

The Gendered North-South University Collaboration: Experiences and visions

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The universities in the North² and the South are as all institutions, gendered. That means that the ambitions of the universities reflect ideologies, which attribute different values to male and female students and teachers. These ideologies are also embodied in the various institutions, for example in the mandates of the programmes for North-South university collaboration. This article is based on our experiences from such a programme, namely the *Anthropos project*³, financed by the Norwegian University Committee for Developing Research and Education (NUFU)⁴.

Although there are great variations within and between university disciplines, different values are assigned to knowledge produced and managed by men and women in society. The implementation of such gendered ideologies has consequences for men and women, ethnic relations as well as regional, national and international relations and development. As researchers we are both carriers and reproducers of these ideologies. They have consequences for the way we think and feel.

We are concerned about the fact that the majority of the researchers in the North as well as in the South are men, and that the knowledge produced almost inevitably becomes gender biased. That means that knowledge production may contribute to create male elites. Zygmunt Bauman (1998) is concerned about global elites that acquire more and more power, and with weaker connections and obligations local communities. These elites control capital as well as cultural ideas, including control of what is considered as “universal knowledge”. This is a kind of knowledge that has strong roots in the North. The development of new knowledge and competence and the way it is produced, executed and practised, demonstrates how elites remain limited in number, but continue to keep control (Alterm & Holtedahl 1996). These elites eventually include an increasing number of people from the South. It is therefore reasons to believe that the split between global

elites and “the common people” in the future will remain just as deep as today’s division between North and South. In this process the male dominance is increasing and becomes more and more evident. In spite of certain counteracting tendencies, this is a development to which we are opposed. Our concern is therefore with visions and actions that are necessary in order to change today’s tendencies.

Our perspective: North- South collaboration and the production of knowledge

What kind of experiences are our visions based on? What are the actions that are needed in order to realise the visions and what are the obstacles? One might think that there is no obvious answer to such questions because of the variations of academic structures and cultures. Nevertheless, we think that there are at least two essential elements in a strategy for people who work in the academic world. The first element in our strategy is based on increased collaboration between Southern and Northern researchers in the production of knowledge and competence building, in our case collaboration between Cameroonian and Norwegian researchers. For us, and most of the NUFU researchers, the collaboration has taken place through years of working in the South. We have, however, only just begun to implement our collaborative efforts in Norway. Our vision is therefore that the collaboration in the production of knowledge will take place both in the North and the South, for example both in Norway and Cameroon. Researchers from the South should consequently have the same opportunities to carry out research as we have in the North. They should be invited to Norway to do research and to teach our university students.

The second important element in a North - South collaboration is that the local population or the “informants” get a more important role than is normal in today’s production of knowledge (Holtedahl 1998, Gerrard 2000). Such a strategy implies that the participation of a local population in the establishment of knowledge is recognised. When the local population participates in such processes, this might lead to a situation in which the academics and the local population share both the language and the means of mediation. We have experienced that this is very important when women are in the focus since they often emphasise participation and interpersonal relations (Gerrard 1990, Altern & Holtedahl 1996). Only if the local people feel that they are “owners” of the knowledge, will a continuous mediation between society and university be possible. If we succeed in this, we might also succeed in fighting against the tendency that the elites separate from the local population. In this way we can construct knowledge that is relevant in the academic world as well as in the society where the research is carried out. Such visions are connected both to current discourses in the social sciences, especially

in anthropology, as well as to our own experiences from fieldwork and research in general. In the following we shall elaborate on these connections.

Western versus Southern anthropologists: Experiences and reflections

Criticism against the social sciences, especially anthropology and its discourses, was raised a long time ago. African scholars, for example Kenyatta as early as in 1938, and Diop in 1954, launched heavy criticism based on their experiences from African societies, against the production of knowledge and the way it was used. From the 1960s scholars both from the South and the North continued to raise such criticism (Goddard 1969, Banaji 1970, Leclerc 1972, Hymes 1974, Said 1978, Blakey 1991). The basic critique is organised around the role of anthropology as part of colonial and imperialist dominance, its theoretical limitations, methods of data collection, data analysis, data interpretation, presentation, and above all, in spite of continuous efforts to the contrary, its ethnocentrism.

Since then much effort has been put into “reinventing” or “rethinking” anthropology “by expunging the most obvious bourgeois and colonial elements, and then rethinking and reordering what remains”, as Harrison (1991:1) noted. Despite these efforts of self-criticism in a truly scholarly spirit, anthropology’s perspectives remain situated within the same intellectual, political and ideological frameworks. For Magubane and Faris (1985), a genuine science of humankind, based upon freedom and equality, cannot emerge until the anthropology born of the rationalist and liberal intellectual tradition is changed. They also say that people in The Third World consider anthropology in the following way: “Suspect - as an invention of their enemy” (Magubane and Faris 1985:92). Western, intellectual and ideological control is maintained.

We have at times experienced this antipathy toward anthropologists ourselves. In 1986 a male, Tanzanian professor asked Siri Gerrard why she did not choose to be a rural sociologist instead of an anthropologist, and why she used participant observations instead of questionnaires as her main method of collecting data. Anthropology, its theories and methods were for him closely linked to colonial rule. From the beginning, the young Tanzanian university in Dar es Salaam had given priority to academic fields that were associated with independence and change, for example sociology and development studies.

In 1997 Mahmoudou Djingui and Lisbet Holtedahl presented a paper at a workshop organised during the Cameroonian National Festival of Art and Culture in Ngaoundéré, Cameroon. At this occasion, they were criticised, not because of their findings, but because of the fact that they were anthropologists.

For many African professors, whether they are from Tanzania, Cameroon or other countries on the continent, anthropology is a Western intellectual and ideo-

logical project aimed at maintaining Western imperialist domination over others. This attitude is widespread among Third World scholars and governments (Owusu in Pool 1994, Mudimbe 1988). The Third World diplomats as well as academic scholars, students in the classroom, and the population, question the knowledge produced by anthropologists (D'Amico-Samuels 1991). Therefore, several spokesmen for Third World countries prefer studies that are carried out by their own researchers (Jones 1970, Cassell 1977). According to Owusu (Pool 1994:236) a Ghanaian professor of anthropology at the University of Michigan, claimed that only indigenous ethnographers, working in their own culture and through their own native language, can give descriptions that do no violence to the "integrity" of the cultural realities of natives, because only they are able to obtain 'uncontaminated' data. This is a type of discussion with parallels to the early feminist debates.

This leads us to raise some questions about who has the right to do research, and who has this right in the Third World? Can anthropologists from the South produce the best and most reliable data, and are they better qualified to attribute cultural meaning to events? What about collaborations with researchers from the South and the North? What about collaboration between women and men?

We shall make an attempt to answer some of these questions by referring to examples that demonstrate that being a native anthropologist also gives rise to some important challenges. Being an anthropologist from the South in turn implies complex relations, which may also have an impact on the production of knowledge.

Mahmoudou Djingui's examples

Some years ago Mahmoudou Djingui (1993) worked in his home society, using his own Fulani language while repairing his Master's Degree at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris. From this work he gives the following reflections:

When working alone, I met many difficulties gaining access to some of the information that I needed. The difficulties were related to the relations between individuals who were regulated by tradition. I had prepared a questionnaire under the direction of my supervisor. In Paris I tested the questionnaire among the students coming from the area where I intended to do my fieldwork. Everything turned out well. I had no difficulties. My fellow students said that the questionnaire was understandable and I found that the answers I got from these students were satisfying.

I left Paris and went back home. Before going to the field, however, I decided to test the questionnaire among my friends who had not been to school.

To my surprise they were not able to understand the meaning of many of the questions. I finally understood that I was translating the questions from French to Fulani literally. I realised that I was not able to translate the meaning of the questions into my own language. I went to see my father who had been a civil servant for many years, to help me translating and he did. He was surprised to see me asking certain questions on specific topics. I asked for example, if the marriage is an obligation for everyone in the village. In his eyes, such a question was pointless. Being a native, I was supposed to know the answer. My father's comments therefore made me understand that asking questions on this subject could be interpreted by the informants as if I was questioning the institution of marriage itself.

I had similar experiences concerning the questions on sexuality. My father told me: "Be careful. People will think that you want to insult them. You are not supposed to ask these questions to your elders". This remark revealed the problem of my own position in my society. Even, as a researcher, I have to respect the elders. From the native point of view, I have to act as someone who knows how he can avoid being considered as an irresponsible person. If not, they will think that I want to change or radicalise the traditions. The latter is more serious because of the gap between those who have been to school and the others. This means that I, as a native anthropologist, have no right to the conventional naivety and curiosity that are often helpful in fieldwork.

In the field I met another problem. My informants were obviously expecting me to know how the traditions in the village were. In fact, they expected me to have a deep knowledge of Islamic principles of marriage. Therefore, many of them refused to be my informants, because they thought that they did not know enough on this subject. They directed me to Moodibbo, one of the knowledgeable Islamic persons in the village. This example illustrates that it was difficult for me to make them understand that what I wanted was to know more about their own practices and opinions. Afterwards I have often thought about this. Their reactions to my questions were quite natural, since they had never been exposed to scientific interviews.

When I succeeded in making them understand what I wanted, they interpreted my endeavour as that of a person who understood that he was wrong in following Western culture and who was trying to turn to his own culture. At that moment, they tried to explain the traditional idea of marriage, and tried to convince me on its importance. Still, it was not easy to get them to give their own opinions. The type of knowledge they gave me was useful, but would have even been more useful if my study had been concerned with the presentation of traditional institution of marriage. As mentioned earlier, my interest was the informants' own experiences and interpretations of this institution.

The problem of my civil status was also obvious during my fieldwork. I was not married. I had great difficulties in discussing personal life experiences openly with married people. Such information is not accessible to a novice. Married persons prefer to discuss such subjects with other married persons. Obviously, I had no access to married women. I had to rely on one informant who had access to them. So the information that I obtained from married women was not first-hand information, but personally marked information. The answers I obtained from my informants conformed to the traditional way of thinking. Women and young people gave answers like “yes” or “no”. They were not allowed to talk much. I got rich answers from old men and Moodibbo. They were supposed to be experts and they were very knowledgeable.

These examples show that, if I had not been aware of these problems, the research might have contributed to the consolidation of inequality in this village. The knowledge that was constructed might have been mainly from the point of view of those who have power in the society.

Reflections: Biases in anthropology carried out by researchers from the South?

What we want to say by means of these examples is first of all that they indicate those relations between people in Africa as everywhere else, are based on individual status and position, and this has to be respected. This means that being from the area also puts constraints on you and your work. Different statuses, for example being a man, a young man, or a Western-educated man, will limit the access to certain types of information. In this way the informants, consciously or not, might control the access to information.

Another discussion concerns who is considered to be from the area, and who is a native. When Mahmoudou Djingui did his Master’s thesis, he turned out to be a native student in anthropology. In Cameroon, there are at least 250 ethnic groups. No more than five ethnic groups have fostered any anthropologist so far. Most of them are men. If we suppose that only natives working in their own language can carry out fieldwork in their own society, what happens to the research done on other ethnic groups? Must the knowledge of these groups be neglected because they have no anthropologist in their midst?

If we accept the fact that anthropologists from other ethnic groups can be considered as native anthropologists, we must also accept that the knowledge that is produced might be distorted. Perhaps they also create stereotypes. We have experienced that stereotypes can be deeply embedded in the anthropologists’ minds, whether the anthropologist is from the same ethnic group or not. We have participated in workshops where we have met African anthropologists doing research on groups that are different from their own ethnic group, known as indigenous groups,

or at least as groups that are considered to be less developed. The anthropologists talked about these groups in the following way: “We try to make them understand”, “We try to make them aware of” or “We try to help them doing“. In other words, anthropologists who consider themselves or are considered by others as natives might have the same attitudes and discourses as the ones we have often seen Western anthropologists use when they talk about others.

This illustration indicates that scholars from the South, when they replace Westerners, do not necessarily produce a different type of knowledge. Also Southern scholars might reproduce the ethnic and/or gendered biases by idealising their own tradition in order to prove in a disguised way their superiority to others. There are many modes and degrees of “nativeness” and “outsiderness”, of being an insider and an outsider. Thus, anthropology might certainly, be transformed into a weapon for political struggle. It can be compared to a situation in which African political leaders replace colonial administrators. In many cases African leaders continue to develop their policies with little alteration. This kind of situation is often criticised by social scientists (Seierstad 1969). But as researchers we are also responsible for doing our utmost to understand and interpret such mechanisms and also ask how such biases and stereotypes can be avoided.

Egocentrism among the native *versus* ethnocentrism among Westerners is therefore a question that should be raised and answered. As a reaction to Western bias, Southern scholars are in danger of producing a different bias by idealising their own traditions. The question is then whether it is acceptable to replace a Western bias by a Southern bias or a Western male bias by a Southern male bias?

To conclude this part, we wish to say that we do believe in the possibility of the production of reliable, “true” knowledge. In order to achieve this objective we must be aware of the fact that an anthropologist, whether she or he is a woman or a man, Black or White, insider or outsider, is above all a socialised human being who is submitted to her or his own subjectivity. Self-confidence might be a great danger for Southern anthropologists just as it is for Western anthropologists. Southern anthropologists should therefore consider most of the criticism that is addressed to Western anthropologists as relevant for themselves as well.

Above we have argued for improved collaboration between Western and Southern scholars, between women and men, and between researchers and the local population. In the following, we shall try to point to some of the advantages we have experienced when Southern and Western anthropologists collaborate.

Collaborative research: reducing biases and constraints?

First of all, we would like to state that collaborative efforts have many advantages at different phases of the research process: in the planning, during the fieldwork

and in the process of writing the results. In the following, we will illustrate some of these advantages with our own examples.

Availability of "informants"

"Informants" are often receptive vis-a-vis researchers from the North. They are curious. They want to learn more about them and their lives, and exchange information with them. In brief, "informants" do their own research on Westerners. We discovered this while doing fieldwork in Mbakaou, a village close to an artificial water reservoir in the Southern part of Adamaoua County in Cameroon (Gerrard 1996). When we arrived there the first time, one of the Cameroonian team members, Ousmanou Babawa, addressed some of the men approaching us. As soon as he explained the aim of our visit, one of them, who later turned out to become our host, our friend and one of our key "informants", invited us to stay in his compound. He was interested in our topic, namely fisheries, because he himself and many members of his family were connected to fishing and marketing of fish.

During the years that have passed and after many visits to our host and his family, we have often wondered why they treated and continue to treat us so well? Was it because our host and his family wanted to treat Westerners in a polite way?

This might not be the only explanation. During our conversations the fishermen revealed a lot of problems concerning resources, fishing equipment and financing their equipment. Another reason for their interest in talking to us could therefore be that they thought we might help developing the fisheries, since development workers in fishing were far from unknown in the village.

Perhaps the answer must also be sought in the light of local traditions. In our case our team consisted of both Cameroonians and Norwegians. The Cameroonian members of the team were men, who happened to belong to the same ethnic group, Fulani, and came from the same city, Garoua, as our host. Perhaps our team was well-treated because of this. Over the years, mutual relations and respect have also developed between us. The male members of the team developed a close friendship especially with men, and the female members with women. This can also help to explain the character of our relations and the local hospitality.

In anthropological literature much attention has been given to the relations between the Western researchers and the local population. Ohnuki-Tierney says that "all foreigners, especially Westerners, usually receive the red-carpet treatment from Japanese, who go out of their way to accommodate their visitors" (Ohnuki-Tierney 1984:585). Because of this, the problem of seeking out "informants" is easily resolved. The danger is, according to Ohnuki-Tierney, that the hosts perform for the researchers. He also emphasises that the local population is not always serious, and that they sometimes tell fallacious stories which they suppose are what the Westerners want. In the end, Western anthropologists and their host

“informants” may end up producing a “distorted and negotiated reality” that corresponds to the hypotheses of the researchers.

Whether a team like ours will produce a “distorted and negotiated reality” that is far from the reality of the local population or not, has yet to be seen. However, emphasis on “situated knowledges” (Haraway 1991), long-lasting contact through several persons acting in different statuses, can be ways to validate the knowledge gained. In the social sciences there is now an increased acceptance for the fact that researchers construct their own versions of societies. The versions can vary from researcher to researcher and the texts that are produced are usually the result of a long process. The texts, in other words, represent only one way of looking at society.

Removing the barriers

The local population has often created its own stereotypes of Westerners. Westerners are naive; they do not know the local culture, but they want to learn. They are not ashamed and ask many questions without problems. However, in our collaboration we have experienced that it is possible to change such stereotypes. In a specific situation, the “informants” were eager to answer the questions Lisbet Holtedahl asked in French. Mahmoudou Djingui translated both the questions and the answers. In a regular situation, he could not have asked these questions. Their collaboration helped them to establish a situation in which the researchers asked questions that an anthropologist from the area alone is not supposed to ask. Together with a female researcher from outside, Mahmoudou Djingui felt that he could do this without violating local rules and thus without feeling shame.

We have also experienced that Westerners are afraid of violating local rules and where the difference in the team members’ statuses turned out to be an advantage. During her fieldwork in Mbakaou, Siri Gerrard has been reluctant to enter certain men’s arenas, for example the discussion groups after the prayer in the mosque. In such situations it is a great advantage that a member of the team is a Fulani man. It is easier to accept the presence of a woman in such settings, because of the fact that the male member of the team participates in the prayer and the following discussion, not only in his capacity of being a team member, but also in the capacity of being a respected Fulani man and Muslim. At least the female member of the team feels that she “is permitted” to stay. In addition, a team consisting of men and women with different competence and experience opens up the opportunity to discuss and analyse events and opinions as soon as they happen.

Complementary observation and interpretation

It is often argued that the native anthropologist has problems achieving the necessary distance to his or her own material (Ohnuki-Tierney 1984). For example, it may be difficult to see, understand and appreciate certain changes in society. When

working together with a foreigner, the chances are that he or she will become more aware of those changes. What is obvious for one is certainly not obvious for the other.

Mahmoudou Djingui experienced this when he worked together with Trond Waage, another researcher in the Anthropos programme. The focus of this research project was the young moto-taxi-men⁵ of Ngaoundéré. At an early stage of this work, Trond Waage paid attention to the clothing of the young men and pointed out that they were dressed like young Americans. Mahmoudou Djingui, for his part, had seen their blouse-style jackets as the clothing for young boys, a type of clothing that he himself wore when he was young. He did not notice, like Trond Waage did, the particularity of the style. This new style was more like an American style and had obviously changed. At the same time, Mahmoudou Djingui pointed out: "We discovered that the names attributed to the different moto-taxi stations were Arabic, such as Kuwait City, Baghdad, etc.". Trond Waage, as a foreigner, did not find this very surprising because of all the Muslims and Muslim symbols in Ngaoundéré. Mahmoudou Djingui, who knew the milieu, also knew that these Arabic names had nothing to do with Islam. After a long discussion, Trond Waage and Mahmoudou Djingui finally agreed that the American-style jacket and the Arabic names, taken together, could be interpreted as central symbolic elements creating *the image* that these young boys want to project. Kuwait can be linked to the Gulf War. It means danger. Baghdad in American films is a dangerous city. In America, blouse-style jackets, is often the clothing of tough guys. Thus, taken together the symbolic elements express the idea of danger, of tough guy.

Men's access to women's spheres

Through the collaboration with Lisbet Holtedahl, Mahmoudou Djingui got easier access also to married women and their private spheres. He was even allowed to enter their living space, and had conversations with married women without the presence of other persons. He received a kind of confidence from the married women and their husbands that he had never thought possible. He felt that the presence of Westerners created a kind of complicity between the informants and himself. The situation created a feeling of "us" against "them", the Westerners, and thus admitted even native men into women's private spheres that are normally closed to local men.

Access to and interest in the findings

We also maintain the belief that the people who are the subjects in research projects should have access to the findings that concern them. As long as research publications written by Westerners are directed at a Western audience this is not evident. We have experienced that these attitudes may easily change if a person from the

local society is involved in the study. For example, several of our "informants" or their children have already read our work with great interest. This interest represents possible feedback and it allows dialogue about the research through the different stages of the process. In this way we as researchers are able to reduce a major problem in anthropology that was introduced earlier in this article. We might also come closer to our aim of building up better relations between the local population and the researchers.

North-South collaboration and exchange: Limitations, experiences and visions

Through the kind of North-South research collaboration described above, it is possible to succeed in transgressing cultural inhibitions and reducing ethnocentrism and eurocentrism. One can also succeed in producing knowledge about women, and moreover hope to support women's participation in the academic world.

Collaboration, however, implies that one makes explicit that the quality of one's research and teaching is dependent on the contribution from colleagues from other continents. Most of the existing research relations are based on an underlying model of interaction between Western academics and the local population that suggests a *transfer of knowledge from North to South*. This model maintains the hegemony of a centralised academic elite. We want to promote a collaborative model based on the idea of *exchange between researchers from North and South*. Such an exchange might allow us to transgress some of the cultural boundaries between men and women, North and South, Black and White. In this way, we hope that our co-operation might open up for processes that change the male hegemony. If we succeed in this, the male dominated academic world elite might be challenged, and women, knowledge about women, and knowledge produced by women might obtain an equally important place in the academic world as the knowledge produced by men.

There are, however, many barriers and obstacles in the North as well as in the South that hamper the implementation of collaborative research and joint production of knowledge. In order to fulfil and concretise exchanges between North and South, these barriers and obstacles have to be removed. One barrier is the small number of female students and researchers, especially at the university level in the South. Through our research in the Anthropolos programme we have learned that most women in Adamaoua, Cameroon, do not have access to higher education for financial and cultural reasons. A logical consequence of our collaborative programme was therefore to try to increase the number of women in the programme. The members of the Anthropolos board and the representatives of the University of Ngaoundéré decided to give *scholarships* to women at the Master's level, the Bach-

elor's level and even to some in their first years at the university. However, scholarships to students were not in line with the definition of the academic goals of the NUFU programme. The NUFU board considered such a type of support as *aid* under the responsibility of another public institution dealing with The Third World, NORAD⁶. Scholarships at the lower levels were not considered as serious "research collaboration". In this way it was the Norwegian policy and its institutions that hampered the recruitment of women. With few women in the academic world, the development of knowledge based on gender and equality was also hampered.

Likewise, children from several ethnic groups in northern Cameroon were not allowed to go to school and/or had few opportunities to get support. In order to counteract this, it was important for us to give *scholarships* to students from these groups. Without such efforts the programme of Anthropos could risk to recruit *mostly men* from privileged ethnic groups from the southern part of Cameroon. Especially young men, but also young women from these groups, have for a long time had better access to secondary school education. When a new university opened in Ngaoundéré in 1992 students from South Cameroon were in a majority. In Cameroonian policy the ethnic and regional dimensions are strong. What we feared if we did not favour students from North Cameroon in the study of their own region was an imbalance that in the long run could create conflicts and consolidate existing social differences. These were differences, which, in the future, could threaten the good governance not only at the university, but also in the whole country. Again the NUFU board looked at the number of scholarships and according to them the scholarship programme was too big in relation to the number of students that could later be recruited to the university. In this way the donor institution tried to overrule local decisions.

We have here demonstrated examples of events and cases that can be seen as "problems of translation" when trying to promote research and collaboration in the South. In a sense, it is the same problem as the one Mahmoudou Djingui mentioned when he was doing his fieldwork for his Master's degree. The only way to solve these problems is to encourage dialogue, strengthen exchange between researchers, and allow time and space for the development of locally based strategies.

An important aspect to remember is that North-South collaboration is very time-consuming. Collaboration cannot easily be converted into academic excellence in Norway, compared to more traditional individual research. Building up new institutions with new participants takes time. When researchers from different academic cultures meet, we have to try out new ways of thinking, discuss new research methods and new ways of organising research. If not, we fear that Western academic institutions will continue to contribute to the reproduction of criteria for academic excellence and may also nourish the hegemonic dominance of Western scholars over the scholars in the southern hemisphere. Even if productivity

and efficiency is important for a university, the academic world should pay more attention to how research results should be evaluated.

Implementing the exchange model

Collaboration with emphasis on exchange implies an implementation at many levels. We shall here mention two: 1) collaboration at the university level, teacher and student exchange, and 2) collaboration between the university and the local community.

Firstly, we are convinced that teacher and student exchange enhances the quality of our teaching. Teachers from the South might participate in the regular development of the curriculum, and in supervising and teaching at our Northern institutions just as students from the North should study at the universities in the South. Today such strategies encounter numerous obstacles. One such obstacle lies in the definition of the formal competence of our visitors. A professor of social anthropology from New York is often considered more qualified than a colleague from Africa, because it is thought that the New York professor's competence fits better with our curricula and syllabuses. The experience shows that accepting someone from South, who is unacquainted with "our system" is rare. However, a change of the system to allow stronger participation of our colleagues from the South in research and teaching, offers better conditions. Exchange demands more work. It also implies exchange of female teachers.

We also argue for a programme where African students take study trips to our regions and universities, just as our own students have the opportunity to visit regions and universities in the South. We also want to promote an exchange where Northern students study at Southern universities. Today lack of insight in curricula and syllabuses leads to a situation where students from the North are interested in going to Africa, but not to African universities.

Secondly, promoting collaboration between universities and local communities is very important. This is even more time consuming and challenging, however. If the researchers succeed, such a process can open up the universities. We therefore want to emphasise the importance of exchange between the researchers' informants as well as people in general and the academic world. In this way, local women and men can be interested in developing competence so that they themselves can describe and analyse social and cultural process.

Conclusion

In this article we have argued *collaboration and exchange* as an alternative to transfer of knowledge as the guiding principle in future North-South relations. The benefit is mutual: Southern universities need the input from the North, but the opposite is equally true.

Men still dominate the academic world and NUFU. This means that men to a greater degree than women decide the agenda, and the criteria for good collaboration and research. They are the ones who have access to the academic resources. Women's participation in research and education might give new life to academic institutions and create better conditions for the production of knowledge. If the academic world, NUFU included, succeeds in establishing a more gender oriented policy, this will be an important vehicle in the production of a new type of knowledge, knowledge which is integrated in the daily life of the local population. In this way, the academic world and its institutions, through the promotion of women's participation, will counteract the reproduction of the global, male dominated academic elite.

Notes

¹ This article is a result of a long-lasting collaboration between the authors within the Anthropos programme. The programme is based on an agreement about cultural research and education between the universities of Ngaoundéré, Cameroon and Tromsø, Norway, initiated in 1992.

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² In the following we use North and West, Northern and Western as synonyms. We also use South and the Third World as synonyms.

³ This article is based on lectures held at the Anthropos workshop in connection to the conference "Women's Worlds 99" and Kvinnsforsk's seminar, called the NUFU Gender Seminar following Women's Worlds in June 1999. An earlier version of this article can also be found in proceedings from the NUFU Gender Seminar.

⁴ The NUFU programme (Nationalt utvalg for utviklingsrelatert forskning og utvikling) was established in 1991/1992 and is based on the idea that the Norwegian universities and university employees collaborate with universities and university employees of the South. The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has financed the programme.

⁵ These moto-taxi-men are young taxi drivers who use motorbikes in their work.

⁶ NORAD is the Norwegian Agency for Development

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