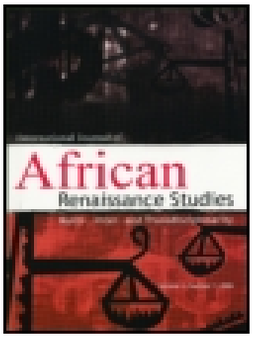

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Article

Decolonising the Discourse on Resilience

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Abstract

This article presents a discursive critique of the Eurocentric paradigms of knowledge production that characterise much of the underlying logics in the age of neoliberal discourses on resilience, pointing out important areas not given sufficient attention. In particular, it highlights the limits of the modernist ontology of resilience, whereby extremely "vulnerable" African communities are encouraged "to become resilient" to climatic disruption and environmental catastrophe and to "bounce back" as rapidly as possible. The article moves the discussion forward, drawing from critical decolonial approaches, in alignment with Indigenous knowledges, to question and rethink meaningful alternative ontologies, ways of knowing and being, in adaptive governance. I argue that the recognition of the plurality of many worlds, rather than one world, highlighted through critical decolonial understandings of epistemic forms with Indigenous knowledges, can be counterposed to Western universality as an innovative ontology to decentre the world order in the problematic dominant development of resilience thinking.

Keywords: resilience; decolonisation; Africa; epistemology; pluriverse; Indigeneity

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Introduction

It is widely accepted that Africa is the continent most "vulnerable" to climate change and environmental stress. The phenomenon of climate change and environmental stress has the potential to impact on the economic well-being of populations, especially in poor societies. Africa's vulnerability to climate change and environmental stress largely depends on its current and future adaptive capacities (Codjoe, Owusu, and Burkett 2014; Nkomwa et al. 2014; Shisanya 2017; Wilson and Inkster 2018). This article uses decolonial thought and pluralism to critique the limits of Western conceptualisations of hegemonic logics of resilience in Africa. Resilience discourse is rooted in colonial knowledge, subjectivity, and power and as such a decolonial approach and pluralism are necessary to retrieve non-Western subjectivities. This article seeks to problematise current understandings of resilience. In particular, it addresses the constructive alternative that lies in drawing inspiration from Indigenous forms of knowledge and practices that might enable us to reconsider resilience in different ways.

It is important to clarify from the outset that my critique of resilience explicitly makes the case for an inter/transdisciplinary approach marrying insights from anthropological and historical studies with those from political and development studies that take a *longue durée* perspective. Resilience discourse has been the object of significant scholarly attention and debates (Blaser and De la Cadena 2018; Bourbeau and Ryan 2018; Chandler and Reid 2020; Humbert and Joseph 2019; Juncos and Joseph 2020). Many of these debates in the critical scholarship centre on multiple logics of resilience (Bourbeau and Ryan 2018; Chandler and Reid 2020; Humbert and Joseph 2019). Resilience discourse relies on ideas of self-organisation and, in particular, adaptation, transformation, and survival in the face of extreme adverse conditions (Chandler 2020; Rogers 2015). No clear consensus has emerged in any of these debates, in part, I argue, because of the conceptual vagueness and malleability of resilience.

A number of critical scholars now recognise that the age of resilience is marked by a new framework for the legitimisation and further extension of the contemporary neoliberal logic of adaptation (Bourbeau and Ryan 2018; Chandler and Reid 2020; Joseph 2018). Chandler (2020) points out that the problem with the pervasive Western, Eurocentric approaches to the development of the concept of resilience is that key to these approaches is being responsive to complex feedback loop effects. Modernist ontologies or frameworks of policy governance for resilience thinking tend to assume "One World" (Law 2015), which means taking the world as the status quo or as a given. Humbert and Joseph (2019) have emphasised the pluralistic character of resilience thinking, which allows for an analysis that sees resilience as a complex and evolving process of articulation. Resilient communities are imagined and widely understood as possessing external capacity-building and coping capacities through maintaining stability, which enables them to sense and respond to changes (Chandler and Pugh 2020; Chandler and Reid 2020; Reid 2020). In terms of resilience, the normative order claims that what matters in a complex world is to minimise external shocks and pragmatically

"bounce back" as rapidly as possible from adversity of various kinds to creatively respond to new challenges (most notably found in ecological arguments about climate change and environmental change) (Pugh 2018; Reid 2020).

Discourses of resilience invariably involve examining the capacity to be aware of and responsive to feedback effects, thereby bringing emergent processes and inter-connections to the transparent surface. It is this recognition that increasingly drives the Western modernist ontology. A resilient community is able to self-govern through strategies of adaptability generated in response to environmental and climatic stress through becoming more "in touch" with their "reality". Resilience approaches entail successful adaptation or transformation and living harmoniously with change and potentially growing stronger through circumstances (Bourbeau and Ryan 2018). Chandler and Pugh (2020) note that the speed of reaction is vital, in that evasive or preventive measures ensure that problem signs are recognised and taken care of as quickly as possible. Automatic policy feedback responses emphasise the need for more effective systems of detection. Productive capacities for response and recognition, associated with the complex entanglements of resilience, enable real-time decisions in "vulnerable" communities. Hence, resilience discourse has increasingly found particularly fertile ground in dramatic external events through the proponents of the modernist/neoliberal paradigm of resilience telling capacity-building communities what to do rather than how to see.

Coping with and adapting to external forces and responding to feedback loops are key aspirations in neoliberal discourses of resilience. I equate neoliberal discourses of resilience with the contemporary demand for humans to adapt to the conditions of the complex world instead of transforming the social and political conditions which hold them back or seeking to transcend these conditions (Juncos and Joseph 2020; Reid 2020). The development of resilience thinking enables a framework that directs "vulnerable" African communities to succumb to circumstances, reimagine catastrophes, learn, transform, and adapt to external necessities and try to simply survive rather than extinguish the sources of their oppression. It is precisely these aspects that are challenged in this article through the call to decolonise resilience in Africa beyond the Eurocentric paradigm.

Over the past decade, sustainable implementation of climate change response programmes for resilience and environmental adaptation has focused almost exclusively on Eurocentric canonised modes of knowledge production. The application of traditional Indigenous knowledge and practices in climate resilience and environmental adaptation strategies has been silenced or maginalised and, perhaps more importantly, largely under-utilised in climate/environmental change policy (Belfer, Ford, and Maillet 2017; Lesperance 2017; Whitfield 2015). However, a growing body of literature in recent years has documented how best to integrate traditional Indigenous knowledge systems and ideologies into scientific assessments of climate resilience and environmental adaptation (Etchart 2017; Lindroth and Sinevaara-Niskanen 2016;

Maldonado et al. 2016; Reid 2019). This article supplements and builds upon this more nuanced literature by providing local area-specific actions/policies and contextualised evidence of Indigenous, unique localised realities linked to climate resilience and environmental adaptation. This article not only pushes the boundaries but also actively transgresses the frontier of working towards more refined conceptualisations of resilience discourse. It will accomplish this in part by suggesting or further developing new theoretical approaches, such as seeing the resilience discourse in terms of pluralism, which provides useful insights into the biases in knowledge production on the continent today. Exposing these biases is important in light of the renewed attention to hegemonic logics of resilience in both critical resilience scholarship and external interventions over the last two decades.

There is a preconception that African populations, presumably those who tend to be poor, powerless, and/or members of an exploited class, are more resilient because they adapt and adopt to misfortune and can shift strategies and decision making in the face of rapid change. Bouncing back from disappointment and misfortune is an assumed characteristic both within "vulnerable" African communities and without. These misleading characterisations can lead to a continuation of oppression, because vulnerable and/or poor people are trapped within these discourses and unable to break through them to build a different "reality". Indigenous forms of knowledge bring to the surface the limits of dominant resilience understandings of "coping", "recovering", and "bouncing back" in the face of regular climatic and environmental stress.

The key argument of this article is that resilience as a discourse and as a concept itself cannot be universally secured through "one-size-fits-all" solutions at the expense of occluded and often-silenced imaginaries. To be sure, local knowledge and practices problematise and powerfully disrupt the construction and the viability of policy interventions of resilience by international actors, precisely through the inclusion of local people with local knowledge. This article moves beyond current policy articulations of adaptation to address the plurality of epistemic traditions entangled in the situated meaning of climate resilience and environmental adaptation which accepts diversity and a plurality of discourses. This is a call for new ways of thinking and governing—that is to say, alternative resilience imaginaries that go beyond modernist understandings. I want to break away from stories about adapting, coping, and being resilient by constructing critical alternatives intricately embedded in places that support the co-existence of different forms of life, as opposed to contemporary governmental imaginaries. The aim of the article is to show how many colonial practices are explicitly displayed in resilience thinking from a policy standpoint, and to establish reasons for colonial hegemony. It also seeks to develop a deeper engagement on Indigenous populations' coping and adaptation strategies in the face of catastrophic climate change and environmental disturbances. I am concerned with African decolonial thought as a site of discourses of resilience, to problematise the underlying assumptions shaping the discourses in "vulnerable" African communities engaging in their own resilience-

building. This observation has largely been overlooked by the dominant approaches of critical resilience scholarship.

The development of the discourses of Indigenous resilience in Africa and critical decolonial approaches needs to be put into conversation with the conceptual framework of pluralism. The horizon of plurality and epistemic inclusivity is of central importance to discourses of Indigenous resilience, because the pluriversality of epistemologies in decoloniality creates a new register for critique. My interest here lies in the plurality of climate and environmental adaptations to a resilient system. This article thus makes explicit the neglect of the plurality of epistemic traditions in intellectual engagements whilst highlighting the inseparable relationship between plurality and decoloniality and modern African studies as a discipline. It is submitted that the historical and contemporary effects of pluriversality are experienced in profound material ways that are of direct relevance to the core concerns of decoloniality as embodied in the resilience agenda.

The article contributes to a growing field of African decolonial scholarship and pluriversality that seeks to redefine the absolute necessity to expand epistemological approaches within discourses of resilience. By analysing discourses of resilience in contemporary governmental imaginaries, I bring forward otherwise often-occluded imaginaries as equally valid perspectives on what constitutes resilience in different places with diverse geo-cultural regions and ethnically diverse intellectual traditions. This article also contributes to the politics of knowledge co-optation in Africa through centring often-silenced contributions of African ways of knowing and being to the decolonisation/decoloniality of discourses of resilience. Further, it contributes to the efforts that view the pluriversalisation of neoliberal discourses of resilience as an inextricable part of the wider task of decolonising knowledge production and subjectivity in the interest of the real empowerment of Indigenous peoples. This analysis seeks to question the weakness of Western, European thought that constrains the discourses of African traditions and that structures resilience doctrine. This article focuses on how a critical African decolonial approach reasserts and reattests to the triumphs of constructive alternative ontologies in the age of neoliberal discourses of resilience. Some of the pertinent questions explored in this article are as follows: What exactly is the era of neoliberal discourses of resilience? What does it require from decolonisation and plurality? And what could the “decolonial turn in critique” mean for neoliberal discourses of resilience?

Reading Decolonisation in the Age of Resilience

Decoloniality is delicately complex: it means different things for different people in different contexts (Maldonado-Torres 2008; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2020). It is beyond the scope of this article to try and define such a complex concept. Suffice, however, to say that decolonial approaches mean the struggle for representation informed by the perspectives of the subaltern. It is where attention is placed on structures of social reality

and theories seeking to understand such reality (Elliot-Cooper 2018). Decoloniality entails decentring Western epistemologies and implementing epistemic plurality to reflect multiple other forms of being and knowing. In making this critical point, I am certainly not advocating a fundamentalist epistemic project; rather, I am calling for a plurality of epistemologies of the future. I seek to consider differences in ideas, social practices, histories, identities, and beliefs as part of a myriad of means towards the democratisation of knowledge production beyond the yoke of pervasive Eurocentrism.

Decoloniality/decolonisation as a paradigm of restoration and reparation essentially depends on context, historical conditions, and geography. Within the decolonial concept lies an understanding that the world cannot be interpreted from an abstract universal standpoint, but is rather composed of diverse critical epistemic, ethical, and/or political projects towards a pluriversal (as opposed to a universal) world (Mignolo 2011). The contours that shape the landscape of decoloniality can be traced to leading black intellectuals and academics who fought for epistemic freedom and opposed the violence of Euro-modernity (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2020, 893). Decoloniality is not part of modernity; it is border thinking, border epistemology, delinking and unlearning dominant narratives as a way of re-learning the knowledge that has been pushed aside, subjugated, forgotten, buried, or discredited by the continued unfolding of Western modernity (Vieira 2019). Thinking decolonially is essentially to unmask, disrupt, question, displace, rattle, and unsettle modernity and, of course, render coloniality visible wherever it seeks to hide itself by exposing both its rhetoric and its reality (Mignolo 2011). Within such a context, the decolonial project is not criticism of modernity within modernity *tout court*; it is, rather, standing outside modernity in order to expose its darker side. There are three ways in which decoloniality can be understood, namely coloniality of power, coloniality of knowledge, and coloniality of being.

I approach decoloniality as a paradigm of knowledge and subjectivity that focuses on "teasing out epistemological issues, politics of knowledge generation, as well as questions of who generates which knowledge, and for what purpose" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2020, 893). Decoloniality/decolonisation calls for the structure to be destroyed to create new forms of lives (Amato 2017; Sekyi-Otu 2011). It moves away from the deceit of coloniality in the sense that it authorises the lived experience of the African subject: those who are at the receiving end of subjection and especially those who suffer from subjection (Mignolo 2011). Critical decolonial approaches inaugurate the subjectivity of the African subject as a necessary condition to combat subjection in the the process of liberating the African subject (Jansen 2019). The need to work towards decolonial futures rather than the preoccupation of colonialism is the task of decoloniality/decolonisation in a world still largely under the control of pervasive Eurocentric paradigms (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2020).

Falola (2017, 704), in "Ritual Archives", shows how the colonial encounter has, necessarily by design, resulted in the coloniality of the archives of knowledge, replacing Africa's ancestral ritual archives with limiting and severely limited templates of

Western, Eurocentric knowledge. Falola's programme is to "challenge the conventions of Western archives" and their prejudices, so as to cause a resumption of the interrupted history of Africa and other colonised/dehumanised peoples, and finally bring about the emergence of "organic intellectuals" (Eze 2017). Falola (2017) and Kebede (2017) correctly point out that the decolonisation programme must begin from ritual archives, from the reconstructing and restoring of traditionality in its own terms.

In articulating the necessity of decolonial critical analysis, Horsthemke (2017), like Kebede (2017), defends the value of Indigenous knowledge systems, arguing that all knowledge systems are local. However, Horsthemke raises several critical issues about the definition and application of Indigenous knowledge systems. According to him, we must guard against taking as science mere beliefs or opinions without evidence/reason(s): "bad assertions, superstitions, and prejudices, bias—in fact anything that involves myth and fabrication—constitutes an infringement on the epistemic rights of students" (2017, 687).

The notion of colonial difference, Escobar (2015) notes, should be theorised and imagined outside Western modernity. According to Escobar (2015), alternative thought opens the vistas of decolonisation, where social transformation can emerge through engaging both epistemology and political space. Resistant political traditions must engage in decolonial delinking from re-Westernisation and in politico-economic de-Westernisation, which is in total opposition to modernity/coloniality and imperial knowledge. Re-Westernisation and politico-economic de-Westernisation introduce new terms of epistemic formulation and engagement necessary to control the terms of epistemology. To challenge the logic of modernity and pervasive Western-centrism/Eurocentrism is not being fundamentalist—it is, rather, engaging in "unveiling body-politics of knowledge" (Mignolo 2011, 14). Shifting the geography of reason is politics informed by epistemic disobedience and decolonial delinking in Africa. The salient point is that decolonial thinking is not only a response to the locus of enunciation of pervasive Eurocentrism; it signals one of many steps in unpacking the lived experience embedded in racialisation and the intention to vanquish coloniality/colonialism (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2020). Decoloniality, for example, starts from radical transformations—political and economic—and the liberation of subjectivities from the disenchantments of Westernisation and Eurocentrism.

Decolonising Discourses of Resilience

The argument I am making here is not to essentialise and exoticise Indigeneity or adding one more cultural perspective, way of thinking, and way of being. I want to draw out for the reader how epistemic questions of knowledge and subjectivity disable the assumptions of resilience in "vulnerable" and precarious African communitues, hence an attempt to decolonise resilience. Of late, a meaningful alternative discourse demanding the decolonisation of contemporary resilience thinking has become evident in critical policy scholarship, prompted in large measure by international policy actors.

Many international organisations throughout the policy world, such as the World Bank, that have attempted to formulate policies to help people cope with the crises caused by global ecological catastrophes and exposure to endemic disasters are attracted to Indigenous peoples on account of their perceived exceptional abilities and capacities to endure over time in spite of challenges (Chandler and Reid 2020), specifically those living in Africa. Critical here is that attention to discourses around Indigenous knowledge and Indigeneity represents a reversal of the long history of colonial denigration (Thomas, Mitchell, and Aresenau 2015; Valayden 2016).

In earlier phases of modernity, the knowledge and practices of Indigenous peoples were disparaged on account of their perceived inferiority. However, today there is an apparent appreciation of Indigenous knowledge and practices in international policy-making (Joseph 2021; Tocci 2020). To be absolutely clear, I do not see this apparent epistemological shift taking place in the underlying logics of resilience scholarship. Rather, this epistemological shift functions to discipline the Indigenous themselves into performing their own resilience (Chandler and Reid 2020). The adopting of Indigenous peoples' knowledges under the auspices of resilience, I argue, must start with the acknowledgement of the adaptations to local geography and ecology and not from the assumption that there is a universally accepted conceptualisation of the world. This would enable new forms of thinking and responsivity to emerge. International institutions have readily promoted and perpetuated the resilience paradigm while systematically ignoring or marginalising Indigenous knowledge production.

My problematic is that discourses of resilience need to be replaced by meaningful alternatives, such as decolonising approaches and pluriversality, because of their compliancy with the neoliberal constructions of governance interventions. The fact of the matter is that the approach to resilience by policy-makers in large international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) and multilateral institutions on the African continent is largely out of touch with localised realities and experiences. A more nuanced understanding of the effect of social, economic, or environmental policies and how they are adopted, adapted, or ignored would seemingly provide better results. Thus, my argument builds upon a long history of work meant to decentre Western thought and prioritise African epistemologies. The following section envisions and (re)imagines discourses of resilience in Africa as creating "decolonial subjects and decolonial knowledges" (Mignolo 2011) and is framed by the Akan and Frafra ethnic groups' rich understandings of and relationships with the world around them. This, I believe, can help us move away from Eurocentric narratives, which tend to be rooted in the top-down, modernist ontology of adaptive governance. So, the questions I consider the most fundamental here are simply: What does it really mean to decolonise discourses of resilience? What might a decolonised approach to resilience look like in practice? The answers to these questions need to be sought in the creation of a very different setting for a decolonisation approach in the wider contemporary debates on the development of resilience.

Decoloniality and the Question of Knowledge Production

Decolonised approaches to discourses of resilience aim to make visible distinctive perspectives grounded overwhelmingly in Indigenous lived realities, values, experiences, histories, cultures, ideas, and aspirations, as well as a fundamental reconceptualisation of the very idea of resilience. Looking at the worlds of Indigenous African societies as an innovative ontology to decentre the global power structure is to underline the idea of the proliferation of alternative epistemologies as a challenge to coloniality in wider debates about resilience. We cannot understand the challenges which preoccupy the world today without understanding the ways in which discourses of resilience expressed themselves epistemologically by shaping the colonising and colonised populations (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2020). This understanding also involves engaging in a decolonised political-ethical way of being and different ways of knowing. This involves a particular form of critical stance, held to keep future possibilities open (Chandler and Reid 2020), which is at the heart of this article. Discourses of resilience around crises as perceived by governance structures overlook divergent understandings of environmental adaptation and Indigenous climate vulnerability. I question and expose the universalistic, reductionist, and totalising logics of Western modernity regarding resilience, because resilience regimes of rationality bounce off multiple versions or degrees of crises (Chandler and Reid 2020). This limits the capacity for local communities to craft institutions and influence conventional structures of adaptive governance. Moreover, it paints a picture of "vulnerable" Africans as being without agency—and there are numerous examples in the literature of how African populations navigate around the parts of these logics that do not suit them.

The ability to adapt in the face of environmental disaster and climatic misfortune is understood as increasingly inherent to Indigenous forms of knowledge. I frame and reinterpellate Indigenous forms of knowledge as sites of livelihood resilience in terms of climatic and environmental adaptation as well as powerful symbols of hope for achieving successful adaptive capacities. The reality, in contrast, is that the construction of discourses of resilience in the critical literature, surprisingly, subjugates the plurality of Indigenous knowledge production which contains crucial insights about how to negotiate today's catastrophic climate vulnerability, environmental disruptions, and other perturbations of various kinds. Assuming a universal normativity and positivist naturalisation of climate resilience and environmental adaptation (United Nations Climate Change 2019), rather than the diversity, plurality, and agential forces of resilient Indigenous subjects, increasingly precludes the production of existing Indigenous modes of knowledge required for extremely "vulnerable" societies to survive and flourish in particular ecosystems. A deterministic understanding of regular environmental disturbances and climatic disruptions fails to account for any (in)security outside certain predetermined frameworks; it romanticises and essentialises the coping strategies of Indigeneity, casting them as responsible for adapting to climate crises and environmental disruptions, rather than problematising and politicising Indigeneity. Indigenous communities' modes of thought, encoded in traditions, worldviews, and

spiritual relationships to memories of environmental and climate destruction and exhaustion, play a fundamentally important role in coping with and delinking from planetary crises imbricated in the lingering epistemological colonialism.

Case Study of the Akan: Geographical, Historical, and Cultural Context

Akan is the language of the people called the Akan. The Akan are the largest ethnic group in Ghana (Adomako and Ampadu 2015). According to the 2000 national population census, the Akan constitute 49.1% of the Ghanaian population, and about 44% of the country's population speak Akan as non-native speakers (Awuah-Nyamekye 2009). The Akan occupy the greater part of the southern part of Ghana. Akan is spoken as a native language in five of the ten regions in Ghana, namely the Ashanti, Eastern, Western, Central, and Brong Ahafo regions (Adomako and Ampadu 2015). They are sandwiched by the Ewes in the Volta region of Ghana. The Akan speak various dialects that are mutually intelligible; they include Fante, Asante, Akuapem, Bono, Kwahu, Akwamu, Wassa, Akyem, Ahafo, and Assin (Awuah-Nyamekye 2009). They are referenced here because their close connection to the natural world and their reduced social-ecological resilience and adaptive capacity provide an important basis for today's efforts in dealing with environmental adversity and climatic threats.

Arguably, the traditional Akan worldview plays a significant role in maintaining locally resilient social-ecological systems (Cobbinah and Anane 2016). Notably, they built a forest, which aligns with traditional worldviews and values for sustained environmental change, but also with sustaining traditional livelihoods (Awuah-Nyamekye 2009). The resilient and responsive capacity for regular environmental adaptation and climate resilience is emblematic of the Indigenous Akan people of Ghana (Adomako and Ampadu 2015). The Akan's traditional or local ecological knowledge exemplifies a decolonial pathway and the political imaginary of the new resilience doctrine in upholding existing Indigenous cosmologies and epistemologies in coping, adapting, and "bouncing back" from environmental threat and regular climatic disturbances and disruptions posed to life by human practices. They thereby deeply problematise international policy-making regarding resilience and adaptability to environmental stress and climate change approaches rooted in the Western episteme.

The Akan live according to relationships of pure reciprocity with the animals, plants, and waters they depend on economically, culturally, and for health, as constituting the fabric of productive knowledge for transforming planetary conditions (Dumenu and Obeng 2016). For example, the Akan commonly believe that cutting down a green tree along streams and on the river catchment is taboo (Antwi-Agyei, Stringer, and Dougill 2014). In fact, trees and all that lives in the thickets are as important as human life. Therefore, cutting down a tree is tantamount to killing a child; anyone who breaches this taboo is severely sanctioned (Adomako and Ampadu 2015). This is embedded in the religious beliefs of the Akan, to the extent that planting a tree is, in essence, a form of worship (Oti 2005). In the Akan traditional milieu, the tree is symbolic of life. Thus,

traditional conservation strategies are stimulated in the process along with the protection of specific plant species with medicinal properties (Ntiamoa-Baidu 2008). The Akan's initiatives and Indigenous cultures, worship practices, and offerings are designed to address a perceived supernatural influence over unpredictable climatic systems to maintain wetlands, river systems, lagoons, and associated resources.

Seasonal or circular migration patterns among the Akan constitute a positive traditional adaptation strategy in the face of seasonal climatic variabilities, known and conceptualised by traditional "climatologists". Their knowledge system and ways of being bring people together to accept the necessity of the injunction to change in correspondence with resilient climatic and environmental adaptation, now presupposed as endemic: *Obra ye nnoboa* (Life is mutual aid) (Awuah-Nyamekye 2009). It is said that the interdependent nature of households and communities in times of adversity, uncertainty, and misfortune is intrinsically entrenched in the Akan's traditional practices (Cobbinah and Anane 2016). This interdependence can be found in the everyday proverbs and teachings of the Akan, such as *Onipa nua ne onipa* (A human being's brother is a [or another] human being). In this light, the spirit of solidarity and social networks enable Indigenous communities to offer each other emotional comfort, to adapt, to build resilience, and to accept unchangeable circumstances in the face of environmental and climate change: *Onipa yieye firi onipa* (The well-being of a person depends on his/her fellow human beings) (Awuah-Nyamekye 2009). Demonstrations of goodwill, sympathy, compassion, and the willingness to help are traditional resilience-building and coping strategies.

The Akan's attachment to tradition and culture have, in a way, shaped the diversity and conditions of past and current environments. Accordingly, the way the Akan people appreciate, understand, and relate to certain important elements of the world or the environment around them is normally framed by their culture. The development and deployment of early warning systems, good grain storage systems, improved crop cultivars, better agricultural management systems, and better and more efficient irrigation systems are a range of strategies used within the agricultural sector, resulting in improved resilience. In a similar vein, the construction of sea-retaining walls to stop coastal erosion and storm surges are some of the strategies used in other sectors. Strategies to monitor, mitigate, adapt, and build resilience to drought are incorporated within Akan Indigenous knowledge and meteorological forecasts. Indeed, it is thanks to this recognition that the local phenological observations of the Akan are documented in their local seasonal calendar, where changes in the behaviour of animals and plants are still used as indicators for cultural and subsistence activities. There may be significant lessons to be learnt from the Akan's Indigenous knowledge on weather forecasts for developing local or regional climate adaptation strategies. In short, there are useful lessons in these for future adaptation needs.

The Akan's worldview and their distinct geo-culturally formulated philosophical traditions, expressed through burning practices to deal with the local impacts of climate

change vulnerability, decolonise dominant understandings of discourses of resilience. Their knowledge and perspectives on traditional burning practices to remedy inappropriate ecological actions enhance successful collaboration with the goal of collective survival and sustainability. This reveals the possibility of "different worlds" that they world as well as a nuanced Indigenous empirical scientific knowledge that moves away from the claims and assumptions of Eurocentrism in categorising and understanding the natural world. The Akan's leadership readapts and reimagines intimate, animate, and ethical human relationships with plants, animal symbionts, spiritual beings, and ecosystems to adapt to similar changes in the future, thereby shifting how we think about resilience and adaptability to climate change.

An aspect of the Akan's Indigenous forms of thought is to be wise and active environmental stewards, which arguably provides a powerful antidote to governing discourses perpetrated by the ideologues of vulnerability and resilience and the formation of an-other world. The Akan's traditional narratives and Indigenous ontologies are followed by their giving thanks to Mother Earth (*asaase Yaa*), the Waters, Small Plants and Grasses, Medicine Herbs, Animal Symbionts, Trees, Birds, the Thunderers, Grandmother Moon, the Sun, and the Creator (*Onyame*), indicating a strongly tied dependence on ecosystems' services (Adomako and Ampadu 2015). This has significant benefits in resilience-building, particularly in Indigenous communities across the continent. The Akan believe in the co-implication of both human (ancestors) and non-human (gods) living systems, which provides a new basis for developing new ways of living wrought by climate change and environmental stress (Awuah-Nyamekye 2009). In this epistemological framing, traditional Akan society offers crucial elements to defamiliarise, redesign, and, more importantly, decolonise the entire range of Western systems of thought on the notion of resilience.

Their adaptability to vulnerability, through wise environmental stewardship practices and a code of ethics, is rooted in Indigenous philosophical and religious assumptions fundamental to an alternative epistemology. Inspired by the responsible management of natural resources for the benefit of present and subsequent generations, the Akan believe the ecosystem and the environment has a strong spiritual meaning for humans and hence must be treated as sacrosanct (Asiamah 2007; Ntiamoa-Baidu 2008). Their cultural practices seek to mobilise Indigenous community members in the "ruins" of resilience as well as to offer an alternative ontological awareness of environmental and climatic disruption. As a coping strategy in the face of environmental stress and climate variabilities, the Akan perform certain relationships and responsibilities in relation to forest biodiversity by honouring their invincible ancestors through sacred places and renewing their reciprocal responsibilities with water for continued access to benefits and sustenance associated with it (Cobbinah and Anane 2016). The Akan's spirituality, totems, and taboos encourage collective efforts in responsible resource utilisation, protection, and nature preservation as a coping strategy to evade misfortune and disaster. The Akan's traditional spirituality is, by necessity, crucial in the effort of thinking, creating, and acting with the goal of recreating a different world. The Akan's tradition

of knowing and their pluralistic worldview in this regard resist and continue despite the violence of modernity/coloniality. Their cosmologies and epistemologies constitute valuable tools in the task of decolonising and pluriversalising discourses of resilience. Ultimately, the Akan's critical Indigenous thought provides an ontologically powerful framework to speak with and to address discourses of resilience and governance strategies as well as to challenge coloniality's most visceral foundations and overall scope.

The point I am making is that the Akan's adaptive coping knowledge and experience are key to unlocking new ways of thinking about climate resilience and environmental adaptation. Additionally, it challenges top-down technocratic interventions in relation to the environment and ecological discourses of resilience. From the above, one may say that the Akan's local knowledge-based practices provide an interesting and distinctive pathway to new political imaginaries and decolonial emancipation from the dangerousness of the world in which they live.

Case Study of the Frafra: Geographical, Historical, and Cultural Context

The Frafra are a politically acephalous and amorphous cluster of peoples who inhabit a traditional area of what is now mostly northern Ghana in the Upper East region, reaching into neighbouring Burkina Faso (Anabila 2020). The Frafra, linguistically speaking, belong to the Gur-Voltaic linguistic group and are among one of the nation's minority ethnic groups, constituting 2% of the population of Ghana (Ghana Statistical Service 2014). Gurune, Nankani, Talensi, Booni, and Nabt are the main languages spoken within this ethnic group. The Frafra fall into three main groups: the Tallensi, the Nabdams, and the Gurensis (Ghana Statistical Service 2014). It must be stressed that the inhabitants of this area predominantly engage in small-scale farming, animal rearing, the harvesting of natural resources, hunting, and fishing as their main means of subsistence. They do not earn money as such, but they provide for their own food, housing, and other household needs from materials that are available in their environment. During the dry season the men go out hunting, which offers them a unique opportunity to come into contact with the spirits of the primeval forest (Agyei-Mensah and Owusu 2010; Owusu 2008).

In particular, the Frafra have a three-part view of the world and its inhabitants. The Frafra's traditional worldviews are seen as central to climate resilience and environmental adaptation. My reflections on the Frafra hinge upon the view that about 80% of the population are engaged in rural and natural-resource-based livelihoods. Additionally, their ways of knowing provide an incisive counter-hegemonic conceptual framework to narrow the essentialised readings of issues concerning the impact of climate resilience and environmental adaptation—in effect a reversal or decolonising of the colonial process.

Inherent in the Frafra people's religion and culture are beliefs and practices that serve as effective tools for protecting and conserving nature (Agyei-Mensah and Owusu 2010). Based on their traditional practices of protecting water bodies from being mismanaged, plants and animals, including fish, living in these water bodies are not cultivated indiscriminately. In so doing, biological diversity (flora and fauna) is conserved for a very long time (Anabila 2020). This, in my view, has contributed immensely and effectively to a reduction in wildlife and biodiversity loss.

The ancestors of the community, the people currently living on the earth, and their descendants form an equally important and necessary part for the Frafra's life to go on (Agyei-Mensah and Owusu 2010). For the Frafra, the rituals and daily activities in which the people currently living on the earth engage in are related in many ways to the other two groups: the ancestors and the potential descendants. It is to be noted that the Frafra, as a homogeneous society, still preserve the culture and social structure bequeathed to them by their forefathers (Sow, Adaawen, and Scheffran 2014).

The Frafra, like other Indigenous peoples of the world, have lived in harmony with nature and have been good custodians of the environment (Anabila 2020). One example of such a decolonising conversation is the Frafra's recent development of a culturally, spiritually, and economically significant sustainable forest. This was, in fact, their response to the colonially induced destruction of their constitutive and intimate relationships with multiple species, which are necessary for cultivating critical alternative futures (Owusu 2008). The decolonial approach is a crucial part of this project, and in the light of claims and assumptions about climate change and environmental adaptation, I suggest decolonising resilience is, too. This framing, in turn, has had a profound impact on the Frafra developing nuanced, sophisticated, and intimate relationships with climate resilience and environmental adaptation knowledge. Crucially, contemporary Indigenous Frafra society upholds customary laws and cultural practices concerning their relationship with climate change vulnerability and environmental adaptation (Eguavoen 2013). This in itself is derivative of animated and spirited sets of nested geographies and native topographies.

The Frafra have developed Indigenous knowledge forms and practices in coping and adapting to climate change and to build resilience as an escape from the effects of climate variability and environmental degradation on agricultural productivity (Boatbil and Guure 2014). That is to say, they have developed a variety of Indigenous knowledge forms and associated practices to deal with climate resilience and environmental change stresses. Owing to their belief in ancestors who serve as intermediaries between the Supreme Being (*Yinɛ*) and the living, they often offer sacrifices to their ancestors to implore them to intercede on their behalf in their quest to manage natural resources (Anabila 2020). This has greatly influenced their culture as well as their perception and use of the environment.

In most of the cases, mobility is employed as a livelihood strategy when it is most appropriate to do so and often when it can improve livelihood security. Conservation agriculture is an additional adaptation option to address climate and environmental risks. This practice, also known as "no-till agriculture", not only protects the soil but saves Frafra farmers time and money. Conservation agriculture, more explicitly, reduces soil erosion and makes farmland more productive. The Frafra's principles of conservation agriculture, which include minimum soil disturbance, crop diversification, and permanent soil cover, help to protect the environment and reduce the impacts of climate change on agricultural systems. The age-old practice to till the soil is a means of preparing the seedbeds, releasing nutrients to crops, and controlling weeds (Boatbil and Guure 2014). They leave crop residue in the field to reduce soil erosion, limit evaporation, and manage weeds.

The Frafra's ontology and relationships with animal species, ancestral beliefs and practices, rivers, and the living spirit inside of all things (human, non-human, inanimate), within a wider Indigenous context, aim to dissolve or go beyond the dichotomies of nature and culture. Their proper utilisation of water bodies provides an enabling environment for fish to survive and multiply, hence promoting natural resource management and conservation (Sow, Adaawen, and Scheffran 2014). In this regard, the Frafra's practices and traditions might be considered a key aspect of the decolonisation of knowledge. Their practices (in particular narrative storytelling) and philosophy, which deeply embraces ecological principles, expose a fundamentally different set of critical alternative worldviews about nature and relationships with the environment. This forms a counterpoint to the dominant Western ontology, which tends to support narrow and utilitarian assumptions about climate resilience and environmental adaptation.

The Frafra's caring ethics, adherence to ontological continuity, and attitude to traditional natural resource management and conservation are reflected in their social practices and cultural resources, such as songs, popular proverbs, common adages, idioms, maxims, phrases, riddles, folktales, and many more. These social practices and cultural resources are key for building climate resilience and environmental adaptation (Amenga-Etego 2011). These examples amply demonstrate how the Frafra's traditional belief systems contain precise ecological knowledge about climate resilience and adaptability. Respect and reciprocity essentially reflect an underlying resilience and adaptability. These are evidenced in the Frafra's storytelling tradition, which does not pay homage to the Western capitalist logic of climate change. If anything, the Frafra's practices and traditional belief systems reinscribe new imaginaries that alter the coloniality of established meanings, of Western knowledge, as well as express a rejection of the modern/colonial hierarchy of power.

This, in turn, opens up scope for exploring the impacts of colonisation and its victims, both spatially and temporally. The Frafra's adaptive modes of life must be repositioned as spaces in which new understandings and different approaches to climate change and

environmental adaptation can and need to be developed. In light of the foregoing, it is clear that the Frafra's traditions and culture offer a unique combination of local knowledges that can be harnessed for survival in a world with a rapidly changing climate.

The Effect of Modernisation on the Akan and the Frafra

The Akan's and the Frafra's Indigenous knowledge cultures clash with the rationalities and analytic nature of Western regimes. At stake in this debate and clash of rationalities are significantly different interpretations of climate resilience and environmental vulnerability. Many Frafra and Akan people do not acknowledge climate change and environmental stress as phenomena in the same way that Western thought conceptualises them. In fact, they have attributed the causes of environmental/climatic change and other misfortunes not only to natural things, but also to spiritual or supernatural forces.

I am not arguing that all Akan and Frafra people share the same understanding of climatic resilience and environmental stress, nor that they follow the same methods. Obviously the Akan's and the Frafra's traditions are diverse, and the methods and practices they follow are of many different kinds, too. The question should not simply be which of these different discourses on Indigenous knowledge is correct. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Indigenous knowledge and cultures are diverse, complex, and multiple. If we attempt to reduce these to a unity, as do so many of the literatures emanating from the Western academy with foundational links to colonialism, we get tied into contradictions. The argument I am making is not that all forms of Indigenous knowledge and cultures are essentially of a monolith identity. Obviously, these knowledges and cultures are a multiplicity and it would be fundamentally wrong to reduce them to a monolith identity and/or unity. Yet, there are many common elements in the Akan's and Frafra's Indigenous way of knowing; their worldviews, ecological spirituality, and existing cultural/religious practices do have aspects in common, whether in Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, or elsewhere.

Arguably, Indigenous cultures have been among the worst victims of the effects of coloniality. Largely, colonial impact and religious missionary activities, to mention but a few factors, have resulted in a diversity of lifestyles, professional practices, values, religions, and knowledge systems. But the ontologies of the Akan and the Frafra are said to offer plausible alternatives that support the coexistence of different forms of life. The contemporary attraction of critical resilience scholarship to the knowledge and practices of Indigenous peoples is supposed to contribute to a reversal of the effects of coloniality. Historically, colonial powers disparaged Indigenous peoples for precisely the same reasons they now seem to revere them.

Yes, Indigenous knowledge and practices are changing rapidly in these cultural groups through Westernisation/modernisation, schooling, foreign history and culture, and so

forth, thus relegating the local history to the background (Adu-Gyamfi 2011). In a broad sense, Westernisation/modernisation is largely to blame for causing distraction from certain rich traditional systems, including the observance of sacred days and adherence to taboos relevant to natural resource management. Young people who have obtained Western education tend to shun Indigenous and cultural practices as backward and archaic (Tufuor 2009). Western education, foreign history and culture, and so forth have somewhat eroded the rich cultural values and religious diversities of the Akan and the Frafra people and have also changed their traditional ways of managing and utilising their natural resources. From the perspective of the Akan and the Frafra, policies that ignore their own Indigenous knowledge and cultures are extensions of the long history of colonisation and constitutive of their cultural genocide.

Nonetheless, it would interest the reader to note that Westernisation/modernisation has not entirely led to a replacement of the local knowledge and traditions of the Akan and the Frafra of Ghana, but rather to fusion in these two cultures. My larger argument is that Westernisation/modernisation within the two cultural groups has not seriously undermined the vigour of native institutions (Oteng-Ababio 2012). Despite generations of Western influence, decisions about agriculture and nature management are still heavily based on the concepts of African traditions. For example, soil conservation techniques are still being used today by Akan or Frafra people who are living in a variety of urban and rural regions and within and among other groups. Today, despite mixed cultural influences and Westernisation/modernisation, Indigenous communities living in a variety of urban and rural regions still rely on customary land and share tools for crop production, including harvests. In this vein, it can be said that a multiplicity of identities and knowledge forms now make up a contemporary Akan and Frafra understanding of the world. Nowadays, thinking amongst the Akan and the Frafra ranges from traditional to modern, but in many cases both systems of thinking can be observed as existing parallel to each other. Obviously, Ghana is changing fast and there exists a mix of predominantly traditional, predominantly modern, and more hybrid subcultures. Rather than subscribing to a universalistic understanding, responses to resilience need to openly acknowledge and recognise difference and diversity. In common with many resilience discourses, there is a tendency to fail to recognise difference, multiple and diverse degrees of vulnerability of human life, and different preferences.

Decoloniality and the Question of Being

Forms of subjectivity have been paramount to the process of decoloniality. Conceptions of subjectivity stand at the crux of the coloniality of power and the coloniality of knowledge. In this context, the colonised subject can be conceived of as a point of entry into the critical examination of modern/colonial conceptions of regimes of knowledge and power. Decoloniality offers modalities for understanding the “vulnerable” African subject and his/her embodied subjectivity. This helps in confronting the Western, Eurocentric epistemology in dominant theories, concepts, and approaches that have a

negative position regarding the "vulnerable" African subject. The construction of embodied subjectivity in decolonial discourses through coloniality of power and of knowledge has been seen as a naturalisation of colonial relations articulated around the new resilience doctrine. One important point to note is that the colonised African subject and his/her subjectivity is constrained by the structural conditions of Western epistemological/ontological supremacy and prejudice. The new doctrine of resilience is advancing in Africa and across the world as a major discourse for the development and implementation of neoliberal governance and subjectification (Chandler and Reid 2020). Indeed, forms of Indigenous knowledge are constituted and constitutive of the eventual resurrection of the vulnerable neoliberal subject through the discovery of his/her inner capacities for resilience in all his/her complexity. The resilient neoliberal subject is a subject that accepts the neoliberal imperative to be self-reliant and is defined by his/her capacities to adapt to the dangerousness of this world (Chandler and Reid 2020).

Resilient neoliberal subjects are adaptive to difficulties rather than resisting or attempting to secure themselves. This makes them incapable of political habits and fully compliant with the logics of climate resilience and environmental threat, with its concomitant adaptive qualities. Indigenous peoples have become the target populations of strategies for the making of resilient neoliberal subjects through the development of the resilience and robustness they need to cope with and adapt to change. I claim that local knowledge systems emerging from the cracks of Western modernity offer the possibility of delinking away from neoliberal governance and subjectification. Social movements in Africa on governing regimes of climate change provide original pathways to a new decolonised subjectivity through the unveiling of distinctive non-Western deep relational affective practices that are constitutive of human subjectivity in relation to but also, crucially, independent from the conventional modern Western subject. In this regard the decolonising subject and his/her embodied subjectivity inspires and shapes political discourse to recast discursive practices for helping to reconstitute Western forms of existence in understanding contestation from within ever-present modernity/coloniality. Indigenous cultures and practices bring new agents into being in ways that decolonise subjectivity through the coloniality of power. Indigenous cultures, in other words, create new spaces for Indigenous peoples to make, remake, and recreate themselves (Sousa Santos 2016).

Any rigorous critique of the new doctrine of resilience must directly challenge its dark and dehumanising political agenda. Contemporary discussion of the neoliberal discourse of resilience requires another form of politics that is anti-politics. Engaging in anti-politics is an attempt to decolonise (or emancipate) one's subjectivity as a way of recovering, reconstituting, and constructing an alternative non-Western subject. This refers to politics that is outside the realm of Western universality, bankruptcy, and hypocrisy by affirming other forms of subjectivity. By affirming other forms of subjectivity, we resist the conditions of our own suffering: by acknowledging new practices and ways of thinking as well as transforming worlds in ways that provide

security. Anti-hegemonic politics is largely informed by the experiences of the people as they challenge the subjection of coloniality/modernity through the restoration of non-Western agency. It is the politics of the critical discourse, not that of modern subjectivities and modern forms of life. Given this, decoloniality of being or conceptualisations of non-Western subjectivity constitute a necessary practice of resignifying and reshaping the erased embodied subject of coloniality/modernity. In this respect, decoloniality of being aspires to a particular manifestation of scepticism towards Western coloniality that seeks to reintroduce the new conception of the world as articulated by racialised, colonised subjects and subjectivities (Kamna 2020).

Such a form of agency and articulation of thought is a critique of coloniality outside coloniality itself. Decolonial narratives can properly be conceived of as deeply connected to the construction of a new society in that there will be the *self* in the African subject. According to Maldonado-Torres (2008, 5), "[d]ecolonial theory and praxis do not emerge from 'wonder' in face of a strange world, but out of scandal and horror in face of the 'death world' of coloniality". The claim that the West itself has a coherent and unified subjectivity and mode of totalising control is profoundly problematic and unpersuasive, because this becomes a mere caricature of what is otherwise a far more complicated set of subjectivities (Vieira 2019).

Decoloniality as a perspective ensures that the colonised and oppressed take action by creating a new world based on new imaginaries through critical thinking and subject formation. The construction of a renewed subject position opens up a way of thinking that fundamentally delinks from the chronologies of new epistemologies or new paradigms. My thesis is that chronologies of new epistemologies or new paradigms bring into being decoloniality. Border thinking and delinking are constitutive elements of the decolonial condition/resilient subjectivity. Mignolo (2011) asserts that decolonial delinking and border thinking are about challenging the hegemonic and dominant forms of knowledge by articulating knowledge outside modernity. Delinking and border thinking, understood decolonially, urgently necessitate epistemological disobedience by stretching the horizons of the political imagination. Modernity/coloniality as the constitutive part of epistemological canonism totalises the regime of truth by projecting itself as the sole truth—in this framing, other worlds are marginalised, silenced, and discredited since they exist in the exterior borders of modernity/coloniality.

The point that epistemological canonism cannot be questioned due to the myth of modernity/coloniality as universality is still being dictated by the Euro-North academy (Clapham 2020). Effectively, delinking and border epistemology increasingly entail the locus of enunciation for the subjectivity of the African subject and the persistence of contested forms of knowledge and power (Mignolo 2011). Locus of enunciation means to think from where you are located. In other words, decoloniality shows the necessity to open up space for a new kind of thinking that is located in the site of colonial difference. Yet, by using the non-Western subject as the locus of enunciation, I do not reify the binary distinction I seek to deconstruct. As Walsh (2007, 233) makes clear, the

aim of the decolonial turn is "to build new critical communities of thought, interpretation and intervention". In this sense, rather than conjuring a universalistic understanding, responses to resilience thinking need to openly acknowledge and recognise difference and diversity. In resilience discourse, there is a tendency to fail to recognise difference, diverse forms or degrees of vulnerability of human life, and different preferences.

Indigenous people create forms of knowledge and debates through governing techniques, new actors and subjectivities that do not primarily rely on Western modernity. For example, discourses of resilience identified in many national development strategies across Africa, such as South Africa's National Climate Change Response, Rwanda's Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy, and Ethiopia's Climate-Resilient Green Economic Strategy, have been paramount in questioning not only the colonial legacies underlying discourses of resilience meshed with coloniality, but also the normative arguments of these discourses. These programmes are geared towards reducing vulnerability to risks associated with environmental/climate change and follow a broader strategy to reposition Africa within cultural, economic, and global political imaginaries. Micro-insurance (along with other techniques of micro-credit and micro-finance, and the provision of crop insurance) has been used by vulnerable African smallholder farmers to survive irregular weather patterns and other periods of scarcity. The logic of the discourses of Indigenous movements deploys a national green economy strategy by emphasising the adaptive capacity and agency of subaltern populations towards progressive ends to decolonise without opening up possibilities for interrogating the history of colonialism.

Attention to subjectivity extends conventional accounts of resilience to be inclusive of a subaltern subjectivity and the Other. A lack of recognition denies the meaningful agency of those affected and draws attention to the constant tension between recognising the Other and asserting the self. The resilience assumptions of the underlying ontology of vulnerability and insecurity at work in contemporary critical policies do little to empower those deemed fundamentally vulnerable, excluded, or disadvantaged. Therefore, resilience responses must reaffirm the Others' sense of agency and capacity as moral agents to act to make good a perceived lack. Significantly, the discourse of vulnerability and insecurity must be understood as a shared risk, or experience of ontological uncertainty, for all of us. Thus, it is only when we experience recognition that we are constituted as socially viable beings: being accepted or included.

I argue that the colonial violence of subordination and dominance is reproduced by the misrecognition of epistemic injustice and its constitutive role in human subjectivity. In terms of misrecognition the centre–periphery relations (asymmetrical encounters between the colonised and the coloniser) suggest that local knowledge about how things work and are affected on the ground is ignored or devalued in the form of epistemic injustice (Vieira 2019).

Resilience thinking does not appear to foster or even open space for demands for recognition beyond Euro-American-centric hegemonic pretences understood through the lens of the dominant imaginary, theories, approaches, and so forth. Recognition beyond Euro-American-centric hegemonic pretences would enable vulnerable African subjects to navigate their way across the complexity, unknowableness, and dangerousness of life. Recognition in this context implies actively seeking consent from Indigenous peoples with distinctive worldviews. Such spaces and processes offer the potential for the emergence of different interests and values. This would again imply a transformation of politics and institutions within resilience thinking, in particular as regards climate change and environmental vulnerability. Such modes of imaginaries and agency, I contend, would no longer be reserved for Western actors, institutions, and discourses. One could argue that Euro-American-centrism should not simply be allowed to override and silence dissenting views from Indigenous peoples, as it serves to fundamentally and extensively undermine any emancipatory decolonial project. In its most basic form, the decolonial subject of vulnerability within the contemporary discourses on (in)security demands a strategic logic which questions the continual adaptation and change in the subject's ontological and epistemological status.

In this regard, subaltern subjectivity can only emerge in a bottom-up manner through the aggregation and universalisation of local demands, which have often been marginalised and silenced in mainstream discussions of resilience. Resilience thinking within other cultural contexts is argued to be a fundamental site of decolonial struggle. Social movements, like the Ghana Youth Environmental Movement (GYEM), are important sites of significant manifestation in negotiations about deforestation and climate change targets. Such movements—through their autonomous articulations to build new societies, but also their pressure on transformative states to become green states—can make the subject turn decolonial. As the GYEM makes clear, sustainable alternative pathways provide the platform for a just, but more exactly fair, future for people and the planet. Reframing resilience to engage directly with decolonising agents essentially requires reconstituting, reimagining, and reinscribing them with contextually situated understandings of local or Indigenous communities. This is a condition of possibility for the emergence of producing knowledge which is so key in modern/colonial societies.

Concluding Remarks

Indigenous peoples and their knowledge systems recognise the limits of contemporary resilience approaches in an unstable and unpredictable world. This article has drawn upon the concepts of decoloniality and pluriversality to open a new arena on the primacy of epistemology and to highlight the complexities and contradictions of discourses of resilience. The article has further drawn attention to decolonisation as an entry point into expanding the concept of resilience to plurality. It has sought to reveal the complexity of interests and heterogeneous ensembles of politics of knowledge and subjectivity shaping the discourses of Indigenous resilience in Africa.

The decolonial approach and the horizon of pluriversality can also be seen as a possibility to reassert any counter-power to repossess discourses on Indigenous resilience. Indigenous resilience (for example) offers an arena to reproduce a scripted story of how Indigenous peoples simply persevere through coping and adapting themselves to the woes of existence. This conceptual expansion has been emphasised here as necessary because, despite critical resilience scholarship turning to bottom-up approaches and agency-based conceptualisations to ascertain the diversity of discourses of resilience, certain key assumptions undergirding the literature continue to trap the thinking within a limited, Western-centric framework and understandings.

As this article has shown, discourses of resilience are discursively embedded in colonial knowledge, subjectivity, and power. What I want to stress is that far from producing the decolonisation of resilience in terms of Indigenous peoples, these discourse function to disempower them further and to naturalise the neoliberal construction of governance. For me, what emerges poignantly is that decolonial approaches, as examined in this article, provide a crucial contribution for retrieving non-Western subjectivities.

I have highlighted the discourse of Indigenous resilience perspectives and made them visible in order for scholars and policy-makers to radically rethink their practices. One of the most promising aspects of this article is that it opens up a new arena for the ethico-political critique of contemporary resilience thinking and its significance for planetary processes of decolonisation. Thus, it is crucial to criticise and resist proposed "solutions" to contemporary resilience thinking that involve overtly colonial logics, including many forms of colonisation of space. This is important, because if colonial violence is a major driver of resilience thinking and its more deadly effects, then it stands to reason that there is the need for careful reflection to ensure that colonial violence is not reproduced, but that critical alternative forms of (in)habitation are moved forward. This is crucially important if contemporary resilience thinking is not to become another shorthand for deterministic depoliticisation. Finally, it is hoped that the concept of resilience, if adopted and elaborated upon in a critical and pluralistic way, can meaningfully contribute to the important task of decolonising discourses of resilience—as a set of present conditions and a source of possible futures.

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