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An African Union-Caribbean Community alliance in the global reparations movement: promises, perils, and pitfalls

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ABSTRACT

Due to shared colonialist histories, current economic and political struggles, and challenges in charting inclusive futures, it is, in the opinion of the authors, essential for the people of the Caribbean and Africa to unite in their advocacy for reparations and justice. This article articulates what such an alliance might look like through a comprehensive analysis of documents between the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the African Union (AU) and by building upon Robin Kelley's critical Nine Theses on Decolonisation and CARICOM's current 10-Point Plan. In assessing the current state of collective reparatory movements, the authors have identified three gaps that require further research: the representation of the Indigenous Caribbean in theory but not in practice, the overarching emphasis on the state-to-state approach to reparations, and the lack of youth participation. Their proposed expansion of the Caribbean-Africa Knowledge Programme will, argue the authors, address these gaps and further the conversation on the importance and urgency of a trans-regional call for reparations by Caribbean and African citizens.

KEYWORDS

Reparations; CARICOM; African Union (AU); 10-point plan; Caribbean; decolonisation

Introduction

Hilary Beckles (2019) argues that the reparations movement is the most significant political tide of the 21st century in creating a just world. The Caribbean Community's (CARICOM) Reparations Campaign is part of a larger conversation in the new world-making process. CARICOM's campaign is a movement that aims to address the damage caused by transatlantic slavery and its long-lasting adverse effects on Indigenous Peoples and Africans who were enslaved.¹ The campaign, which regional governments spearhead, has made a strong case for the importance of transnationalism in advocating for redress. In a significant development, the African Union (AU) and CARICOM held their Inaugural Annual Summit on 7 September 2021, focusing on establishing trade and investment between the two regional blocs. The two transregional regimes formalised a reparative justice alliance to address crimes against humanity. To bolster this effort, representatives from the AU, CARICOM, and the University of the West Indies (UWI)

convened in Bridgetown, Barbados, in July 2023 to form a coalition demanding reparations for historical crimes. A follow-up reparations conference was held in November 2023 in Accra, Ghana, where political leaders from Latin America joined the global call for reparations for transatlantic slavery. The global reparations movement has gained significant momentum over the years, with more countries and organisations joining the cause to right the wrongs of history.

In this article, we explore how CARICOM and the AU can work together to strengthen their joint efforts in demanding reparations for the historical injustices of transatlantic slavery and colonialism. Our methodology is a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary approach involving process tracing (Beach, 2018) (drawing inference based on cause mechanism) and latent and manifest content analysis (Kleinhekse et al., 2020) to locate themes and understand ‘who says what, to whom, and with what effect’ (Vaismoradi et al., 2013, p. 400). We drew on relevant documents that discussed enslavement, political economies, social movements, and creative arts in the Caribbean and Africa. The primary objective of these approaches was to identify central themes that address our primary arguments and develop a comprehensive understanding of reparations from a transnational perspective. Our article proposes a regionalism model grounded in decolonial thought and approaches that deconstruct, re-imagine, and rebuild new possibilities for reparations. This model is designed to provide a framework that addresses the pressing issues surrounding reparations and provides a roadmap for both regions to move forward through educative apparatuses. Lastly, our proposed model is rooted in the radical imagination, which enables us to think beyond the existing frameworks and explore new or indigenised epistemologies.

The article is broken down into four main points to support our main argument: first, it reviews Kelley’s (2021) reparations framework and articulates how we can imagine a decolonial future. Next, it investigates the current relationship between CARICOM and the AU, specifically how they plan to work together moving forward. Third, the article explores CARICOM’s reparations framework. CARICOM’s proposed education programme aims to promote educational opportunities and cultural exchange between African countries and the Caribbean. As part of our intervention, the paper recommends extending this programme to include a ‘Caribbean-African Knowledge Programme’ (CAKP) that integrates curricula, allowing students from both regions to learn about each other’s history, culture, and traditions. Lastly, the article uses a pluriversal epistemology to recommend how these knowledge programmes can engage civil society and students in each region.

Theoretical framework

The article draws on Kelley’s (2021) proposed nine theses of decolonisation to offer a launching pad to think critically about the practicality of decoloniality and restorative justice. Kelley’s (2021) nine theses offer alternative approaches to re-imagining a decolonial articulation of the Caribbean’s reparation movement, which has implications for the AU. Kelley (2003, 2021) argues that reparations should not be a binary opposite of decolonisation; rather, the two must be in sync with each other in articulating Black futures that are detached from Eurocentric epistemologies and ontologies. For Kelley (2021), decolonisation asks two fundamental questions: ‘What

is required to reverse 500 years of history to make a new world?’ and ‘How can we think of reparations and decolonisation as complementary processes rather than at odds?’ He further says that reparations are not about finance; instead, they seek justice and reconciliation in fostering futures that eradicate all forms of racism and exploitation.

Kelley’s (2021) nine theses of decolonisation support a vision of reparations that counters the main neoliberal reparations views. Thesis 1 states that redress cannot occur using the same oppressive instruments grounded in racial capitalism; rather, reparations must undermine these oppressive instruments. Thesis 2 asserts that ‘the question of land is fundamental to decolonisation’ (Kelley, 2021), and an expression of freedom not rooted in ownership or private property is needed. Thesis 3 continues the dialogue on land, arguing for recognition of the spiritual element associated with the land because the land is connected to spiritual practices for Indigenous Peoples (it can be argued for Black people in the Caribbean such as the Maroons, and also on the African continent), loss of land means spiritual theft. Treating land as property comes with borders and permits the practices of policing and surveillance, and, therefore, we cannot even start to consider the possibility of reparations, let alone decolonisation (Kelley, 2021) if we do not rethink the way we talk about and practise ownership of land.

Theses 4, 5, and 6 continue discussing decolonisation and reparations working together. According to Kelley (2021), Thesis 4 demands abolishing all types of oppression and violence. This means, for instance, dismantling the military and prisons, opening borders, eliminating the body of constraints that enforce the heteronormativity of gender and sexuality (the oldest war is the one to control women’s bodies), and liberating LGBTQI+ and Two-Spirited peoples. Thesis 5 advocates for authentic self-determination for all oppressed nations in working towards decolonisation. In Kelley’s (2021) decolonial framing, the struggles of Indigenous Peoples and those of Africans are essential. Thesis 6 demands the decolonisation of history and thought to end epistemic violence through education (Kelley, 2021). He argues not just for a change in the site of history from the coloniser to the colonised but rather for rethinking how history is told, which can include time as nonlinear.

The last three theses bring the decolonisation and reparations discourse full circle. For Thesis 7, Kelley (2021) resumes his critique of the global capitalist system’s capacity to carry out acts of reparations and decolonisation ethically and justly. Using the law as a case study, he underlines the limitations of trying to achieve redress by working within the modern state. To avoid engaging with the same legal mechanisms the exploiters use to justify their crimes against humanity, Kelley (2021) refers to using Indigenous legal methods to hold exploiter nations accountable. Thesis 8 states that decolonisation is not an ‘event’ but a process that has not been completed anywhere. Moreover, power cannot be dismantled or gained just through protest; deconstructing the colonial projects and the global capitalist system requires sustained work (Kelley, 2021). Thesis 9 pays homage to recently deceased Caribbean radical thinker and activist Andaiye (2020), who shared that ‘the point is to change the world’. We must imagine new ways of being in the decolonisation processes, resulting in a new world that subsequently leads to the end of nations, such as the United States and Canada (Kelley, 2021), and the global capitalist system. In the next section, we build upon Kelley’s (2021) Theses to explore the current

relationship between Africa and CARICOM to establish the grounds for thinking through decolonisation and reparations in this renewed alliance.

Tracing the alliance between the African Union and CARICOM

The relationship between African and Caribbean political leaders and grassroots organisations has a rich history, particularly in the mid-twentieth century during the anti-colonial movement. For instance, Ghana's first President, Kwame Nkrumah, worked closely with Caribbean thinkers like Arthur Lewis and George Padmore to advance the cause of independence. However, despite the successes achieved during this period, the relationships established between these regions were weakened by the illusion of self-determination and the continuation of colonialism in the guise of neo-colonialism. One of the factors that contributed to the weakening of these relationships was the lack of pan-African leadership. Without a solid and unified leadership, it was difficult to sustain the momentum that had been built during the independence movement. External actors such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB), which dictated loan conditionalities for international partnerships, also substantially weakened the alliances between these regions as neoliberalism became the monolithic response to economic development. Despite these challenges, there has been a renewed interest in pan-African praxes between the two regions in the last five years.

An undertaking that came out of this restored relationship is the Annual Africa-CARICOM Heads of Government Summit, which was inaugurated on 7 September 2021, focusing on trade and investment between the two regions. Over time, the regions have been increasingly cooperating, as demonstrated by their involvement in the Organisation of African, Caribbean, and Pacific States (OACP) (Richardson, 2021). The initial Summit's primary outcome was the transregional bloc's agreement to establish an Africa-CARICOM Commission, hold annual Africa-CARICOM Summits, advocate for reparative justice, and promote the claim for reparations through the United Nations processes.

Concerning collaborations in the undertaking of reparatory justice for transatlantic slavery, under the leadership of the Ghanaian government in partnership with the AU and CARICOM, the first Accra Reparations Conference in Accra, Ghana, was held from 14–17 November 2023. The goal of the Accra Conference was to intensify pressure on the nations and institutions that practised and benefited from transatlantic slavery. The Inaugural Africa CARICOM Summit also suggested establishing a joint AU-CARICOM Committee of legal and other relevant experts to examine all possible legal strategies for pursuing reparations. Another point was for the AU to partner with CARICOM in piloting a significant Resolution on Reparations at the United Nations General Assembly (African Union, 2023). This initiative would require AU and CARICOM to work together at the UN to establish the broadest possible coalition of allies to support such a Resolution. Lastly, the proclamation mandated the AU Commission to immediately engage with the CARICOM Secretariat to establish the agreed-upon AU/CARICOM Commission by 7 September 2024. The Commission should provide an institutional space for AU and CARICOM Heads of Government and Ministers of Foreign Affairs to meet regularly and discuss matters of mutual interest, including reparations (African Union, 2023). Given the history of Africa-CARICOM

relations, we must provide a brief background of CARICOM's reparations campaign before we discuss our proposed intervention in the educational aspect of the reparations discourse between Africa and the Caribbean.

Caricom's reparations campaign

In the Caribbean context, it is argued that the formal redress movement started in Durban, South Africa, in September 2001 at the World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) when Caribbean scholars, activists, and government representatives advocated establishing a global reparations agenda and hosting 'meaningful dialogue about repairing the damages caused by slavery and colonisation within the context of international law' (Beckles, 2013, p. 6). Beckles (2013) proposes that the Caribbean reparations discourse must be undertaken from a government-to-government approach. As a result, CARICOM's 15 Member Heads of Government made a historical act by launching their Reparations Claim against the Governments of eight European countries (Beckles, 2013). The claim pushed forward was on two fronts: (1) for 'the genocide perpetrated against the 15 million Indigenous people of the Caribbean' and (2) for 'the multiplicity of "Crimes Against Humanity" that were committed against the enslaved Black or African people of the Caribbean' (Comissiong, 2019).

The CARICOM reparations campaign's vision is not focused on individual Caribbean governments but is undertaken as a social development project that can support the growth of the contemporary modern region. The legacies of the conquest and colonisation of the region, the transatlantic trade in enslaved Africans and chattel slavery, as well as the indentureship of peoples of South and East Asia within the Caribbean, frame CARICOM's 10-Point Plan, which highlights 'reparations as a development strategy'. The proposed Plan suggests that reparations payments deal collectively with persistent economic and educational problems facing Caribbean citizens stemming from underdevelopment imposed by slavery, slave trading, native genocide, and economic exploitation by the European nations.

The Plan begins with a call for a 'sincere formal apology by the governments of Europe'. Next, it asserts one of the most well-known tenets in repatriation discourse – the idea that Africans in the diaspora who are from the lineage of the legacy of transatlantic slavery have a legal right to 'return home' to Africa if they wish to do so. This second point was inspired by Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association and the Rastafari movement. Third, the Caribbean Reparations Commission (CRC), the governmental body that oversees the reparations campaign, argues that the governments of Europe committed genocide against the Indigenous Peoples of the Caribbean, and as such, a development plan is required to rehabilitate the respective Indigenous communities. Fourth, cultural institutions, such as museums and research centres, must be established to support Caribbean nationals in documenting and sharing their narratives. Five, the Caribbean's current health crisis is connected to 'nutritional experience, physical and emotional brutality, and overall stress associated with slavery, genocide and apartheid' and must be systematically addressed. Sixth, eradicating 'widespread illiteracy that has subverted the development efforts of the Caribbean nation states and represents a drag upon social and economic advancement'. Seventh, one of the crucial acts of transatlantic slavery has been the violent disruption

and cultural deprivation between the Caribbean and Africa. Hence, the Plan promotes the importance of the African knowledge programme to establish bridges of belonging and to restructure the ‘cultural and social alienation from identity and belonging’. As noted above, our essential contribution to this article builds upon the creation of knowledge programmes as vital tools to strengthen African and Caribbean coalitions. Eighth, post-emancipation, the former enslaved Africans were not directed to any professional or psychological rehabilitation programmes to address the trauma experienced in enslavement. Therefore, developing ‘a reparatory justice approach to truth and educational exposure can begin the process of healing and repair’. Nine, the scientific and technological underdevelopment of the Caribbean reflects the legacy of slavery in the region and must be addressed by technology transfers (Shepherd, 2015). Lastly, the Caribbean governments that surfaced post-slavery and during the independence movement have inherited the heavy burden of poverty and underdevelopment. In moving forward, debt cancellation for Caribbean states is a necessary step towards reparatory justice (CARICOM Reparations Commission, n.d.).

Restoration, restitution and reparations: the Caribbean-Africa knowledge programme

In assessing CARICOM’s articulation of restitution through the scrutiny of their 10-Point Reparations Plan, we have identified three main gaps to confront some of the systemic limitations of the movement, which relies mainly on Western thought in its execution of restitution: (i) representation of the Indigenous Caribbean in theory but not in practice; (ii) the state-to-state approach to reparations; and (iii) lack of youth participation. With an appreciation of the need for increased cooperation between the Caribbean and Africa on advancing reparative justice and building on the works of Kelley (2021) and the creators of CARICOM’s 10-Point Plan, we posit that centring the sharing of knowledge and information through formalised programmes will expedite the movement of both regions towards greater liberation. This section outlines the Caribbean-Africa Knowledge Programme (CAKP), which will address the issues plaguing both regions’ demands while offering new ways of imagining cooperation and alliance. As we embrace the challenge of introspection and analysis to spark fresh ideas about fostering a better world and the crucial role of education, we have to look beyond the economic and ‘epistemic order of European modernity – a 500-year-old project’ (Soudien, 2022, p. 9). Thus, our approach pivots on the deliberate shift away from Eurocentrism, Westernisation, and Northernism as the dominant guiding principles. We aim to de-centre these concepts, recognising that they should not be the exclusive focal points shaping our perspectives on reparations and education. In short, the CAKP focuses on allowing students from both regions to learn about each other’s history, culture, and traditions.

Representing the Indigenous Caribbean

The argument for reparations typically encompasses two key aspects: direct monetary disbursement to individuals and increased investments in Black communities. Many are asking for economic reparatory compensation similar to those payments that have been made under the 1919 Treaty of Versailles by Germany and other members of the Central

Powers, to Native Americans for treaty violations, and payments by the South African government's reparations programmes in conjunction with the post-Apartheid Truth and Reconciliation Commission of the 1990s. Useful as these reparations may have been in their respective contexts, we advance a strategy that is in line with reparations as a development strategy that places education and knowledge transfer at its centre and identifies one group in particular, that has been negated in the reparations discourse in practice – Caribbean Indigenous people.

Historically, Indigenous Peoples of the Caribbean have been fighting colonial and neocolonial governments to get access to their sacred lands. Conversations about reparations in the Caribbean must holistically include Indigenous Peoples, not tokenise them. In calling for the establishment of a knowledge programme, the CARICOM Reparations Commission acknowledged in the 10-Point Plan that the region's Indigenous populations were 'dispossessed of their land and continue to lack land security in the present day' (Strecker, 2017, p. 633). For now, our work explores the matter to underline a significant flaw with the Caribbean reparations campaign and for CARICOM to create space for Indigenous voices in their renewed relationship with the AU.

In line with Kelley's (2021) first three Theses, we call for the establishment of a 'Reparations Superfund' (see Franklin, 2012; Walters, 2009) to develop CAKP, which would be an alternative to a distribution scheme focusing on individual payments and would focus on educational and knowledge transfer. The reason for educational transfer and not lump-sum payments to eligible individuals is that singular, one-off payments will not bring about the social transformation needed to engender the development and growth of Black and Caribbean Indigenous communities. We believe that such an educational transfer would pay attention to African spirituality and recognition of Indigenous land rights (echoing Kelley's, 2021 Theses 2 and 3) and simultaneously address the need for the representation of the Indigenous Caribbean in the practice of reparations advocacy. In this way, the Superfund would be used to facilitate knowledge transfer between the AU and CARICOM as it foregrounds educational initiatives and institutions as recipients of reparations payments so that they apply different types of knowledge systems to develop strategies and models of intervention and remediation to advance the representation of the Indigenous Caribbean.

Challenging state-to-state approaches

Currently, we argue that the government-led reparations campaign in CARICOM and AU appears to operate to the exclusion of everyday people in the decision-making processes. In response to Kelley's (2021) Theses 4 and 7, which recognise the dismantlement of oppressive systems and the development of decolonial mechanisms, we suggest that reparations advocates must learn from and work actively with civil society. It is significant to highlight that grassroots organisations have been foundational in advocating for the tenets of reparations but have lately been pushed to the wayside. For instance, a people-centred grassroots movement that has been central in laying the transnational groundwork for the CARICOM reparations commission is the Global Afrikan Congress (GAC), a pan-African organisation. It has pushed for Caribbean reparations while working across the region, mobilised people and organisations in the Caribbean diaspora, and formed chapters in Toronto (Canada), London (United Kingdom), and Washington DC (the United States).

In the recent International Reparations Conference hosted at the University of the West Indies in August 2022, GAC played a crucial role in setting the Conference's tone and moulding the reparations movement into a people-centred project despite governments and private institutions being partners in this Conference. However, we have noticed that although organisations like the GAC have been crucial in advocating reparations, they represent a small percentage of Caribbean and African nationals advocating for redress using a decolonial framing. Our proposed CAKP would address this lack by connecting grassroots organisations in the Caribbean with their partners in Africa to facilitate the sharing of best practices and synergise their efforts to pursue collective reparations. As argued in Kelley's (2021) Thesis 8, the sustained work of dismantling colonial apparatuses cannot merely be a top-down process. It requires the active involvement and work of all facets of society and the voices of these civil society leaders need to be centred at high-level reparations discussions as their inputs are critical in advancing a nuanced vision for trans-regional reparative justice.

Engaging youth participation

As Walters (2009) reminds us, 'until the racism vanishes . . . there can be no thought that reparations for Blacks will be sufficient to provide racial reconciliation' (as cited in Franklin, 2012, p. 8). Unfortunately, many youths in CARICOM cannot relate to this sentiment as they are outside of the reparations debates that seek shifts in structural arrangements of colonialism. In fact, CARICOM's 10-Point Plan nods to this when it notes that 'generations of Caribbean youth, as a consequence, have been denied membership and access to the science and technology culture that is the world's youth patrimony' and consequently, proposes technology and science transfer as part of the reparative project. Nevertheless, as we argue below, it will take more than technological and scientific transferral of knowledge to remedy past wrongs that have led to the dire circumstances that the region's youth face today.

Caribbean youths have inherited colonial structural arrangements (political, social, economic, and educational) that are built upon white supremacy and designed to make them compliant and/or fail to gain access to the global marketplace. The educational opportunities they currently access do not adequately discuss their history and the resultant psychological damage, cultural loss, and economic disenfranchisement enacted upon them. Decision-making power has been withheld from the younger generation, and this has been an obstacle to enacting comprehensive and inclusive legislation because racial capitalism and the extraction-occupation dynamics embedded in settler colonialism continue to serve as persistent foundations for the systems that shape the fabric of social and governmental structures. These systems include schools, healthcare facilities, policing, military complexes, justice systems, labour market determinants, and ecological commodification.

Therefore, our CAKP seeks to address this information asymmetry by emphasising the need for our youths to receive a holistic and nuanced education about their origins and current predicament in the world order. Learning from shared examples of African youths in similar situations due to the persistent forces of coloniality and capitalism, we believe youths today will understand the need for comprehensive reparations to right past wrongs and chart an inclusive and progressive way forward. As per Kelley's (2021)

Thesis 6 vision, it is only with the decolonisation of history and thought that our youths even begin re-imagining what a just future could look like for people of African origins, and CAKP will accord that initial injection of liberating information and learning.

Decolonising reparations: creating pluriversal futures

Numerous present-day initiatives to pursue reparations claims are grounded in prior analytical explorations of potential political and legal strategies and direct endeavours to seek reparations. Following Kelley's (2021) Thesis 1, we must distinguish between *colonialism* and *coloniality* for this to be successful. Whereas colonialism is viewed as following modernity in that colonialism ended in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, coloniality can be said to be constituted by modernity and we are therefore still living under a coloniality regime. Thus, 'colonialism is a concept that inscribes coloniality as a derivative of modernity' (Mignolo, 2002, p. 82). The CAKP, therefore, moves beyond a critique of colonialism and towards the active construction of a 'pluriverse' (Mignolo, 2002) using non-Western epistemologies as a way to think about and explain the world.

We believe that CAKP's educative potential will allow for individual and collective reflection and interrogation of what it means to exist within regimes of coloniality in the Caribbean and Africa despite explicitly not being colonised like our forefathers. We cannot break the chains that bind us without first recognising that the chains exist, and decolonial education is that guiding light, that wake-up call to be alert to our current positionality of not believing the symbolic independence we enjoy today, but rather unite as a larger bloc to advance pluriversal futures grounded in the liberation of both regions. But we recognise that this will not be an easy task because, as Reiter (2018) maintains, 'colonialism has so thoroughly destroyed and delegitimised non-Western epistemicide' (p. 8). As such, the CAKP cannot fall into the trap of merely regurgitating existing knowledge, it has to intensely question the origin of such knowledge and posit ways of understanding our present outside of Western hegemonic narratives.

We call on the AU to explore using the CARICOM demands as a basis for developing a comprehensive 10-Point reparations platform for the continent. While little attention is paid to the adverse effect of this barbaric process on continental Africans, we seek to address this by using the CARICOM 10-Point Programme as the model to discuss what specific issues and problems should be included in reparations demands for people of African descent in the AU. While monetary settlements are reasonable in the short term, they will not provide the boost needed to develop the region over time. The CAKP is the first part of seeking input and creating spaces for engagement within the AU to outline the true ravages of colonialism, the lingering effects of coloniality, and the systemic areas of work required to correct centuries of underdevelopment. Such a plan rooted in CAKP, and in collaboration with CARICOM, will create the type of reparative futures this article aims to champion.

The CAKP programme would also focus on learning about African knowledge systems, not as a monolith but as a diverse continent with different knowledge systems that have been developed outside of and have been influenced by its diaspora. Such a programme would rely upon education to develop rich, diverse, and deeply rooted indigenous knowledge systems that are steeped in African culture and traditions, and it would focus on combatting a century of epistemic violence. In Sriprakash's (2022) words, this 'requires us to re-imagine just futures for education, departing from common

assumptive frameworks that position education either as a force of social reproduction or as a track to upward social mobility' (p. 2). The CAKP begins by recognising that the current capitalist systems we are reliant on have been constructed through modernist epistemic violence. Thus, 'part of epistemic justice is the formal and explicit recognition by global powers within the modernist development structures that historical trauma has affected the descendants of enslaved peoples beyond materialist ways' (Brissett & Jules, 2023, p. 11). To repair epistemic violence, the CAKP would need to bring into focus the nexus between colonialism and capitalism and how these twin systems eradicated African knowledge systems. The CAKP would be built to interrogate what we teach in our schools and how we teach it and move towards integrating African Knowledges into the formal educational system while recognising that African knowledge varies among communities. This would require a movement away from 'coercive command-and-control forms of pedagogy and knowledge transfer' (Brissett & Jules, 2023, p. 12) that reify Eurocentric education and what it means to be 'man'/human (see Wynter, 2003). The CAPK would focus on epistemic delinking from Eurocentric knowledge, which 'requires recognition of the "Other epistemologies" and "Other knowledge" as well as liberation from Western disciplinary and methodological limitations' (Stojnić, 2017, p. 105). In this context, epistemic reparations constructed through the CAKP involve Western nations acknowledging and endorsing the need for African and diasporic societies to explore their knowledge systems authentically. It entails recognising their right to shape education in a manner that validates and integrates their unique ideas. This goes beyond mere acceptance of globally circulated, powerful notions of schooling and education, often propagated through global initiatives like Education for All and the Sustainable Development Goals. These initiatives, often tied to or conditional for aid, should not limit the autonomy of African and diasporic societies in constructing their educational frameworks. In this way, we envision a focus on epistemic knowledge construction to involve a

... shift in the geopolitics of knowledge that would lead to establishing epistemic pluriversity. This concept supposes the world in which many worlds co-exist, opening the possibilities for inter-epistemic and intercultural dialogues based on experiences of modern-colonial societies. It calls for abolishing of the hierarchies between different epistemologies, where other formation of knowledge with its specific sources and methodologies are not less valid of 'not scientific enough'. The world in which epistemologies include material embodied knowledge as a lived historical embodied experience. (Stojnić, 2017, pp. 109–10)

In this way, CAKP would recognise that 'geopolitics of knowledge' implies that 'modernity is not a strictly European but a planetary phenomenon, to which the "excluded barbarians" have contributed, although their contribution has not been acknowledged' (as cited in Mignolo, 2002, p. 57) or what Dussel (1999) has called 'transmodernity'. Thus, African philosophies are placed at the centre of deconstructing the exteriority of Western metaphysics and not viewed as analytic and explanatory tools. Therefore, one could argue that

the existential dimension of African philosophy's challenge to Western philosophy in general and Continental philosophy in particular is located in the need to decolonise the mind. This task is at least as important for the coloniser as it is for the colonised. For Africans, decolonising the mind takes place not only in facing the experience of colonialism,

but also in recognising the precolonial, which established the destructive importance of so-called ethnophilosophy. (Bernasconi, 1997, p. 191)

Thus, decoloniality is central to the CAKP, which is the recognition of the subalternation of knowledge by undoing and unmasking the extent to which European philosophical thought has championed colonialism and justified it through a philosophy of history that has privileged Eurocentrism. The call to decolonise stems from an epistemic subaltern position of Eurocentric blindness to the other side of modernity, which is coloniality. Such a recognition comes about by acknowledging that ‘there is a wealth of knowledge that has been subalternized by modernity/coloniality’ (Mignolo, 2002, p. 74), and therefore, this leads to the reproduction of the coloniality of power. Such thinking described above echoes Kelley’s (2021) Theses 4, 5, and 6.

Following Kelley’s (2021) last three Theses, we propose that as the CAKP fuels the march towards pluriversality, it must break away from Western cosmology, epistemology, and hermeneutics. Pluriversality, which views the world as constituted by several worlds and decolonial ways of thinking, is central to the CAKP because it calls into question the notion of ‘universality’, which is central to Western cosmology. The superiority of universality has been derived through coloniality, and therefore, we must delink from such Western universalistic thinking, which is part of the imperialist project. The CAKP is constituted as a way to change the gnoseology of our world by relying on African knowledge systems such as Ubuntu. The CAKP must therefore be pluriversal (an entanglement of several cosmologies) in that it should accommodate Western universalism and cosmology but not be dominated, subsumed, or regulated by these ideas. For the CAKP to function pluritopically, it has to conceptualise African knowledges from within rather than thinking about and then describing these knowledge systems. Mbembe (1992) notes that escaping the colonial mindset and framework is a complicated task to undertake because colonialism, in its course, obliterated numerous local scientific traditions by categorising them as primitive folklore and replaced what was considered Southern superstition with Northern science and, in the process ratifying binaries such as modern/traditional, progressive/backward, and civilised/primitive. Thus, the CAKP should be grounded in an ‘epistemological relativism’ (Reiter, 2018) driven by the search for alternative and place-bound epistemologies and approaches. The CAKP has to move away from reproducing and recreating colonial traditions and the colonial mindset, a feature of the decolonisation movement.

Africa and the Caribbean reparative justice futures

The issue of reparations for the atrocities of transatlantic slavery has gained significant attention in mainstream conversations. It has been argued that reparative justice has replaced affirmative action practices that were put in place for Black people, specifically in the US. The reparative justice discourse can serve as a crucial tool in envisioning and striving towards a new emancipation, particularly for the descendants of enslaved Africans. The topic’s prominence in discussions allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the impacts of slavery on individuals, communities, and society as a whole and underscores the urgency of addressing long-standing systemic inequalities. We contribute to the discourse by examining

the restored relationship between the Caribbean and Africa in the region's coalition in advocating for restitution for transatlantic slavery. Our intervention is made in the education stream by proposing a transnational education project, the CAKP. CAKP is grounded in decolonial thought as a tool to strengthen the coalition between Africa and the Caribbean in the global reparations movement. In his theorisation of the significance of the imagination in new possibilities, Kelley (2002) stated, 'we must recognise that the revolution begins with thought, with how we imagine a new world, with how we reconstruct our relationships with one another' (p. 63). Therefore, the CAKP enters the reparative justice discourse through the radical imagination to acquire justice for the crimes against humanity committed on African people and also create space for Caribbean and African indigenous and decolonial epistemologies that disrupt the continuities of colonialism in the guise of neocolonialism.

Furthermore, our contribution to the global reparatory justice movement for transatlantic slavery builds on CARICOM's 10-Point Plan and advances the concept of CAKP by drawing from Kelley's theses on decolonisation. We are not claiming to have the overall solution for establishing and practising an expression of reparative justice that will 'save' Africa and the Caribbean, but we do recognise, as Kelley (2002) asserts, that it starts with thought. By extending some of the tenets of CARICOM's 10-Point Plan, the CAKP lays out practical steps by working with the education system in both Africa and the Caribbean. Kelley's (2021) eighth thesis asserts that decolonisation is not an event but a process, suggesting there must be a rite of passage from one generation to the next – from the older to the younger generation – to continue the decolonisation process. As such, working with the education system ensures that the mantle of reparations and coalition building are sustained in creating new worlds delinked from Eurocentric epistemologies and ontologies.

Note

1. In this article, we use the term 'transatlantic slavery' rather than the more popular 'Transatlantic slave trade and slavery' because the second term suggests that Africans who were the victims of enslavement were on the African continent waiting to be sold, which contradicts historical facts. Most of the people were stolen and shipped away from the continent. It is important to note that the kidnapping of people involved no transaction, and most of the affected African communities did not partake in related business deals (Diouf, as cited in Wittmann, 2013).

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