised by white people (Dyer, 1993).
of view, it may be safer to pretend that black and coloured academics or students do not exist.

While both our female and male interviewees had experienced racialisation through being ignored in Sweden, their narratives revealed that the responses to this were clearly gendered. Women said that, while they had felt racialised against in Sweden, they had also been able to use this space to focus on academic work, since they were not disturbed by family obligations or care work in the academy (see also Leathwood & Hey, 2009 for a discussion of care work in the academy), something which men rarely mentioned.

**Between a post-racial discourse and demands for ‘authentic black bodies’ in Mozambique**

In the Mozambican context, contemporary race relations are constructed within the framework of its postcolonial history, where Portuguese colonisers mixed with the African population. Today, the African–European population accounts for 0.2% of the total population, of whom the majority belong to ethnic groups such as the Makhuwa, Tsonga, Lomwe, Sena and others. During and after the war of independence, thousands of white Portuguese colonisers were chased out by the Mozambican Liberation Front- or FRELIMO-led troops. As a result, the current and second wave of white Portuguese migration to Mozambique is seen as highly controversial. In the context of this article, white bodies are controversial for both historical and contemporary reasons. Today 0.06% of the population is of European descent. The Mozambican racial regime is also influenced by historical trade relations with India long before the European and Portuguese colonisation and, today Indians account for 0.08% of the total population. Despite the Indian group’s historical presence in Mozambique, the country has preserved a lot of its own culture and traditions (Index Mundi, 2013).

Similar to the South African context, HEIs were modelled on the previous colonial power of Portugal and the language of instruction was Portuguese. During the colonial era, higher education was mainly restricted to Portuguese settlers, and the enrolment of Mozambican students amounted to less than 0.1% (Brito, Brouwer, & Menezes, 2008, p. 304). As in many other countries in Africa, student enrolment has increased tremendously in the last decade. In Mozambique, enrolment increased dramatically between 1995 and 2003 and, by 2011, had reached 112,787 students. However, the number of female students still lags behind and represents only 25% of the total student enrolment in public institutions (Fellesson & Mählck, 2013; INE, 2012). Against this backdrop, how do women and men experience discrimination in academic workplaces in Mozambique after a period of transnational academic mobility?

The quotation below, by a female academic, is chosen because it highlights processes relating to family situation and gender relations in academic workplaces, factors that were frequently mentioned by other women, though less by men, as obstacles in their careers.

> Men get a lot of support […] I know men who got financial support from the university to complete their PhD after their training period was over, something I didn’t get […] Men get information, yes, about calls; when the women get the information it is always too late and the deadline is closed […] and sometimes women are not supported by their partners and they have small children. (Woman researcher and lecturer)

While being in Mozambican academic workplaces, men primarily experienced discrimination when engaging in international collaborations, as these next two quotations illustrate.

> As an African researcher, you have to actively search for collaboration opportunities, they are rarely offered you. We are not on the international radar for research collaboration. (Male, PhD)

> I have repeatedly been part of research projects with partners at European institutions without having any salary from it. For some reason I was suppose to work on the project for free, just being grateful for the opportunity to be included. (Male researcher and lecturer)

Interestingly, when asked about gender inequality in academia, our male interviewees tended to focus on women’s careers; they did not always acknowledge the gendered nature of academic work relations and only put family relations at the forefront when discussing women’s career obstacles in academia. As a consequence, the responsibility is placed on individual women rather than on gendered structures and workplace cultures. Accordingly, men’s privileged position as ‘males’ in a gendered institution remains unproblematised.

The survey results on women’s perceived disadvantages and actual lower academic positioning in Mozambican universities (see Fig. 1) as well as men’s overall gender blindness should also be related to the general complexities on skin colour found in the survey and in the interviews. Despite the relatively low rates of discrimination on the grounds of skin colour which the survey revealed, both women and men attached importance to skin colour in the interviews. The notion of mixedness was mentioned as affecting social relations in academia and in Mozambican society at large. In this context, mixed skin colour was mentioned as part of the national identity; ‘You see, because of our colonial past, here in Mozambique, we are all mixed’ and ‘Here in Mozambique we all look different’ were two often-mentioned comments aimed at highlighting the ordinariness of differences in physical appearance and skin colour and the absence of race-based discrimination. This could be interpreted within the
framework of a post-racial discourse, indicating that discrimination based on skin colour is now obsolete. However, other interview narratives point out another and different direction. Here blackness is mentioned as an indicator of national belonging, thus forming a basis for positive discrimination. The following quote from a female researcher/practitioner will give an example of this discourse:

I can see it from conversations; for example, if you have two candidates for PhD studies, although they are both Mozambicans I am sure they will choose the black one for a PhD candidate. You see these kinds of things. [...] you see, some people would say that Mozambique belongs to Africans, not to Indians, mixed or whites and here because of our colonial past, whites are from Portugal. Maybe these would not be white in Sweden? [Laughs]

The quotations above show that there is ambivalence between a post-racial discourse (‘Here in Mozambique we are all mixed’) and a discourse that emphasises blackness as a denominator of privilege. For this interviewee, who self-identifies as a Mozambican woman of Indian descent, blackness constructs and is constructed by ‘authentic Africanism’, although what constitutes this authenticity is not clear. In the quotation above, skin colour, ethnicity and postcolonial relations are mentioned as important for constructing ‘authentic Africanism’ and for boundary marking.

Taken together, the survey results and interview quotations above suggest that the respondents’ ‘embodied intersectionality’ (Mirza, 2013) – here, gender, family relations and skin colour – and postcolonial relations (i.e. the Portuguese colonial legacy in contemporary Mozambican university system) mutually trigger various imaginaries which constitute different positionalities for researchers when entering Mozambican university workplaces after a period of transnational mobility.

Accordingly, the processes of racialisation that our respondents face in Mozambican HEIs are very different from those in South Africa and Sweden and point more in the direction of pan-African politics. These discourses are hardly surprising considering the resistance to colonialism arising before, during and after the war of independence (Arnfred, 2011). How could these findings be theoretically conceptualised? Based on these empirical findings and previous theory on inequality in HEIs, the following section introduces the concept of embodied discursive geographies as a possible way of comparatively researching inequality in HEIs.

Concluding discussion
Drawing on the work of postcolonial academics such as Said (1979) and Fanon (1986), contemporary feminist postcolonial researchers have theorised the ways in which spaces and bodies are constructed as belonging and what happens when bodies that do not belong to the somatic norm enter these spaces (Ahmed, 2007; Mirza, 2009, 2013; Puwar, 2004). From this angle, it is possible to analyse the consequences of living with, but not being embraced by, the (white, male middleclass) somatic norm. In this article, the empirical results indicate that there are gender differences in relation to how women and men experience their positionality in academia, thus their relation to a context specific somatic norm: women tend to emphasise experiences of discrimination which comprise intersections of gender and/or family relations, postcolonial knowledge relations and processes of racialisation. Men tend to emphasise postcolonial knowledge relations and processes of racialisation, omitting the gender/family relations intersections.

As mentioned earlier, this study has explored the experiences of a group of academics and PhD students who, thus far, have not been included in research on academic mobility – the development-aid-funded African researcher. This also implies that there exists no pre-given theoretical toolbox particularly designed for the research presented here. Therefore, another important result of this article is the emergence of a new, empirically based, theoretical concept designed for comparatively researching intersectional gendered and racialised inequality in HEIs. I call this theoretical concept, ‘embodied discursive geographies’. Let me elaborate on this line of thought: here I combine the theory of the somatic norm and body spaces (Puwar, 2004) with the theory of intersectional feminist translocality (Anthias, 2012) and the theory on postcolonial knowledge relations (Saïd, 1979) in order to introduce the concept of ‘embodied discursive geographies’ and make comparisons. In the context of this article, which follows how the same group of academics moves between different postcolonial workplaces, the theory of translocality makes possible an analysis of the complex ways in which subjects’ positionalities change across the different spacial and social locations and the dual and contradictory positionalities of privilege and disadvantage that may occur. Furthermore, the respondents who are the focus of this article do not move within a knowledge vacuum; rather, the sites of research are different postcolonial workplaces which have particular imaginaries of who can embody ‘the good researcher’ (Mählck, 2013). In this context, the concept of embodied discursive geographies is influenced by Said’s (1979) work on ‘imaginary geographies’, which refers to how postcolonial knowledge relations are at work when new knowledge is produced. In other words, ‘imaginary geographies’ reveal that the mechanisms that are put into practice to control new information [Imaginary geographies are] not so much a way of receiving new information as... a method of controlling what seems to be a threat to some established views of these things’ (Saïd, 1979, p. 59).
Since the phrase ‘imaginary geographies’ was thought up to meet the conditions of theoretical research in the field of literature (Saïd, 1979), I have instead made use of the concept ‘discursive geographies’ to capture the material and, in the case of this article, the embodied and corporeal. Before I develop the concept of embodied discursive geographies further, an explanatory note on how this article conceptualises the relationship between bodies, discourses and spaces is needed. Here, bodies/the material-semiotic (Haraway, 1997; Tuana, 2008) are seen as constructed by biological processes as much as by language/discourse and the interaction with humans and spaces. When bodies move and interlace with other bodies and spaces in specific time constellations, particular representations of bodies and available subject positions are produced (Rose, 1999). Accordingly, ‘Bodies do not simply move through spaces but constitute and are constituted by them’ (Puwar, 2004, p. 32).

An example from the empirical results in this article can illustrate this argument further: in Sweden, racialised processes of exclusion are articulated through ignoring, which connotes the ways in which ignoring is used to remedy the Swedish postcolonial past – that is – being at the forefront of producing race–biological research. In South Africa, racialisation is articulated more openly compared to Sweden. Considering how racialisation based on skin colour, long before the apartheid regime, has been used to construct and maintain social stratification in South African society, this is hardly a surprise. Mozambique differs in comparison to Sweden and South Africa. Here the colonial history of Portuguese settlers and their impact on the university landscape, contemporary postcolonial donor dependence in research and pan-African discourses of resistance are constructing processes of racialised privilege and disadvantage in contemporary academic workplaces.

The concept of embodied discursive geographies adds to previous research on bodies and spaces by its comparative and empirical approach to studying how processes of intersectional gendered and racialised inequality shift across spatiotemporal contexts. It points to the contradictory and shifting nature of intersectional power processes, where representations of subordination and dominance can occur either simultaneously or at different times or in different spaces. Here the results indicate that both women and men experienced changes in their dual positionalities when they moved between the different academic workplaces and there were gender patterns in these shifts. Accordingly, I suggest that, when guest researchers enter new academic workplaces, they do not simply enter as a new workforce but as embodied discursive geographies which trigger different imaginaries; when these imaginaries are connected to inferiority and/or threat, this leads to intersectional gendered and racialised inequality which is articulated differently in the various postcolonial university contexts. Here the concept of embodied discursive geographies denotes the ways in which social space and postcolonial knowledge relations are transformed and influence contemporary social relations; this, in turn, produces representations of bodies and specific subject positions.

On a methodological note, the concept also feeds into what Loomba (2009) has labelled ‘cautious comparativism’. By focusing on how hierarchical race and gender relations are articulated in different geopolitical and postcolonial university contexts outside the theoretical and empirical Anglo-Saxon research canon (i.e. US, UK, Canada and Australia), the study challenges the understanding of racism and sexism as universal constructs and contributes to the existing knowledge about gendered and racialised inequality in HEIs. For future research, it may be worth investigating how the concept of embodied discursive geographies developed in this article applies to research on discrimination at work in other sectors of society and in other geographic locations.

The results also point out the importance of mobility for how inequality and resistance in academia are produced. Through the mobility of bodies, the shifting boundaries of race and gender regimes, postcolonial knowledge relations and the agency of bodies emerge as key aspects in the construction of translocally produced embodied discursive geographies. I realise that racialised and gendered inequalities cannot easily be eradicated. However, the diverse meanings that embodied discursive geographies produce in different translocal contexts suggest that openings for social transformation in HEIs and other sectors of society are possible.

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