

FOREWORD

It is always an honour to be asked to write the preface for a book. It is a special pleasure to write the foreword for a volume that celebrates the work of a much-admired mutual colleague. In this particular case, we celebrate the life's work of Professor Wahab Egbewole, one of Africa's most celebrated lawyers and (socio-)legal scholars.

As a legal practitioner and as a scholar, primarily attached to the University of Ilorin in Nigeria, Professor Egbewole's reputation is known well to those with a background in African socio-legal studies, not least through the Law and Society Association, of which he has been a long-time and well-respected member, including through the Collaborative Research Network (CRN) on African Law and Society of which I am a co-organiser, together with colleagues Penelope ("Penny") Andrews, Jonathan Klaaren, Heinz Klug, Jarpa Dawuni, Mark Kende and others.

Professor Egbewole's scholarly contributions, which include dozens of articles, book chapters and close to a dozen books, are accompanied by his greatly appreciated role as an academic leader and mentor to emerging scholars, at the University of Ilorin, within the African Law and Society CRN and further afield. His academic scholarship has been ground-breaking, critical and intimately connected with the lived realities of especially Nigerians who have been mobilising for social justice.

Sadly, due in large part to systemic inequalities built into the pillarized, Western/Northern-privileged orientation of the (socio-) legal academy, which is reinforced by a range of mainly corporate-owned digital matrices that are relied upon as a valorisation of global academic scholarship, Egbewole's work is far less known to those outside of the flourishing community of African law and society scholars than it should be. This lack of representation is arguably shifting, however, not least due to global South-led intellectual initiatives such as Third World Approaches to International Law (TWAIL).

Alongside Professor Wahab Egbewole, African scholars who have had a particular impact on critical, socio-legal scholarship in Africa certainly include, but are by no means limited to, scholars such as E. Tendayi Achiume, Penny Andrews, Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, Ntombizozuko 'Zozo' Dyani-Mhango, Frantz Fanon, James Gathii, John Grovogui, Tshepo Madlingozi, Makau wa Mutua, Joel Ngugi, Celestine Nyamu-Musembi, Obiora Chinedu Okafor, Boaventure Rutinwa, Issa Shivji, Matiangai Sirleaf and Sylvia Tamale.

Inspired by these and other scholars, including from the TWAIL movement and especially Professor Egbewole's scholarly legacy, this volume plays a role in remedying this systemic injustice, making his work and those of the contributors to this volume, known to a broader audience.

As Onuora-Oguno and Olatoko notes in the introduction to this volume, "(a) successful scholar must always represent the high moral values and discipline which distinguishes in the society". Professor Egbewole not only resonated these values as a human and as a scholar but ensured that his scholarship and legal practice have been of benefit to society. His research has not merely gazed at the *blue sky* as so much research does. It has been critical and grounded and has exemplified the true meaning of social relevance. Accordingly, Egbewole has constructed a formidable scholarly and personal legacy that future generations of legal practitioners and scholars will continue to look to for guidance and inspiration in the generations to come.

This introduction sets up the remainder of the volume, with contributions by some of the finest of a new generation of scholars within the African law and society community. This volume covers three key areas

of scholarship in which Professor Egbweole has made numerous contributions: first, international law and institutional challenges at the (sub-) regional levels of governance; second, the advancement of socio-economic and cultural rights, both through the courts and in relation to their gender-specific aspects, and finally, early childhood education policies as well as legal education.

In the first part of this volume, there are several contributions that resonate with Egbweole's longstanding legal practice and scholarship on the role of international law and institutions. Contributions address both the roles of these normative frameworks and enforcement organs in addressing both longstanding and recent social and economic challenges within the African Union and in particular at the (sub-)regional levels of the Economic Community of West African States.

The second part of the volume is a nod to another aspect of Egbweole's role as a scholar and practitioner to advance socio-economic and cultural rights across the continent, through contextualised, progressive adjudication and from a gendered perspective. This includes the role of progressive Islamic legal scholarship as an alternative to the orthodox, punishment-oriented goals of contemporary measures aimed at addressing domestic violence.

The third and final part of the book addresses a further aspect of Egbweole's legacy, namely his abiding concern for early childhood education and legal education alike, the role of the courts in redressing these concerns and the need for greater inclusion of Afro and queer-sensitive pedagogies and perspectives. Contributors to the volume address the role of schools in redressing systemic marginalisation—including stigmatisation based on disability—and efforts to translate their rights as prescribed in national constitutions and international legal instruments. Contributors also address a topic that TWAIL scholars have paid significant attention to, namely the need to revisit orthodox approaches to law school education, both in expanding their normative scope to include issues that receive less attention than they should. These issues include persons with disabilities as well as addressing the existential challenges posed by climate change that are most drastically affecting lower-consuming countries, including in Africa and regarding sexual violence as more than merely a criminal act, but as a social and deeply gendered phenomenon.

Altogether, the scholarship in this book serves both to honour the legacy of Professor Egbewole as both a legal advocate and a scholar in critical African legal studies, and to advance the scholarship on three key areas that meant so much to him. There is little doubt in my mind that this book will serve as a crucial reference for African students and scholars of law and society, and for global students and scholars alike.

The Hague, The Netherlands

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