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Faculty Agency, Neoliberal Reform, and the Emergence of Entrepreneur Academics in Zambia

by

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Abstract

This study investigates Zambian academics' construction and reformation of identity in the context of neoliberal reform of higher education since the 1990s. It employs interviews with carefully chosen academics to investigate how they recognised and acted upon several subject positions made available by a neoliberal climate. According to the research study, academics have agency in articulating and re-articulating their identities. Evidence suggests that, far from being passive objects in the neoliberal university's discursive constitution, these academics actively participate in the discourses and negotiate their identities to survive. The study will hopefully broaden the literature's notion of identity by increasing our understanding of how academics overcome material and contextual constraints.

Keywords*: Identity; neoliberalism; agency; faculty; reform.*

Introduction

In 1991, the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) won Zambia's first multi-party elections after 17 years of a mono-party system of government. The new government swiftly shifted the country from the ideology of humanism to neoliberalism. Humanism was an ideology that emphacised state ownership of means of production. Some scholars have described this as state capitalism (Musacchio et al., 2015). Under the neoliberal platform, education and other social services were privatized, and the market was given a more prominent role in public life. Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) developed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) in the 1990s were the catalyst for this shift in economic policy. The SAPs were designed to reduce government control over the economy and increase private sector involvement instead (Mama, 2006). By 1996, the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) implemented a new educational policy dubbed "Educating Our Future" (EoF). This remains the national policy on education to date.

This policy shift precipitated several propositions. At the outset, it loosened governmental control over higher education to promote greater competition and innovation. The neoliberal higher education financing and provision model replaced the socialist model typified by government funding and control. Deregulation also allowed many private sector firms to participate in higher education. Educating our Future urged public higher educational institutions (HEIs) to improve their revenue streams and take steps to organise "non-government" sources of funding. Non-government sources of money implied commercial and industrial firms functioning under Zambia's "environment of economic liberalization" (p. 102).

Further, EoF proposed that the HEIs "become entrepreneurial and profit-motivated" on their own (p.102). This ultimately led to the commodification of higher education. Henceforth, the public universities were expected to develop a "greater spirit... of competitiveness and better awareness and of the importance of marketing themselves more aggressively" (p.102). In addition, HEIs were encouraged to consider the services they provide, "whether they be teaching, research, consultancies, and use of facilities," as possible sources of revenue (p.102). The University of Zambia (UNZA), the flagship university in the country, and the Copperbelt University (CBU), the second public university created in 1988, have, since 1996, shifted their focus to generating revenue as a result of this policy.

State funding to the universities has been steadily eroded (University of Zambia, 2013). In 2015, the Minister of Higher Education urged the public universities to be entrepreneurial after passing the policy in 1996. UNZA initiated strategic planning in 1996, shortly after the EoF came into effect, to boost revenue creation through competitive fees, consultations, investments, and cooperation. The 2013-2017 installment of the University of Zambia Strategic Plan [UNZASP-2013-2017] aimed to reposition the university in the global knowledge economy by supplying "industry-relevant products" such as students and research "outputs." A competitive attitude is evident in the institution's innovative approach to its responsibilities.

Statement of the research aim

Although the implications of the growing "liberalization" of higher education have been the focus of a steadily growing body of scholarship, there has been scant attention paid to the agency of faculty members in the face of these reforms. In this paper, agency is defined as the ability of the faculty members to act upon the discourses of neoliberalism that entered the higher education space in the 1990s. It was argued that Zambian academics have been able to identify and work

on numerous subject positions in a fluid ideological landscape. These academics have crafted entrepreneurial modes of identity through an ongoing negotiation process as members of a dynamic institution situated in an ideologically shifting terrain. In this paper, "identity" refers to how faculty members constructed a concept of themselves as scholars considering the political and economic context in which they worked. These identities were negotiated because they emerged because of faculty members' perceptions of themselves and their adoption of subject positions made available to them by the new ideological climate of neoliberalism. Thus, far from being passive recipients of neoliberal reforms, they have been agentic beings assuming "strategic perspectives and taking strategic actions towards goals that matter to him/her" (O'Meara, Campbell, & Terosky, 2011, p.1). Davies (1991) similarly asserts that "agency is never freedom from the discursive constitution of self but the capacity to recognise that constitution and to resist, subvert, and change the discourses themselves through which one is being constituted" (p. 51). Thus, in the face of neoliberalism, the Zambian academics were not only objects and subjects of discourse but also active participants in creating their identities and reshaping the available discourses.

According to Davies and Harre (1990), members of a social group's perceptions of themselves and others are influenced by the context in which they are situated. Accordingly, several discourses coalesced at UNZA to provide a diverse range of subject positions and ways faculty members could identify themselves. The author contends that Zambian academics had developed their sense of self as members of a dynamic institution located in a rapidly shifting ideological milieu. The use of the word "negotiation" in this paper means that these identities of scholars evolved, reproduced, reworked, rearticulated, and reshaped due to the ideological milieu at each epoch of UNZA's history. Different subject positions and forms of faculty identity have emerged at UNZA due to discourses such as nation-building, decolonisation, efficiency, accountability, and competition.

Research question

The neoliberal restructuring of Zambian higher education has resulted in a complex and dynamic environment where faculty members forge professional identities. I wanted to investigate faculty agency in the face of political and economic changes in their country.

Theoretical framework

Poststructuralism has dramatically influenced my understanding of identity and agency in this study. Poststructuralism opposes meaning uniqueness and language stability. Poststructuralists, according to Collinson, highlight the ambiguity of identity processes: "rather than understanding the self as an objectifiable, cognitive essence, poststructuralists argue that identity processes are essentially ambiguous and always in a state of flux and reconstruction" (2006, p.182). Poststructuralists argue that agency, like identity, is "contingent and fluid" (Levinson et al., 1996, p.11; Milingo, 2019) and not static. It is ad hoc and changes depending on one's position and social conditions. From this perspective, universities are ideal for investigating how situations such as neoliberal reform in Zambia contribute to developing certain types of identities among academics. It does not imply that these identities are innate, but they may serve as a conduit for diverse conceptualisations of globally circulating ideas and their local contextualization. This study will ideally broaden the definition of identity produced in the literature by expanding our understanding of how academics overcome material and environmental restrictions. Ideally, it will highlight the faculty's agency in these encounters, as opposed to the widely held notion that they are solely on the receiving end of neoliberal discourses (Vican, Friedman & Andreason, 2020).

Literature review

This review positions study within its fields to demonstrate how faculty members' professional lives in contemporary academia have been influenced by neoliberalism and its associated concepts. Unfortunately, there is little research on African academics' experiences with neoliberalism, particularly among faculty in Sub-Saharan Africa. Even more scarce is research that positions the faculty members as agentic beings capable of recognizing and taking up the subject positions availed by the reform of education. Accordingly, the author reviewed three focal studies on neoliberalism and higher education in Africa to demonstrate how, even within Sub-Saharan Africa, neoliberal reforms of higher education may be subject to differing interpretation frameworks, even in countries with similar social, economic, and political backgrounds. Two studies stand out. The first scenario is based on empirical research undertaken at Makerere University in Uganda to investigate the effects of neoliberal reform on higher education. The second study was conducted in Kenya, especially at Kenya National University (KNU) and the University of Kenya (UK). Both studies shed light on fascinating yet contradicting disclosures and insights regarding the entrepreneurial university.

Mamdani's scholars in the Marketplace (2007) is based on a longitudinal investigation of neoliberal market reforms at Uganda's flagship university, Makerere University, from 1989 to 2005. His findings suggest that neoliberal reforms can be understood from within, using emic perspectives, and from beyond, using etic perspectives. Insider accounts of what is going on in a culture that we want to understand are emic views. Mandami observes rising commercialization at Makerere, which she describes as "subordinating the university to the logic of the market" (2007, p. 5). He further claims that the neoliberal restructuring of Ugandan higher education institutions established a rival informal institution at Makerere, one driven by the private good "where problems of quality have been thrown by the wayside" (p. 264). More importantly for my research, Mandami contends that neoliberal reform via privatization and commercialization weakened the quality of research done by lecturers and their teaching function because they were more focused on collecting funds for their institutions. As a result, he recommended a rigorous debate and study to understand better what neoliberalism does to higher education in Uganda and across Africa. However, the findings of my study reveal a different reality regarding this ascribed weakness. As I show below, the faculty in Zambia do not necessarily regard the neoliberal era as an erosion of their autonomy but as an opportunity to reinvent themselves. This demonstrates that they have agency in the process.

According to Johnson and Hirt (2010), neoliberal higher education changes in the global North fundamentally differ from the effects observed in Kenya. For example, the study discovered that, whereas the implementation of academic capitalism in European and North American universities resulted in the preferential treatment of applied research over teaching and community service, this did not appear to be the case at the Kenyan National University (KNU) and the University of Kenya (UK). The study discovered that most KNU academics and administrators saw a lack of industry connections as a failure in their university. Furthermore, money was repeatedly presented as a significant concern for these schools. As a result, several KNU academics considered the university-industry partnership as a realistic answer to the problem, as one respondent stated bluntly:

> The universities are generators of knowledge and technology, and the industry and the consumers are recipients of this generated knowledge. It will happen if we start collaborating and holding dialogue and meaningful conversations. We have market limitations, and the limitations are not the markets [themselves], per se. It is the linkage between the producer and the market. I see the institution as part and parcel of the society

> out there, the industry and the private sector, revolutionizing economic development (Johnson & Hirt, 2010, p. 492)

Whereas scholars such as Deem (1998), Hill (2007), and Ozga (1998) have underlined the negative impacts of academic entrepreneurialism in the Global North, the Kenyan case study found that this form of capitalism in Kenya increased students' access to educational possibilities. In terms of research and academic capitalism, private money influenced faculty teaching, research, and community service activities in the Global North. Corporate sponsorship was desired but not forthcoming in Kenya.

A particularly intriguing conclusion is the perceived value of corporate sponsorship in Kenya. This conclusion demonstrates that while examining the influence of neoliberalism, nothing should be taken for granted because it has grown quite complicated in that it presents differently in different localities. Mandami concludes his research by urging a more excellent investigation into the varied ways in which neoliberalism affects higher education on the African continent. Therefore, the current paper in Zambia found it compelling to react to Mandani's (2007) demand for more broad discourse on the commodification and marketisation of African HEIs. In the current study, the author inquired about how faculty professional lives were changing or not changing in the Sub-Saharan African context. More precisely, the author proposed a study to investigate the impact of neoliberal forces on the professional life of professors in Zambia's peculiar geopolitical location. Unfortunately, there have been few studies on the effects of neoliberalism on higher education in Zambia. The following three studies are only tangentially related to faculty professional lives, but they are worth mentioning since they show the intensity of Zambia's higher education system's neoliberal restructuring. Masaiti (2013), for example, investigated the influence of cost-sharing on Zambian parents' ability to pay for their children's university education, concluding that the burden of cost-sharing was, in fact, excluding low and middle-class households from the higher education system. Cost-sharing was one of the neoliberal ideas that entered the mainstream of Zambian educational policy in 1996, with accountability, privatization, competition, efficiency, and effectiveness (as discussed above). As a result, Masaiti attempted to comprehend neoliberal policies while assessing the impact of cost-sharing, which are also fundamental to my research. As a result, he discovered that neoliberal policies have ramifications for parents, students, and UNZA.

Mwelwa (2014) conducted a study in Zambia that investigated the feasibility, benefits, and drawbacks of instituting a student loan scheme that would pay many students from low-income

families. Similar loan systems have been suggested in numerous African nations, including Kenya and South Africa, as part of ongoing neoliberal higher education reforms. These loan programs are necessary by the state's dwindling role in financing. However, the study discovered that the loan program in Zambia put parents under significant financial stress, which has impacted the parental community as the paradigm transforms into a more collaborative partnership between the state and the parents in covering tuition fees. This partnership is manifested through cost-sharing, a core tenet of liberalization implemented in Zambia.

A study by Chipindi & Vavrus (2018) on the impact of neoliberal discourses on faculty identity unveiled diverse aspects of neoliberalism. This study sought to investigate the effects of Zambia's neoliberal reforms on the careers of University of Zambia faculty members (UNZA). Interviews with junior faculty (those in their positions for less than ten years) are used to investigate the problem of "ontology of mention" (Broudy, 1986; Lungwangwa, 2000), which holds that faculty do not "exist" in academia unless they publish and are recognised in the publications of other scholars. The study also looked at the material and managerial challenges these professors face as they navigate their positions in academia. The authors suggested that junior faculty members in Zambia were compelled to choose between the pressure to develop knowledge and the lack of government support.

Although these and other research on higher education in Zambia focus on the changing configuration of the neoliberal university, no study has yet concentrated on the agency of academics in the face of neoliberal reforms. Despite indications of Zambia's localization and appropriation of neoliberal university reform, there has been no empirical examination of faculty agency in this development in Zambian contexts. My study helps to fill these gaps in the literature.

Materials and methods

The central aim of this study was to explore how Zambian academics accept, resist, reshape and recontextualize globally circulating discourses of educational reform. The researcher employed a case study approach to achieve this goal. This approach involved the study of one entity (Yin, 2008) which was bounded in terms of place, as it is a specific place located in the capital city of Zambia, Lusaka. Consequently, this study was empirically grounded in this research site. However, the author was cognizant that this case was influenced by broader processes, forces, and policies in Zambia and beyond (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017; Changwe et al., 2021).

This study's primary data collection method was a semi-structured interview (Patton, 2015). Interviews with faculty at UNZA enabled me to understand better their feelings, thoughts, perspectives, and experiences. In addition, the interviews helped me better understand how faculty members negotiated their professional identities in relation to shifts in the ideological landscape and the neoliberal discourses. The author interviewed five purposely selected participants before the start of fieldwork in October of 2021. The researcher intended to explore the perspectives of the three categories of faculty who make up the academic body at UNZA. Academics from the faculties of Humanities and three from the Natural Sciences were interviewed.

Findings

The study's findings revealed that the fall in the availability of research funds in the 1990s led to a shift toward commercial and corporate sources of research financing, which influenced faculty members' identities. As a result, scientific research at UNZA began to become more entrepreneurial. A rising body of literature investigates the creation of new identities in academia due to the neoliberalization of higher education in various countries. My study contributes to these understandings by highlighting the agency faculty exhibit in the face of neoliberal reforms. The faculty members are not free from “discursive constitution” but recognize and act upon the subject positions that this new milieu avails (Gonzales, 2014).

Thus, in the following pages, the researcher examines how Zambia’s neoliberal era created new subject positions, resulting in a shrinking gap between scholarly and entrepreneurial identity elements. As several scholars have highlighted, survival in the neoliberal climate necessitates some quick strategic maneuvering on the part of academics. This entrepreneurial spirit was popular among UNZA teachers as they became more reliant on the resources made available by Zambia's liberalized economic environment.

Geraldine, a professor of Natural Sciences, informed me she had been a lecturer since 1988 and had worked her way through the ranks. She is currently a member of the Human Resources Committee, which assesses academic members' applications for promotion. She added that each applicant's quantity and quality of research was the most critical component in reviewing their promotion application. Beginning in the mid-1990s, she provided critical insights into how the University Council legitimized the entrepreneurial instincts of modern faculty members.

> I believe that the 1990s, or at least the mid-1990s, saw a systemic transition from the era of socialist abundance in the 1960s to the late 1980s to a liberalized market economy, in which various institutions in Zambia had to demonstrate their worth by generating their income and reducing their reliance on government handouts. The University of Zambia was also forced to adjust its focus from relying on government funding to producing revenue through research and consulting. As a result, the Council began to pay attention to how UNZA staff members are innovative and proactive in raising funds for the organisation. We have maintained that it is published or perish, but we also consider how much money a person may produce. Promotion to Professorship requires applicants to demonstrate their ability to draw considerable sums of funds into the university. (Interviews, 01, October 2021)

The preceding comment shows that one of the critical drivers of faculty entrepreneurship was the severe institutional financial realities that faculty members began to face in the 1990s. The decision of the University Council to foster entrepreneurial research goals and reward them with promotion legitimized the closing of the gap between academic research and entrepreneurship. Thus, the steep fall in government support for UNZA in the 1990s and the severe economic turbulence caused by SAP simultaneously posed substantial difficulties for academics. Instead of playing the victim, these actors adopted the limits and devised a suitable reaction that ensured their survival. For academic survival, they turned to entrepreneurship.

The Hunter-academics

Respondents in this study noted that resolving this quandary required them to connect their research endeavours with the objectives of corporate, governmental, and non-governmental institutions that frequently had the financial clout to fund research.

Another Natural Sciences academic, Sakuwunda, said that as UNZA began to be driven by market forces such as efficiency, productivity, profitability, and competitiveness, he found expression, excitement, and satisfaction in articulating a scholarly identity centred on hunting for projects that brought funding. When he was questioned about what he meant by hunting, he said the following:

> I consider myself a hunter-scholar, a hunter who hunts for financing opportunities. Many forms of indications frequently spark my hunts. For example, I do much research on the web [I believe he means the internet], and I just say, "Let me type something into the Google Scholar search engine every week." I may type a topic, and I have frequently

> discovered that issues that I would never have considered may arise. Then I strike! (Interviews, 02. October 2021)

Sakuwunda also informed me that to thrive in modern academia, one needed to develop a squad that could be summoned whenever a search was triggered by a signal, such as a new funding potential. Furthermore, he argued that the hunt would only be successful if a cadre of young intellectuals were assembled to conduct various hunt aspects. Sakuwunda indicated that he has a team of highly driven young men and women with whom he has worked on multiple hunts:

> When a hunt is sparked, I am sure I will remember a group I have formed. Some young scientists in the group have been carefully selected. It will be interesting to see how quickly they break down and synthesise their ideas when I speak and explain the issue to them all simultaneously. In my group, I bring together individuals with various skills and expertise: One excels at a particular type of sickness or a subset of diseases, and another excels at fostering collaboration among specialists from many fields, including those dealing with wildlife issues. Another scientist is studying some tropical diseases and neglected diseases. The fourth is a pro at distributing and releasing information, and these are young men and women who want to succeed. When I am done, I say, "Let us get started," and then I take a step back and remain silent. It is awe-inspiring to hear what they have to say. Then you may be confident that the search for finance will be a success. There is a good chance you will listen to their voices. (Interviews, 02. October 2021)

Sakuwunda's definition of grant proposal writing as a hunt exemplifies faculty agency. Incorporating entrepreneurial components into their academic work was an act of identifying terrain transformations and taking up subject positions that made them relevant.

In completing the interview, Sakuwunda stated that, besides being a hunter-academic, he took great delight in being a motivator for the future generation of professors, whom he was pleased to take under his mentorship. He claimed that Zambia's liberalized higher education system presented a lot of "low-hanging fruits" for academy members to take advantage of. In describing what he meant, he said the following:

> Yes, that is the motivation, and I get the inspiration from our international partners, especially the route I have told you is coming from Japan. Yes, the policy pronouncements that the government is giving us, so now it is up to us to fight. I feel we have the motivation

> and the capacity to challenge any apples shown (laughter). Yes, we should be able to throw the proverbial stones proverb. (Interviews, 02. October 2021)

Sakuwunda saw himself as a local satellite connecting global expertise gained from the global North to growing local expertise for younger faculty members. He joined the junior faculty of an international network of veterinary research partners. Although some scholars argue that participating in research tailored to corporate or externally determined parameters may jeopardies academic identity (Hakala, 2009; Jain et al., 2009), Sakuwunda told me that "given the constraints that we face in doing research work," he saw nothing "seriously wrong with my hunting expeditions" (interview, 02 The link to transnational scholars from the global North presumably indicates the enduring role of aspiration in the process of identity construction for local Zambian professors.

Mwakayaya, another faculty member, said he was a staunch supporter of entrepreneurial motivations for research. While in the 1990s, the agricultural sector was proliferating, it needed scientific innovations like fast-maturing seeds (due to droughts in the early 1990s) and new methods of soil treatment and fertilization; he drew on this intersection to develop his scholarship (due to the growing need for food security, both within and outside Zambia). He believed that placing his study interests in nationally and commercially relevant areas would help secure funding for his work. He would be able to commercialize his study and raise additional funds due to receiving such support. It would also assist him in becoming a well-known academic because his research would be situated in an increasingly profitable area.

> I am fortunate that the DNA of indigenous seed varieties is the focus of my scientific investigation. In Zambia, I have followed the interactions between Agricultural Science and the country's agricultural sector. Because of the terrible drought in 1993/94 and subsequent emphasis on food security, this appears to have been a popular idea at the time, fortunately for me. For example, in researching drought tolerance in food crops, it was not difficult to identify groups inside and outside Zambia that were not interested. By carefully framing the research problems I addressed in a way that would attract seed production companies in Zambia and bilateral and multilateral donor organisations that were eager to fund the research, I could avoid feeling the impact of reduced government funding for scientific research at UNZA. Due to this approach, my study has been accepted for publication in prestigious worldwide and national scientific journals, making my work more relevant and appealing to potential donors. You bring the money through your

> research in a place without research funding, and that is how I have got to be strategic. (Interviews, 03. October 2021)

Here, we observe Mwakayaya's agency in assuming a subject position offered by this interaction between scientific research and a crucial sector in a developing country, agriculture, which had no shortage of actors ready to spend money on research with economic importance. This subject position illustrates that Mwakayaya understood the options available to him and used them to forge an identity as a scholar. Mwakayaya exercises agency by carefully selecting the key foci of his study, trying to develop knowledge despite material constraints that affect the availability of research money. This dialogue, like Sakuwunda's, is rich in examples of the agency.

Mzumara, another senior faculty member, illustrated the commercial orientation of academic identity by expressing a similar outlook on her research interests. She informed me that she received her doctorate in biochemistry from a prominent European university in the early to mid-1990s. Mzumara claimed that the difficulties she endured in the early and mid-1990s helped her prepare for the more desperate circumstances she faced as an educator in a poorly supported system. She responded to my query on how she felt like a new academic during a period of profound change in higher education as follows:

> Nature was the best instructor in my early career because I joined UNZA when funding patterns began to shift. I joined as state financing began to dwindle, and those problems helped me develop a solid approach to research. If we had money, like those who joined before us in the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s, I believe UNZA would have remained static. However, the difficulties I encountered while obtaining funding for research and publications broadened my perspective and prepared me to excel in a highly competitive environment. Having everything handed to me on a silver platter would not have helped me live in modern times. People are now arriving from all over the world, and these people have overcome enormous obstacles and are aggressive. (Interviews, 04. October 2021)

Mzumara saw the academic environment as an opportunity to transform oneself into higher education liberalization. She articulates her identity in connection to the subject position given by higher education deregulation, embracing the competitiveness that came to define academic work in the 1990s. She saw herself as an aggressive scholar who had overcome adversity to emerge stronger.

Chazanga, a humanities Ph.D. holder, highlighted entrepreneurship and commercial acumen in his work as a scientist and researcher in a liberalized college. He similarly portrayed

himself as a scholar who understands how to properly bid for and acquire financing to conduct research and publish his findings. He stated the following:

> Scholars may be able to generate new types of knowledge due to the liberalized academic environment. For example, I usually try to seek money by browsing the internet and looking for calls for proposals to which I can respond. Over the years, I have secured financing by successfully producing research proposals. (Interviews, 04. October 2021)

Similarly, Nolly, another humanities faculty member, mirrored Chazanga's concerns. But, according to Nolly, the problems posed by the political economy of higher education in the 1990s enabled one to take advantage of market signals to rise to the challenge and build a scholarly identity immersed in bringing glory to the institution [specifically UNZA]:

> I found it immensely satisfying to attract financing for the research that I was conducting. Under challenging circumstances, if one can acquire funding for research, implement it, complete it, and publish it, one becomes a true academic. I am glad I made it; I used the liberalized environment to get financing by farming my research proposals in ways connected with possible sponsors. The university recognises that one's ability to seek funds is a positive. In that sense, you are also moving the institution. So, you are getting the financing for whatever you are doing, and the research you are performing is also for the institution's glory. So, you are doing it for the institution as well. However, you are doing it for yourself because it is publish or perish. As a result, it works both ways. (Interviews, 05. October 2021)

Thus, faculty members took satisfaction in branding themselves as entrepreneurial and commercially minded academics. They seized the signals supplied by the liberalized market to build an identity based on a closer alignment of academic work and entrepreneurship.

Discussion

The above conversations support the findings of Jain, George, and Maltarich (2009), who found that academics involved in commercially driven research in the United States often develop hybrid identities comprising two distinct personas: a focal academic self and a secondary commercial persona. As neoliberalism became established, faculty members' tendency to construct a greater alignment between their identity and the business world is a prima facie proof of agency. The rise of entrepreneur-academics was not reliant on the faculty's passive adoption of globally circulating trends. With the rise of the entrepreneurial university, the distance between

scientific research and industry/commerce narrowed. Academics aggressively reinvented themselves to stay afloat when circumstances changed. Some faculty, such as Mwakayaya, began to frame their research pursuits in a way that drew funding.

In contrast, others, such as Sakuwunda, adopted aggression and "the hunt" in their pursuit of research funds, adopting a hunter-academic identity and taking pride in bidding for and obtaining research funding. As a result, the faculty began to define their identities as scholars in terms of business acumen and competition. These identities were purposefully manufactured by academics who recognised and acted on available subject positions.

The perspectives demonstrate a level of agency that has seldom been captured in the literature on neoliberalism. Faculty members in the global south are often conceptualised as recipients of neoliberal reform's subjectification and objectification process. This study, however, demonstrates that the actors are agentic as they can appropriate and reconfigure the neoliberal forces to local realities, meanings, and contexts (Dean, 2012) while simultaneously emphasizing how such localizations express universal principles in global contexts. This paper is significant not just because there is a lack of research on university faculty agency in Africa but also because the findings will have important consequences for educational policymaking in Zambia and the larger international community.

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