

The Academic Book in the South: Conference Report

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This two-day conference was organised by the British Library (BL) in association with the Academic Book of the Future project (represented by Professor Marilyn Deegan) and the Oxford International Centre for Publishing Studies at Oxford Brookes University (represented by Dr Caroline Davis).

The conference was opened by **Caroline Brazier**, Chief Librarian of the BL who anticipated a fantastic 2-day event on 'The Academic Book in the South', and extended a particularly warm welcome to colleagues from outside the UK. The conference should help us all learn in more depth about perspectives on scholarly publishing and dissemination in different parts of the world. She extended a warm welcome to people from the UK. Some of the drivers behind the conference included the discussions over the last five years about different models of publishing, dissemination and research. The BL's main focus is on the UK; but as a global research library, it needs to understand what is happening elsewhere in the world and adapt to changing publishing models.

Maja Maricevic, Head of Higher Education at the BL, commented that policies affecting academic publication are changing and challenging. Particularly, academic book publication is being affected by changes in science journals publishing. Projects on books in the Humanities are therefore important. There should be 'not one big policy brush'. Questions about the diversity and multilingual nature of books arise.

Marilyn Deegan, Professor in Digital Humanities at Kings College London, introduced the 'Academic Book of the Future'² project. This 2-year project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), in collaboration with the BL, is being led by Principle Investigator, Samantha Rayner at University College London. The project draws on the enthusiasm and expertise of a larger coalition of stakeholders from the academic world, libraries, bookselling and publishing. Besides addressing the interests of institutions in the UK, Europe and America, the project places great importance on the future academic book in the global South.

Caroline Davis, Senior Lecturer at the Oxford International Centre for Publishing Studies explained that all the keynote speakers come from South Asia, the Middle East and Africa. The panellists, from across the UK, comprise academics, editors, publishers, librarians and archivists. The conference represents an unusual opportunity to bring together speakers from different regions of the world.

The first plenary speaker was **Sukanta Chaudhuri**, Founder-Director of the School of Cultural Texts and Records, Jadavpur University, India. Sukanta thanked the organisers for this exciting and productive opportunity for people from the global South to engage with each other. He was speaking about India. By 'the South', he meant the academic and publishing community physically located in the South rather than the people from that area located in the global North. He pointed out that conferences such as this are rare, and in the global South, where academic publishing is a 'feeble presence' from an international perspective, virtually unknown. He hoped this event could

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² <https://academicbookfuture.org/es>

explore ways in preventing an even greater disproportion in the global presence of the academic South. The economies of publishing are important – academic authors are readers too, yet the author's and reader's interests can sometimes be opposed. There is a problem of costs: of purchasing academic print publications sourced from the North and priced accordingly. Without pricing differentials, even the publications of charitable organisations can be expensive. The South can also be 'parsimonious' and has a poor record on sharing resources.³

Sukanta discussed the 'doubtful panacea of Open Access publication'. Open Access to resources may make it easier for scholars to carry out research, but at the same time harder for them to publish in international fora. OA may therefore perpetuate imbalances between North and South – it will help train students better, but with higher career potential, more will flock to the North. It is important to think about access and publication together and coordinate the two. Otherwise one might flourish at the expense of the other. The needs of the author and the needs of the reader must be mutually productive.

Sukanta made a plea for Northern rights holders to release non-copyright digital resources for free access. To the extent that this has happened, such resources, along with subscription-based resources paid for by institutions in the South, have brought about some 'limited revolution' in the work of undergraduates. But present levels of access hardly begin to cater to the needs of international-level research.

The South can also improve its own digital output, which only currently covers a fraction of available material. This is not due only to lack of funds; rather, the culture of digital access and preservation is unfamiliar. Digitisation in India has come some way since the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta created a major database of early Bengali journals now hosted by Heidelberg University. The School of Cultural Texts and Records at Jadavpur University has created some major archives, some of them now hosted by the Endangered Archives Programme of the British Library and the School's own Tagore website 'Bichitra'. On a bigger scale the Digital Library of India offers over 187 billion pages. The National Manuscript Commission of India has done excellent work in locating and cataloguing manuscripts. But funding is now required to digitize the manuscripts themselves, and a similar programme is needed for books.

Smaller institutions are uploading their own resources, for example, the repository of the West Bengal State Central Library in Calcutta. Sukanta pointed out that it is hard to be aware of what is going on elsewhere in the country as most material remains offline with the risk of records being lost through file corruption. The digitisation of early Bengali printed books (to which the BL is contributing) is adding to the possibility of an integrated 'Early Bengali Books Online', using fellow conference participant Abhijit Gupta's Bengali Short-Title Catalogue as bibliographical control.

Sukanta pointed out that India's corporate houses have been unforthcoming in contributing to higher education initiatives in India. India does not lack a skilled workforce. Three programmes for text analysis of non-Latin languages were written by students and young researchers at Jadavpur University. The human resources are there, but need coordination and support.

Archival databases create conditions for publication. One could think of crowdsourcing whereby students and academics edited a country's textual heritage. Translation is more difficult and would have to rely on machines. No Indian language has a workable electronic lexicon. A substantial input from computer scientists and linguistics is needed. This is 'doable' – but not in the print medium.

³ The INFLIBNET programme of the University Grants Commission of India is a good example of resource sharing.

And when done it would provide a template for the future. Locally-based scholars have a pivotal role. The BL's proposed partnership with Jadavpur University and the Srishti Institute can provide a model. When material is located in the countries concerned, a viable model is the BL's Endangered Archives Programme. Such programmes also create prestige for locally funded projects.

Such engagements are also necessary to forestall the appropriation of materials by commercial agencies which destroys the chance of Southern scholarship engaging with the North on equal terms. Sukanta argued that this is also unnecessary, as Southern material can be digitised more cheaply in the South. Sukanta's vision is to create a body of Southern material to feed the North's 'laudable appetite' in exchange for access to the North's own material. This would enable 'the South to look the North in the eye'. 'Southern studies' tend to be a niche concern and need to be brought into the mainstream. Digital technology can play a productive part. Sukanta quoted Tagore: 'Do not ask with empty hands what you should ask for from the fullness of your being'. 'The scales are weighted against the South for reasons not easily reversed.' We can only think of practical strategies to subvert global inequalities.

Thinking about publishing in the conventional sense, the South must negotiate a double hegemony of the printed book over the electronic, and the North over the South. In the Humanities and Social Sciences, electronic journals still live in the shadow of the print journal – however unnecessary and uneconomic this has become. How to free the ejournal and the digital monograph is the biggest challenge for academic publishing in the 21st century. If all publication were digital, we could publish more. But we must take care this is not at the cost of quality, or loss of ethos of a discipline. And the costs of ejournals are widely disproportionate to subscriptions – 'we are no nearer a material solution'. Even the best funded institutions of the North are finding it increasingly difficult to pay. Experiments of digital platforms providing peer reviewed free-entry, free-access ejournals have not made much impact. But free access and the catholicity of the Internet should mean that genuinely valuable research will attract attention. Print does not allow this.

In Indian academia materials accessed are largely determined and limited by academic practice and methodological limits derived from the West. But more than in the West, there is an influential presence of non-academic scholars and enthusiasts, 'amateurs' in the best sense, rather as in Victorian England. The Kolkata Book Fair, attracting hundreds of thousands of such 'amateurs', is a striking testimony to this. The Internet and Wiki-culture offer new platforms for this community. There is also the electronic compiling of archival material, an updated version of the kind of Victorian exercise that produced the *Oxford English Dictionary*. The disadvantages of such endeavours include the lack of standardisation of practice.

The questions and discussion covered the need for more South-South dialogue and collaboration: 'no one can work alone'. By 2020 more than half the world will be online, and connectivity is improving. There needs to be more integration of publishing houses, journals and professional bodies.

Infrastructure needs – electricity and bandwidth – were a constant theme. A speaker from South Africa quipped that it can be easier to fly to a Northern library than wait for something to download from a Northern library! But this isn't the case in India. The metropolitan cities and large urban centres in India are well connected, and even smaller towns have slower but adequate bandwidth.

A participant from the University of Valencia pointed out that in some respects Spain had reverted to a 'Southern condition' after the global financial crisis and was having to make do without grants in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

There was some discussion of Open Source and Open Journals. In India many of these do not command credibility; and in some cases the author has to pay to publish. Sukanta felt that 'a different set of journals' was needed, set up by Indian universities and peer-reviewed by international panels.

A speaker from Sudan spoke about the needs for digital transformation (digital archiving is 'practically all undone'), cloud-computing, analytics, mobility and language processing. Automated translation is a vital issue for the future. We can 'create some islands and hope they link to a continent' with funding from inside and outside the country. There is an urgent need to accept the electronic as the primary medium for exchange of knowledge in the global South.

The second plenary speaker was **Sari Hanafi**, Professor of Sociology at the American University of Beirut. Sari spoke about 'Arab Knowledge Production'. He began with an anecdote. His recent co-authored book *Knowledge Production in the Arab World* had been published with Routledge but was unavailable in Lebanon: boundaries are still real.

Sari has researched the social conditions of publication and the reading crisis in the Arab world. In analysing 'Arab knowledge production' we must first be aware of the lack of reliable statistics. Eighty per cent of total publication in the Arab world is represented by Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. There is a 'crisis of production/publication' in this part of the world. By contrast, states in Latin America are increasing publication (proportionate to population) year-on-year. The Middle East region also compares unfavourably with Romania or Ukraine. One reason is that in the Arab world fewer books are produced and more journal articles. Other challenges to production include insufficient readership, weak markets, civil war, censorship, and freedom of expression issues. For Saudi Arabia, all production is done in Lebanon. In Syria an author can wait two years for permission to publish a manuscript. In Egypt, authors are in prison for nebulous reasons such as 'lack of morality'. Bookshops are few. There is a negative correlation between supermarkets and bookshops in the Gulf countries; and there are other barriers to developing publishing structures. But there is a market for books, and especially in the Gulf, a notable female readership.

Sari reckons about half of publishers in the Middle East provide ebooks. Not more. Because of the high levels of piracy, there is mistrust of ebook platforms, and there is the additional problem of format incompatibilities.

Sari argued that the academic world also needs to consider the relevance of publishing research locally versus internationalisation. Both are important. Key questions include: knowledge for whom, knowledge for what? This means publishing in high impact journals but also in e.g. op. eds. for different publics. But in the Middle East, academic production is growing 'clandestinely' and not translating into policy influence.

Another problem is that social research is often funded by international donors and involves short-term policy-driven projects 'dominated by political science and narrow vision'. 'Publish globally vs perish locally, or publish locally and perish globally' encapsulates the problem in this region where academia is commodified and academics are pushed towards publishing outside the region.

It is notable that many who are critical of their societies do not come from academia. Looking at writers' contributions to relevant media in the region, 8 out of 10 names are not from the university; much knowledge remains outside of it. This is a very different situation from France, for example, where in newspapers such as *Libération* and *Le Monde* a similar proportion of contributions would come from the social sciences and academia.

Other issues include knowledge fragmentation and translation, research infrastructure and institutional hurdles including the 'celebratory business of rankings'. 'How are we supposed to compare Harvard and Sudan? It's surrealistic.' Abstracting and indexing tools also exclude: Scopus is more open than Web of Science, but books are not captured. And books written in Arabic are 'despised'.

OA journals in the region have 'an image problem' and are perceived as being of lower quality. Publishing in books remains extremely important although fewer and fewer academics do so. OA portals are also important: virtually all countries in Europe have them; and in Africa, CODESRIA⁴ is creating one. But the Middle East region does not have one.

Questions addressed lack of digital engagement. Sari is sensitive to social class issues. Fifty per cent of Arabs live in rural areas; whereas in Europe 80 per cent are urbanised. Power cuts are frequent. A kind of 'Arab JSTOR' is necessary – but non-existent. In Thailand, by contrast, a research portal was created by the state and the consequences – including expanding co-citations in the sub-region – are 'amazing'. These kinds of steps are necessary 'if we care about Northern hegemony'.

Another discussion concerned translation. This is expensive, but a serious effort is needed to keep up conversation with peers internationally, also with local communities in their own languages. But who will pay the bill?

Sari spoke about his role as the editor of the *Arab Journal of Sociology*. In sum, he does everything – organising peer review, finding reviewers and chasing authors. He doesn't get a course release to edit a journal. This evidently affects quality. But institutions are not committed to improving the quality of journals. In the UK too there is the related problem that journal editors get nil credit in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) for being a journal editor. But paradoxically publishing articles in journals is credited.

The subsequent panel discussion brought together three speakers on 'academic authorship and knowledge production', Stephanie Kitchen, managing editor of the International African Institute, and of the journal *Africa*; Insa Nolte, Reader in Anthropology from the University of Birmingham; and Padmini Ray Murray from the Indian Srishti Institute of Art, Design and Technology.

Stephanie Kitchen explained her role is as managing editor of the book series and journals published by the International African Institute, a learned society in African studies based at SOAS. She was mostly concerned with the 'knowledge production' part of this discussion. But academic authors are also editors and producers. 'Academic authorship' and 'knowledge production' are coterminous and intrinsically collective endeavours. And both are local and international.

Given what we know about the crises in higher education and consequent impact on academic publishing in Africa, Stephanie mentioned a few positive steps taken in African studies to address barriers to knowledge production between North and South.

First, co-publication with publishers in Africa: this is still possible. Monographs are being co-published with CUP and Wits Press in South Africa. In practice, such commitment reveals itself in small gestures: such as the forgoing of licence payments, raising relatively small grants to reduce production costs and price, and authors being willing to help with local promotion. But even South Africa has a tiny market for academic publishing – 300 copies of a title are typically printed. Elsewhere co-publishers are not always found. And efforts of formal publishing and distribution in Africa still need to be backed up by appropriate book donations – to academic institutions and higher

⁴ <http://www.codesria.org>

education libraries – which are expensive; co-publication and local distribution should be more efficient. However finding a co-publisher willing to take a book on the continent does not equal ‘African distribution’ – far from it.

There are positive signs elsewhere – in journals for example, Jonathan Harle’s work has shown that leading journals are by and large available freely or at low cost to many leading institutional libraries in Africa. Of course, the ideal and realisation of ‘access’ extends far beyond mere electronic availability; but this is its prerequisite. We can also point to some institutionally funded Africanist journals, such as CODESRIA’s, or those published in Germany including *Africa Spectrum* that are fully OA; whilst the leading African studies journals allow green OA – for authors to deposit accepted articles into openly accessible institutional repositories. We have a long way to go in books to match these achievements, and the economies are by no means straightforward.

On authorship, Stephanie’s work indicates that African studies journals are publishing some African authors; but not enough and not enough African women. There is higher representation of ethnically African authors in subjects such as current affairs, development and politics. History and anthropology have weaker representation – yet the *Journal of African History* has perhaps the best record of recruiting African editors. So this might reflect the weaknesses in history scholarship in the African continent. There are also efforts, through the provision of writing workshops, organised by the ASAUk in the North or CODESRIA in the South for example, to support African scholars from the continent and diaspora to publish. But more needs to be done.

Structural obstacles include the multinational textbook publishers that dominate local African markets; African governments which disinvest from higher education and research and Northern donors who close appropriate schemes that promote books, publishing and knowledge exchange. These need to be addressed via targeted lobbying of policymakers in the North as well as the South. Practitioners can usefully help identify where the barriers lie.

Insa Nolte introduced herself as speaking as an anthropologist who has done fieldwork with colleagues at Osun State University in Nigeria. This has made her aware of the political economy of knowledge production. In Nigeria Internet access is still limited so she was mostly discussing print production.

There are editorial problems in Nigeria and the linked danger of Nigerian researchers doing only empirical work, whilst Northern colleagues ‘think’. This needs to be challenged. The way book publishing generally works is that authors pay publishers to produce copies of their books which are then ‘launched’ at grandiose events to help recover the costs.

In the 1980s-1990s there was an exodus of academics to the West, patronage reasserted itself and library budgets were slashed. Another reason the writing of books is hard to achieve is due to the ‘privatisation of research infrastructure’. Statistics are hard to come by – none have been collected on education or religious affiliation in southern Nigeria, for example, since the 1960s. Nigerian academics tend to be dependent on sponsorship or scholarships from the North, which affects relationships with Northern researchers. Then there is the problem of ‘disappearing archives’: archives with sensitive materials on matters such as land rights and chieftancy are removed by persons concerned for political reasons. The weak output in Nigerian academia can be contrasted with the rich output in the arts, music and literature where Nigerians have flourished.

Insa commented also on the ‘supply side’ of publication: so-called ‘internationalisation’ whereby ‘offshore’ publications (published abroad) are most valued. This means that Nigerian journals are devalued. Then there is the problem of ‘fake’ (or predatory) journals. Nigerian academics receive

one credit per publication; this means that there is more incentive to publish articles than books. Even so, some good books are published in Nigeria. But the underlying parameters governing universities need to shift for change to happen.

Padmini Ray Murray opened by thinking about 'what is it like to be a book'. A book is a container, and not representative of uniform development. Noteworthy has been the speed of digitisation in South Asia. Much material in South Asia is accessed on the Internet, particularly on mobile devices. Some users are only experienced with such 'closed systems'. There are examples of the Digital Humanities engaging with 'minimal computing', producing 1990s-style static websites that work well on such interfaces. Padmini feels issues of infrastructure and language translation are prerequisites to talking about publishing. She speculated that the future academic book in South Asia might be something more open or interactive.

The discussion addressed authorship and citations. Lack of African participation and inclusion in UK publication is connected with a lack of PhD funding. It is also due to the links between empirical contributions and theory. Northern scholars tend to over-emphasise theory as there are limitations on spending long periods of time on fieldwork in African countries/universities. We also need to acknowledge that there are other pressures on African academics – to take administrative roles in universities rather than having time to write. Racism is still a factor.

There are disproportionate resources between Northern and Southern journals. Better-resourced Northern journals can and often make material accessible to the South but this raises questions about impact on publishing in the South.

The third plenary speaker, **Walter Bgoya** provides some reflections based on 44 years in African publishing. He would not dwell on the litany of problems facing the African publisher that remain realities – poor infrastructures, the multinationals, finance. African publishing is best understood as a series of contradictions which begin in the quality of education: students' poor performance, the weak book culture, and the weak foundation of primary and secondary education now going back 3 or 4 generations. School leavers are not prepared for work and publishing is starved of good staff. Then there are the problems facing the African university. The shortage of books may not be the most critical problem here, but it is important. A major issue is the high prices of imported books from the UK and the US. Cheaper Indian editions are widely sold in Africa, costing less than half of US/UK editions, although prices are going up. However, students still prefer Western books.

African publishers need to acquire rights to publish local editions. Bookshops should get bigger discounts. In African universities, focus needs to be placed on developing common curricula and harmonising course book requirements. The fastest way for universities to get books would be for their university academics to write them. This idea is gaining some ground. A good example has been set by the University of Ghana's initiative to publish 50 books developed by Ghanaian academics at the university in collaboration with 3 local publishers. High quality books have been published elsewhere in Africa. CODESRIA has initiated a programme to publish university textbooks adapted to the African context.

Such initiatives demand economic viability for African publishing. The market is small but private universities are growing rapidly. This explosion of the student population provides a challenge to the African and the Northern publisher – but may act as a disincentive to licenced editions. Piracy is another impediment. There is a full blown piracy industry in Nigeria where 40% of all textbooks sold are allegedly pirated copies. How can this be resolved? We need to seek how to exploit copyright practice to benefit African publishing. Copyright evokes a gamut of issues. As a publisher, respect for

copyright protects the business. But there are also questions of access and the democratisation of knowledge. We need to understand book piracy historically. The US used to reprint English works; Russia and China also experienced a piracy stage 'which Africa won't bypass'. Those who are supposed to stop it benefit through corruption. The fastest remedy would be to make books more easily available at low prices. This requires cooperation – which is generally not happening with British publishers. British publishers can still be categorised (as Henry Chakava identified⁵) as 'good', i.e. sympathetic to changing African conditions; 'bad', i.e. behaving as if colonial times are still with us; or 'ugly' – driven entirely by commercial imperatives. Chakava was also correct in his observation that 'the bigger the publisher, the harder it is to deal with the British'! African publishers should continue to engage with British publishers and hope that 'the giants' will change their practices.

African publishers are penetrating Northern markets, however getting US and UK academics to publish in Africa is problematic. In the US, lecturers do not get tenure if they publish in Africa; in the UK, the choice of publisher is determined by matters of prestige and citations.

Walter thought of Open Access as publishers being encouraged to make books OA after a period of time. Ideally, textbooks should be made available freely to students and teachers. There may be other advantages of OA that African publishers do not appreciate. But attribution alone won't be a strong motivation. If a private or public funder were to commission OA textbooks, then contracts would need to be tendered. Access to online books also depends on electricity and connectivity. Internet penetration is still quite low, c.26 per cent in Tanzania, and only available to the most privileged. So at the moment, OA is limited in scope.

Another problem is African languages. There is a perception that only European languages are suitable for intellectual work. It doesn't matter that these may have fewer speakers than e.g. Swahili. Google is busy developing a programme for Swahili whilst at the same time in Tanzania the Ministry of Education is barring bilingual English / Swahili books from use in schools!

On digital technology, Walter owns an EBM espresso book printing machine. He bought this with borrowed money at 18 per cent interest. Running it has been a struggle of electricity failures and trying to conduct repairs over Skype with breakdowns in communication. He hasn't made \$1,000 from this machine! Therefore he has resorted to other methods of book production.

Comments returned to the question of the pricing of books. Shamil Jeppie asked whether the speaker felt that South Africa is a *sui generis* case? Walter responded no. South African publishing is dominated by multinationals; and the country is still effectively two nations: education is 'appalling' in non-White schools. 'South Africans may not think they are in Africa – but they are!' South African booksellers will buy African published books through the UK at double the prices, but won't order directly from Dar es Salaam. So it's complicated. Shamil Jeppie commented that at HSRC Press everything is published simultaneously in print (hardback and paperback) and free online. So far paperback sales have gone up, as people don't print whole books. HSRC Press has co-publications with Pluto, Zed and CODESRIA. The challenge in South Africa is also publishing in local indigenous languages – little has been done about that, thus perpetuating Anglophone publishing and the sense that publishing in South Africa is rather 'stagnant'.

Were there government initiatives to bring out textbooks? Walter briefly gave the history of state publishing, printing and distribution in Tanzania via a parastatal monopoly. This collapsed, but private publishing has thrived. In his view, going back to one single textbook would amount to 'killing

⁵ Henry Chakava 'Dealing with the British'. Available at <http://www.bellagiopublishingnetwork.com/newsletter25/chakava.htm>

the industry we're developing'. The core problem is corruption driven by the big multinational publishers – notably the documented cases of OUP and Macmillan. Also to be addressed is the lack of a national book policy: in that sense things are 'going backwards'. On co-publishing, authors need to be encouraged to publish locally, and publishers to licence. Northern authors should make such licences a condition of publishing; and then the African publisher needs to try to sell 300-400 copies.

The next plenary speaker was **Akoss Ofori-Mensah** from Sub-Saharan Publishers (SSP) in Ghana.

Akoss is mainly involved in publishing academic books – textbooks and reference material used in universities. Most publishers in Ghana don't publish academic books. They are engaged in 'custom publishing' where the author or university pays for a book to be published; then copies of the book are given to the university or author. In this model, the publisher doesn't have to handle distribution. In Africa there is a lack of proper distribution channels; libraries are cash-strapped and bookshops scarce. Overseas, her books are marketed by the African Books Collective (ABC).⁶ Akoss has co-published including with Pan-Macmillan in South Africa and with Norwegian and Caribbean publishers. She has also published translations including an English version of a series of books on Ghanaian/Danish history.

SSP has published several academic books for the universities in Ghana, notably *Reclaiming the human sciences through African perspectives* in 2 volumes. SSP was one of four publishers contracted to publish the aforementioned University of Ghana's readers' series. It is however proving impossible to recoup costs and the university is having a hard time selling the books. Aside from the Library of Congress and occasional overseas buyers, books sit in the warehouse. An issue is student photocopying. CopyGhana has been set up as a way of taxing photocopying, with royalties being paid to writers and publisher associations. Efforts are being made to get students to pay a levy.

Akoss gave examples of academics from the North who are publishing in Africa; a British historian of Ghana is exploring the option of co-publishing a book on Ashanti. Previously, works like this were being published abroad. But authors with research grants are looking to local publishers and taking them more seriously.

Akoss also noted that computers and the Internet have revolutionised publishing. Digital print has improved quality. It can no longer be said that all African books suffer from low production quality. When ABC was formed in the 1980s it had a hard time selling books that didn't meet the production standards of the North. Through Print On Demand (POD) ABC produces books on behalf of publishers in Africa. Other improvements include the lifting of import duties in Ghana for approved printers; it is hoped that this exemption might cover all books. POD and also ebooks have made dissemination easier. However, many people don't understand how ebook sales work on the net.

Questions were raised on the issue of indigenous languages; in Ghana the issue is complicated as geographical boundaries weren't created according to language. Ebe for example is spoken in Benin, Togo and southeastern Ghana.

On rights, there are similarities between the African market and the India market: rights to publish academic books are generally not being sold to international publishers. SSP has sold rights on children's books to Brazil and Europe, but not for academic books. She has co-published with the UK publisher James Currey; however these books were not originated by SSP. Another question was

⁶ <http://www.africanbookscollective.com>

about whether the SSP model required or received funding. Akoss felt books can be made to work commercially.

The panel discussion that followed included Frances Pinter (Knowledge Unlatched / Manchester University Press), Mary Jay (African Books Collective), Lynn Taylor (James Currey/Boydell and Brewer Publishers) and Maria Marsh (Cambridge University Press).

Frances Pinter has had a long interest in African publishing – Mahmood Mamdani was her first author. She described Knowledge Unlatched (KU) as a ‘community interested company’. KU is interested in developing a sustainable route to OA for specialist scholarly books. The idea is to spread the cost of OA across institutions. The publisher’s origination costs need to be covered. With conventional publishing, the intermediaries and aggregators take a share of the pie which can be eliminated or reduced when content is open. Frances felt that a variation on the theme of KU might be helpful to *some* publishing in the South – not textbooks, but perhaps some monographs.

In the KU model, the global library community and publishers pledge to make OA monographs a reality; participation costs are less than purchasing hardbacks. Libraries decide which titles to support, demand is aggregated and the book is ‘unlatched’. KU raises the cost of getting to first digital file which are all the pre-print costs from the library collective. In exchange the book becomes OA (available to everyone who has access to the Internet). The model has attracted considerable interest because of mandates. EU-funded Horizon 2020 material has to be OA. The recent UK ‘Crossick report’⁷ concluded that ‘the direction of travel to OA for books is clear’. The report also reaffirmed that books are important. Library collaboration is popular in the West; and with KU, libraries are paying the publishing costs as not many authors have the funds to pay the equivalent of APCs for books.

Frances gave some statistics on how OA content is being used. The first round in 2014 was small; titles were collected books from the publishers and the average title fee was \$12,000. Usage downloads were recorded from 175 countries and have already exceeded 75,000. Manchester University Press has had 99 books on OA for 5 years which have achieved 7,000 downloads in 205 countries.

‘Round 2’ of the programme is bigger and includes 78 books from 26 publishers. Subject packages have been developed. In the initial pilot, publishers were mostly university presses; they now include commercial publishers. Google Scholar is indexing OA books. ‘KU Research’ is looking at how OA books are being used.

Frances floated a possible ‘KU South’. The idea would be for a group of publishers in the South to come together to find libraries in the North willing to pay the publishing costs and in exchange the publishers would issue the books on OA. Publishers would still be able to sell retail ebook versions such as Amazon/Kindle as well as any print format they wished. Publishers would need to propose where to locate a pilot and get seed funding. Marketing is important and if a book is OA and people want to read it, they will find it.

The next speaker **Mary Jay** introduced her organisation African Books Collective (ABC) as an international distributor, currently for 155 publishers from 24 African countries. It was African-founded and ‘owned’ (but not capitalised). It built on the idea that African publishers wanted to have relations with Northern publishers and make African research known internationally. The digital age changed ABC’s methodology –through ebooks, POD, e-platforms for libraries, and Open

⁷ <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/rereports/year/2015/monographs/>

Access. But Mary felt ‘there isn’t one digital panacea for the whole of Africa’; rather there would be utilisation of different routes.

Mary gave some statistics. ABC handles 3,000 titles of which 63% are academic books. This mirrors the figure of academic sales to the US. Sales in the UK and Europe are regrettably low. Twenty per cent go to the ‘Rest of the World’ category’ and 20% to Africa. These are generally comprised of donor-funded orders and ‘real’ sales to South African libraries.

Intra-African trade is almost non-existent. Ebook sales are negligible. E-platforms however, notably Project Muse, have been productive. There is no technical reason why an African library shouldn’t buy ABC books.

Other impediments are corruption in textbook tenders, donations and lack of co-publishing. US and UK academic regimes of tenure don’t help. The non-inclusion of African published titles in European and US university courses is notable. ‘It is possible to read African studies without reading a book published in Africa!’ Lobbying and advocacy are needed, as are new ways to circumvent the hurdles.

On local and global access, ABC reported ebook sales of c.80% to the US, 6% to Europe, 5.5% to Africa, and 8% to Asia. Downloads are mainly in the US, but Canada, Turkey, Australia, Kenya and South Africa all show ebook usage. This is more minimal in Scandinavia and Europe. Expanding access in Africa is about libraries having the resources and digital training, about finance and technical capacity, and understanding in the institutions. In Mozambique and Rwanda, ebooks are being bought but not downloaded. There is virtually no distribution in India. Overall, there is no evidence that sales on e-platforms have depressed sales of print books; print book sales have in fact gone up – so electronic access might be working as a marketing tool.

On future prospects, Mary feels that access to training in the use of online resources is important. On OA, conventional wisdom is that it needs institutional funding, as the publisher is also taking a risk. Over half of African countries have no known digital repository. More broadly, issues remain lack of intra-African book trade, the paucity of library budgets, and heavy dependence on Northern book donations illustrated by a recent study⁸ showing that only small minority of the donations are recipient request-led. Such donated books are rarely in local languages. If libraries become dependent on donations, this negatively impacts on African publishers. ABC’s Intra-Africa Book Support Scheme, no longer funded (due to a change in aid priorities), was hugely beneficial to libraries in Africa, and also to the publishers, as it enabled them to distribute books in local domestic markets.

Lynn Taylor introduced the publisher where she has worked since 1990, James Currey. Since 2008 this has been part of Boydell & Brewer, another independent publisher. The specialist academic imprint, with an editorial team of two, publishes 15-20 titles per year across a range of disciplines. The aim is to produce scholarly books in a range of formats. Its authors, whose primary research is in Africa, come from world-wide. There is a need to make sure the works are available in the African continent, where there are some different challenges from the North but some shared concerns and overlaps. As a small publisher, issues include how to navigate changes in the industry and technologies affecting academic publishing globally. Many old questions remain. African scholars need to be published, referenced and cited. A scholarly book needs to stand the test of time – Lynn’s job is to help identify the good ones providing editorial input, support to writing and copy editing. Authors also appreciate input into design and typesetting. Books need to reach their appropriate

⁸http://www.academia.edu/13165497/Book_Donation_Programmes_for_Africa_Time_for_a_Reappraisal_Part_I

audience – James Currey concentrates on what works best for each title. There are a myriad of formats and options to choose from: cloth, paperback, paperback editions for African markets, epub, and e-platform distribution. Baobab Ebook Services⁹ supplies pdfs to libraries in Africa. They continue to look for licensing agreements for offset rights whereby the African publisher will decide which books suit their market and what the local market is likely to be. The process takes time – everything takes time. Books are also sold via sales reps. Some translation rights are sought. Two recent requests have been handled for Turkish rights, and another for an Arabic translation. That said, not many James Currey books are available in translation even between Francophone and Anglophone texts and although the circulation of knowledge and access to scholarship is widening through digital technologies, a divide still exists in the research accessible to scholars working in the same discipline but in different languages.

Maria Marsh, Commissioning Editor for Middle Eastern and African Studies at CUP, saw her job as furthering the dissemination of academic research in the North and the South. The majority of CUP books in Middle Eastern and African studies are by European and US authors. The ‘diversity of the authorial pool is small’. She would like to publish more books by Africans and scholars from region of the Middle East. It should be a ‘two-way street’. One job of the publisher is to make sure the author pool widens. There also needs to be regard for gender.

Once an author has submitted a proposal and the manuscript has been peer reviewed and revised, the publisher will determine the ‘strategy for the book’ – the audience and readership. The majority of books in Maria’s areas are high priced monograph, or simultaneous paperback and hardback editions. Books are published as ebooks and on eplatforms also. Paperbacks tend to be easier to distribute into the regions. The American University in Cairo or Beirut will buy copies if books are in paperback. So different strategies are being thought about. In African studies, there is co-publication with the CUP Cape Town office and other rights deals with Wits Press. The Middle East is a different market. Here translation rights are more buoyant. Turkish and Arabic rights have been sold. The lifting of sanctions and opening of the market in Iran will have a positive effect. In terms of distribution of sales into Africa, each country needs its own approach. Sales are not made to many countries – there are economic and social contexts that need to be taken into account. Finally CUP is more broadly involved in medical/maths initiatives with Africa, and in thinking about how research is disseminated in the region. ‘We don’t want to be in a disempowering discussion of academic enclaves.’ Publishers should be thinking about what they can do and about ways to create new partnerships in the regions with libraries and publishing houses.

A question to CUP was why book prices are so high in the regions under discussion? US university presses have lower prices, typically in the region of 30-35 Euros. Frances Pinter pointed out that US university presses are able to support lower prices because of university funding. These subsidies can be considerable but don’t exist in the UK. It is also worth being aware that US administrators are pulling back on their subsidies – so the prices of their titles will eventually go up. OA would get around some of this but publishers need to cover costs.

There was debate about whether ‘it’s possible to do African studies without reading an African author – which would be taking us back 100 years’. It is crucial to read African authors. Two of the universities in UK recognised for their African studies programmes, SOAS and Birmingham, are committed to studying African authors. It is not productive to blame academics for the state of African book publishing. Mary Jay clarified that she was talking about reading books from African *publishers*, not authors. Information about the regions is coming out – but not from the regions. CUP

⁹ <http://www.baobab-ebooks.com>

pointed out that the former is valuable too. The authors being published are those funded to do research. There are of course African authors writing. Mary Jay felt that publishing in Africa needs to be recognised as a strategic industry – as it is in the UK and the US – and as being about culture, sustainable development and education, which involves books.

Another question addressed library resources. Librarians in Africa do not have large budgets. Fewer books are being bought than in the past. In many cases this is because subscription purchases to science journals supplant these. ‘The science journals are eating into the budgets.’ Representatives from the BL clarified that they have separate budgets for serials and monographs. But generally usage of resources also drives purchases.

Another question was on publication subsidies. Should we be looking to these to support the distribution of books in Africa? In African studies there are examples of subsidies to support differential pricing. These are generally provided by the North. Journal schemes such as EifL¹⁰ operate differential pricing models. The HINARI¹¹ scheme is another example. Differential pricing could be achieved in a more concerted way for books. In the commercial sector, it is a question of how to incentivise aggregators to sell more books at a lower price.

At the start of the second day of the conference Maja Maricevic summed up many important questions from the first day: about academic authorship and knowledge production in India and the Arab world, inequalities in publication, around collaboration, citation, referencing and presence of authors from the South. Overall, there is a changing balance between North and South. The challenges, particularly in African publishing, are those of infrastructure, Internet speed and electricity. OA has positive and negative effects. It helps with the availability of materials. But we need to think about the needs of publishers, authors and universities.

The first speaker was **Nureldin Satti** from the National Library of Sudan. Satti chairs the UNESCO fund for the promotion of culture in East Africa and the Great Lakes region. Satti is interested in the links between culture, peace, conflict and development. Overall, the production of knowledge in Sudan does not meet expectations. More resources are needed for the creation of knowledge. Challenges include ‘radicalisation’. The Middle East is grappling with the misappropriation of cultural heritage. To obtain ‘cultural peace’, links need to be made between heritage and social transformation. Attention is needed to the issue of archiving knowledge and ‘cultural heritage’, which can be conceived of as ‘part of the problem in many cases’. In many countries, ‘the past is taken so seriously that it constitutes a kind of blockage to the future’. The landscape of the creation of knowledge suffers from structural inconsistencies. There have been digital advances, but these have exposed the need for a ‘cultural revolution’. Capacity building, more access and selection of content are needed.

Digital advances are changing educational institutions in the South, including the provision of academic books. Sudan’s Al Bashir has stated that ‘we are now going to do the educational process differently’, meaning that laptops and the electronic screen were going to become the main tool in the classroom. In Kenya, laptops are being distributed. The atmosphere is that the whole eco-system is changing; Open Source is important and in the East/Horn of Africa, actors are looking to models in India.

¹⁰ <http://www.eifl.net>

¹¹ <http://www.who.int/hinari/en/>

'Digital Sudan'¹² is digitising the cultural heritage of Sudan, enhancing the visibility of the arts and humanities. Agencies working together include the Sudanese Association for Archiving of Knowledge (SUDAAK - with 22 members), the National Library, National Archives and the Ministry of Culture. Private sector institutions are involved. The National Library is quite new in Sudan (started from 2005). It includes 17 million items of heritage. Some go back to 16/17th century. There is digitisation of cultural heritage and mobilisation of financial resources. The library also plays an advisory role to the Ministry of Culture. Another important role of the library is to raise awareness of the rich cultural and historical heritage of Sudan. Much has been done in terms of popularisation of heritage through books, TV and radio programmes. These are the broader contributions to the project of archiving knowledge. There is also a link between popularisation and curriculum-creating processes. Sudan needs to establish a team and institutional capacity to do that. This is missing in many countries of the South, including in Sudan.

A national framework for digitisation is essential, to save time and resources. There needs to be harmonisation, partnerships and private sector support e.g. for digitising TV, radio and photo archives. Durham University's Sudan archives are partners. There are other partnerships with Kings College, University of Bergen and the World Digital Library in Washington; also with Emory University. Sudan's library is learning from experiences of those institutions.

For the National Archives of Sudan a major issue is how to convince owners to digitise manuscripts. There are other intellectual property issues. Future challenges include government control. There are civil society initiatives, and public-private partnerships, for example, the UNESCO-sponsored cultural mapping project, which need to be reinforced. The goal is to 'build the knowledge society'. Another ambition in the National Library is in working with non-textual formats, e.g. radio and TV. And problems are not unique to Sudan – in the UK for example, the BBC is struggling with archival issues.

The discussion covered decisions about what is selected for archiving and digitisation and why. A guiding principle is that 'the essence of democracy is transparency'. Social, intellectual and personal rights have to be taken into account. The process has to be participatory. People need to be informed on the selection process. In Sudan there is a heated debate on national heritage.

OA initiatives need to be clear, and use social networks and available technologies. Sudan is emerging from very difficult times; but there is a new spirit, national dialogue, the will to change and desire for partnerships in a global movement for equitable knowledge with due respect to all heritages.

Is there 'an archive law' in Sudan? I.e. are researchers mandated to deposit papers, and does this extend to non-governmental organisations? Sari acknowledged things are 'Khartoum-centric'. There are informal exchanges. There are obligations on public institutions, ministries, departments, associations and newspapers to provide copies of their products and items. But issues of storage, conservation and access remain.

A final question addressed 'work in education and emergencies: how do you protect the archives?' This question was very pertinent. UNESCO regrets damage to heritage during conflicts such as those experienced in Timbuktu and Syria. They try to negotiate, but are not always listened to. There are very ugly realities. But Timbuktu is functioning again.

¹² <http://simon-tanner.blogspot.co.uk/2013/07/digital-sudan-cultural-heritage-revived.html>

The next plenary speaker was **Shamil Jeppie**, Director of the Institute of Humanities at the University of Cape Town, on 'The Meanings of Timbuktu'. Shamil works on the history of Timbuktu and the place of writing in the region. Timbuktu has been largely absent from serious academic publishing. Its image is dominated by popular publishing. There are for example 300 titles in the BL relating to Timbuktu, but hardly any dealing with its scholarly character. Timbuktu has a place in the popular imagination, in poetry and travel literature, even in the South African struggle literature. There is work in specialist journals, notably *Sudanic Africa / Islamic Africa*. But Timbuktu is also imagined romantically. Shamil pitches his study somewhere between the academic and the popular. It is important to acknowledge the local publishing tradition in Timbuktu itself. Paulo Farias's work had revolutionised our understanding of the region arguing that we shouldn't just 'data-mine' the writings of the local scholars, but engage with the contexts and texts, both handwritten manuscripts and scanned and digital copies. Local families bring forth collections, but where do scholars start with this kind of thing? They produce catalogues – but the texts are part of a living tradition of scholarship. There are ethical and political issues. We are making arguments about the past of the region based on these collections. There are 24 family collections in or around Timbuktu. Foundations come in, 'local people see the dollar signs' which can lead to an inflation of the number of items in Timbuktu libraries as conservators set budgets depending on the number of holdings.

This culture is not peculiar to Timbuktu. There are 5 or 6 other places of manuscript production including Djenné in Mali and towns in Mauritania outpacing Timbuktu in terms of the production of manuscripts and books; these places are still rising and are connected, as Charles Stewart's work has shown.¹³ Shamil argues that we need to think of the library not as a fixed space but as something mobile. During the crisis in Mali, collections were moved from Timbuktu to Bamako. Shamil felt this was a mistake, but acknowledges he was not there. Perhaps it isn't necessary to 'build a state of the art library'? There are more decentralised way of dealing with these collections. In Timbuktu students sat at the feet of scholars, read and memorised a book; this was how you learned. And then they moved on. There was a long tradition of Nomadism: moving about meant moving with your library and parts of books. Notable also is that none of these books are bound; they are loose-leaf; there was no tradition of binding, including of the Qur'an, so pages could be disaggregated. Inherently this challenges the West's 'obsession with fixed beautiful buildings and the nature of the book as a fixed bound thing'.

From the mid-late 1990s, foundations poured money into Timbuktu to digitise its collections. Questions arose about how to handle digitisation, the movement of the libraries; and items disappeared. Digitisation does help conserve materials but can't capture paper evidence. Few of the manuscripts are dated but it is possible to check dates with author information. Crucial evidence is revealed by paper history. Digitisation should be an entry point or first encounter; but researchers need to have the chance to see material items themselves. Materiality adds to their complexity and richness. Some of the manuscripts were produced by scholars who were merchants. The paper comes from southern Europe. But scholars can't always afford to travel and spend time with the manuscripts so digitised images are important. Good work is being done with digitised images. Digital access is necessary as unless people have this, the mythology will remain. The Tombouctou manuscript project website¹⁴ includes manuscript metadata and bona fide researchers can get access.

¹³ See e.g. <http://archive.aramcoworld.com/issue/200306/mauritania.s.manuscripts.htm>

¹⁴ <http://www.tombouctoumanuscripts.org>

There are examples of Sudani script and Suqi script. Shamil's book, *The Meanings of Timbuktu*¹⁵ aims to give voice to the local collection owners who still speak Arabic of the high classical kind seldom still used elsewhere. The book contains translations and images are captured and reproduced. The entire book is freely downloadable; but has sold 1,200 copies in Africa. It has been published in French and an Arabic translation is being done in Damascus. So the book moves from the archival to traditional publication to being available online. It aims to fulfil a need for high-end serious scholarship but also to make scholarship accessible.

Questions were raised about copyright, which remains in trust in Timbuktu. Shamil feels the 'balance of forces is totally on their side' – the manuscript owners have learnt how to exercise their power.

It's worth noting that the Germans have put a lot of money into conservation in Bamako, including via the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures in Hamburg, a world centre in comparative manuscripts. Shamil was asked whether he was sharing his work with other universities in the region? There are some working relations with northern Nigerian universities. A notable research scheme was started by Abdullahi Smith in the 1950s including on Niger. But there is a capacity question. Linguistic skills in French and Arabic are needed; and 'funding can corrupt you, less can be more'. In Lagos, there are Yoruba Arabic manuscripts. Shamil is a fan of the BL's Endangered Archives model. 'It has opened things up.' From Lamu in Kenya, there are digital libraries and archives all over the place. Initially no value is attached to these things, which are often 'hoarded'. Does digitisation risk these traditions? Shamil is of the view that digitisation is a precaution: look at what's being lost in Libya. We will always lose something from tradition, therefore it is better digitise and save copies off-site. When conditions are precarious then digitise with as much metadata as possible. Timbuktu used to be 'the safest place on earth' until 2010; now it's important we have something to tell the story. 'We still haven't written much of the history. Dozens of students can work on these things.' There is a value in catalogues. Local custodians can be resistant to letting people look at materials – but these can crumble away. Digitisation can be regarded as a form of theft. The technology itself isn't the challenge – it's about creating trust in the right milieu.

The panel discussion that followed included archivists in the UK working with global South collections.

Gillian Evison, Head of the Bodleian Libraries' Oriental Section, spoke first. She discussed the digital shift over the past decade. From practices of 'specialist imaging', now 'everyone has a camera'. This poses challenges for university libraries. Her library's collection of books and manuscripts from the Far and Middle East, South East and Inner Asia is substantial, and considered big for the North, but is tiny compared with libraries in the South. The library has to contend with humidity fluctuations, but its rare books and manuscripts are safe. Digitisation allows access when travel is expensive.

In 2011, the Bodleian allowed the deposit of personal photographs. In the early stages of 'DIY photography' copies were left in the library. Images and metadata haven't been scrutinised. Dropbox is the preferred method of exchange and to create research networks. A recent Armenian exhibition in Oxford was organised almost exclusively on Dropbox.

Outside the North, book heritage is at risk. So researchers offer the library digital pictures of manuscripts. This is not new. Sanskrit manuscripts belonging to Nepal were sent to Oxford in the 1930s for photographing. Typically a paper manuscript might last 2-3 centuries. Several manuscripts become illegible every week. Librarians of the South have amazing programmes to conserve manuscript heritage. But there is no hope of covering all private collections. Therefore a fieldworker

¹⁵ <http://www.hspress.ac.za/product.php?productid=2216>

with a camera has an important role to play in preservation. Syrian and Afghan manuscripts are being destroyed. The Oxford Oriental library uses the special collections model; digital photos belong to the institution of origin and are valuable assets. An on going question is whether the Bodleian should curate manuscripts that will never leave their country of origin? The BL's Endangered Archives model conceives projects as digital. But the by-products of research questions (e.g. fieldworkers' photographs) are not catalogued. Some of these represent 'unique' material.

The next speaker was Francis Gotto, the Sudan Archivist at Durham University. The Sudan Archive was founded in 1957 as a home for the records of administrators from the Sudan Political Service, of missionaries, soldiers, business men, doctors, agriculturalists, teachers and others who had served or lived in the Sudan during the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium period (1898-1955). These records include personal and official papers, diaries, photographs, maps, printed items, and museum objects, and so can contain a range of material including material not found in the Sudanese National Archives. The Archive also holds records from before 1898, and continues to accession some modern records. They include ethnographic research of colonial administrators and more modern material. The location of the archives reflects their postcolonial heritage – i.e. there is distance between where the archives are and the peoples they cover. Another such location has occurred following the independence of South Sudan.

Digitisation therefore has a lot to offer in terms of remote access to researchers. The Sudan Archive has collaborated with SUDAAC (Sudanese Association for Archiving Knowledge) to make digitally accessible governmental grey literature and national mapping surveys. The archive deposits copies in Khartoum. Digitisation selection has been determined by usage and demand, and preservation requirements. What is digitised may often only be a representative sample of the records held. Context, copyright, authority and the choice of which collections to put online are key concerns.

James Lowry, a lecturer at the University of Liverpool's Centre for Archive Studies, spoke about archives in the global South, tracing archival underdevelopment and the problem of 'displaced archives' to their colonial roots. He described the attempts of the Colonial Office to encourage good record-keeping, and the limited responses from colonial administrators, observing that proper archival services only really emerged in much of Anglophone Africa on or after independence. It was at this time that the problem of displaced archives arose. The famous Mau Mau case highlights the problem of 'migrated' archives, but 'archival displacement' was common, in order that the UK government should not be embarrassed. Using the principles of European customary law, under which it was common practice to transfer records necessary for running a territory to the territory concerned, helps make a case for why displaced archives need to be returned, assuming professional practices. UNESCO has established three further principles to be applied: retroactive sovereignty, territorial origin and functional pertinence. These themes are explored in more depth in James's forthcoming edited collection *Displaced Archives*.

Given that government record-keeping was in a poor state at independence, there have been many challenges for archivists in the global South. Often, national archives are not given the authority necessary for enforcing good practices. For example the National Archives in Sierra Leone has no authority to work with ministries to collect materials. However, Tanzania has stronger archives legislation and is taking steps to establish a Trusted Digital Repository (TDR) for its digital archives;¹⁶ if successful, it may be the first national archives in Africa to do that. Otherwise, the records and

¹⁶ A 'Trusted Digital Repository' conforms to the OAIS standard for digital archives.

archive community often has limited tools. There are issues of infrastructure and facility, and training needs. As already discussed in the case of Nigeria, archives can be in 'complete breakdown'. This situation has serious implications for scholarship of all kinds. While it is obviously difficult to approach historical research without adequate archives, James emphasised that we are talking about other kinds of research, particularly the research and scholarship needed for public policy and social development.

The questions considered first whether, at Oxford for example, there were still problems of uniformity? Gillian Evison's view was that 'getting something is better than nothing'. Photographs taken on tablets have quite good quality. A council of perfection isn't necessary.

Another comment stressed the issue of 'disappearing archives'. In Kaduna in northern Nigeria, archival material connected to land disputes had 'disappeared'. Meantime, Kenyan violence triggered by land disputes could have been settled if land records were trustworthy and accessible. It can be difficult for lawyers to gain access to archives held as personal collections. African intellectuals are passing on materials to state libraries. Nyerere's papers are deposited in Tanzania in the Centre for the Founders of the Nation. In Sudan, land records are held in Khartoum, but access can still be difficult.

Another question addressed what rights and provision exist for researchers to search the images in other researchers' own archives? Archivists are creating finding aids and geographical locators. But there are questions about who should create aggregator tools. Digitisation helps with access. But there are no short cuts to 'serendipity and slog' - working through and reading material. We miss material if we over-rely on digital and word searches. The digital world is partial. Only 1 in 9 files might be digitised. Gillian commented on how a 'Flickr free-for-all' soon led to researchers complaining that the data isn't well organised or easy to navigate. 'Maybe the librarian could spend some time on it?' the users asked. The richer and more standard the metadata the more useful it is. Communication between the academic world and archivists can be improved.

Abhijit Gupta spoke about Jadavpur University Press. The university press is a traditional model, but also a nascent model in their part of the world. The pioneering work by Sukanta Chaudhuri on new texts and records notwithstanding, there is justification for the traditional publishing model. In the colonial period (from the 18/19th century), the Royal Asiatic Society and Bengali learned societies published academic work. Bombay, Calcutta and Madras university presses published textbooks only. OUP, Macmillan and Longman were very important in the textbooks market. OUP 'put into place scholarly publishing in the continent' and was engaged in the translation of sacred and ancient books, comparative religion, histories and ethnographical texts. By the 20th century there were Indian publishers in the academic and trade sectors. Philip Altbach has written on publishing in India and the strengths and weaknesses of distribution.

Abhijit considers that the reasons for Indian university presses not taking off post-independence were because in the nation-building era classroom teaching was the priority. The academic would only publish for particular interests, and there was a lack funds. Jadavpur University Press (JUP) was started in 2012 when universities were downsizing and publication programmes restricted to journals with state funds provided to departments. The model of contracting journals with commercial publishers is not as common in India as in the West. Prices remain affordable. Sales of back-issues of journals are at low prices. This makes scholarship accessible; but there are compromises in quality, and concessions in peer-review. The system is not failsafe. The academic hiring system based on points and ISSN publication leads to dubious quality.

JUP publishes anthologies and monographs reflecting the resources available. Books are pre-selected, funds are disbursed by the university and there are competitive quotations from printers. Financial support from university affords a certain degree of autonomy however interests may diverge. This model also depends on voluntary labour. The press has 2 staff members. Print-runs are 500-1,000 and there are no e-editions as yet. They have published fine books in recent times but Abhijit feels such a model isn't sustainable in the long run. It is hard to do everything on their own. So they are looking at co-branded imprints with multinationals whereby JUP is the smaller partner, treated by the larger publisher as an author. On the surface, there are benefits. Publishing is efficient and hassle free. But the advantages are yet to be assessed. There are misgivings: a sustained relationship with a 'Big Brother' may impinge on autonomy in the future. But such models are finding acceptance in the Indian English-language market.

Abhijit feels the press needs staff and financial autonomy. There are also restrictions owing to being part of the university, on collecting payments online which is unfamiliar to university administrators. There are no such models in other universities. The general view is that if the press survives – and it is arguably as essential as other departments – it should be publishing textbooks. 'Perhaps other publishing is too utopian for our times?' Distribution is another problem. Larger distributors 'eat up profits'. Sales of edited books and monographs are 'fitful'. As with printed academic journals there can be piles of unsold books, and there are no distributors. JUP is still not selling online and older Indian publishers are still not online. 'Born digital' publishing with POD would save on production costs, although there are still peer review and design costs. Yet a large section of the Bengali readership still prefer print. Summing up, Abhijit had presented a 'shoe string model to emulate or avoid at all costs'!

Padmini Ray Murray of the Srishti Institute of Art, Design and Technology is launching an MA programme in the Digital Humanities, the first of its kind in India. She has worked in the UK as a book historian. There is a need for book history and publishing studies to be embedded in India. Sukanta was her mentor but colleagues don't exist elsewhere in India. Nielsen BookData does some form of data collection on c.30% of the Indian market. But students need to look more closely at book markets. There are students at SOAS working on these issues. Padmini's argument is that the academic book is a colonial construct that modern India doesn't have to subscribe to. Historically it was involved in the justification of bring Western knowledge and education to Asia, as a 'cure of darkness'. Schools and education are still shaped by these ideologies. British publishers – Macmillan, Longman and OUP – dominated the higher education sector. The print culture of the Indian community was constructed on this model. British publishers remained significant in the postcolonial period. There was an Indo-American agreement in the 1960s for US reprints to be sold in the STM sector. The academic book enjoys a significant space in Anglo-American academia. Yet there has been wider sharing, e.g. via the Kalkorta bookfair appealing to the non-professional reader (echoing Sukanta Chaudhuri's argument). 'Magazines', akin to non-fiction for the lay reader (comparable with the UK's Zed Books) were also important.

In the Indian university sector, publishing-for-assessment is increasing. The points system is weighted towards peer review articles over books. Publishers are generally not selling rights abroad. Padmini feels that scholars should be trained to harness digital tools to publish online in meaningful ways. Monographs need to be distributed in more 'generative' ways. The Indian language blogosphere is active. Concerns of language, also of what comprises the arts and social sciences given the Western intellectual tradition, need to be shaped to fit locally relevant conceptual frameworks. From the 19th century Humboldtian university, today's modes of knowledge production have changed. Western knowledge is not the only mode of knowledge in an Indian context. There

needs to be reorientation in the shape and blueprint of academic publishing that depends on the digital environment. Indian humanities scholarship can be somewhat different from Western models. Notable too is that the Digital Humanities in the global South are not always hosted at an academic institution (as Sukanta's project is). Rekhta, an Urdu poetry library contains the texts of 650 Urdu writers whose work had been transliterated into English and Hindi.¹⁷ The Indian Memory Project,¹⁸ containing crowd-sourced material, is another example.

Debates in the Digital Humanities indicate that a book should be free to use. Padmini gave some examples of how the digital book could look. *The Historian's Macroscope*¹⁹ was 'written live' although tensions transpire in collaborative writing. Books can be in print and OA. And we need to explore 'big data'. POD outfits could be fruitfully initiated in India. Photocopying is eating into publishers' profits but publishers need to work with students and teachers, not against them.

Summing up, Padmini suggested that a Digital Humanities manifesto makes provision for generative material, has a utopian core and privileges the sharing of knowledge through partnership. From the Enlightenment idea of the monograph, South Asian scholars have used the form to their own advantage. 'Now the time has come to create new tools to share with the rest of the world.'

Questions covered the Bengali blogosphere and issues of continuity and preservation. Blogs need to be archived – 'there is no point in this generative conversation if we can't point to it'.

Jadvapur University Press deal with language publishing by producing bi- or sometimes tri-lingual editions. Translation between Indian languages is less common. Translations of the Indian classics is also important. It is worth noting that on the Indian university campus 'the total academic discourse is highly bilingual and multilingual'. Research and classroom teaching takes account of the use of more than one language.

A technical challenge is to come up with a single integrated programme for creating indexes that would take multilingual content and be searchable across languages. Another challenge is to diversify the languages used in book history. Scholarship tends to be in English. There are a few examples of Russian articles and work in South Asian languages translated into English.

Problems of the monograph include that it 'doesn't make money'. JUP publish 500 copies of a monograph. But they are difficult to sell. Distribution is the Achilles' heel. It should be easier to publish and sell monographs online. JUP was asked whether it used online booksellers, such as Amazon. The paperwork necessary from the university makes it difficult to fulfil the conditions of such e-tailers. This is also the case with the Indian eportal Flipcard. There are tax issues and the university is cautious as it is something new for Indian universities to sell online.

Padmini explained that she is not saying that the monograph shouldn't exist – but that its status is 'overdetermined' for reasons of career advancement. A digital edition of a monograph has a different caché. It can be a 'cross-over title that gets knowledge out there'. Text can be more fluid; tables and photos, could be presented more dynamically in an online version.

Shamil Jeppie pronounced himself 'agnostic' about the Digital Humanities. In many ways, its features – e.g., marginalia and free-flowing text – reminded him of manuscript in a pre-print type of scholarship. Franco Moretti, author of *Distant Reading*, has recently published an article in the *Los*

¹⁷ <https://rekhta.org>

¹⁸ <http://www.indianmemoryproject.com>

¹⁹ <http://www.themacroscope.org/2.0/>

Angeles Review of Books arguing that ‘the Digital Humanities haven’t produced a single big idea’.²⁰ Marilyn Deegan pointed out that the institutional context of the Digital Humanities is computing and work around textual corpuses. Computer devices are ubiquitous – and dictated to by people who are providing these technologies. Digital humanities can be concerned with older formats of books and can look at ways in which cultures tell stories.

Finally, a big gap in India is training for editing and publishing, including a lack of good copy editors. There have been some courses in New Delhi initiated by independent publishers and the National Book Trust, and there are some courses run by universities. But supply doesn’t meet demand.

Ola Uduku, Reader in Architecture at the University of Edinburgh, was the final speaker.

An architect by training and an academic interested in the design of school buildings, libraries and mass education, Ola opened by suggesting that academic books in Africa are now a rare sight to behold in the continent’s tertiary institutions. Locally authored books are even harder to find. As a frequent traveller to West Africa over the past five years, and writer on the design of Africa schools, higher institutions and libraries in Africa, she has encountered and studied these buildings. Ola was focusing on the undergraduate textbook. She had recently visited Ghanaian universities. Undergraduate courses in the humanities still had academic textbooks on their curriculum reading lists. At undergraduate level, these texts are a mix of local and internationally published books.

Despite being a few hundred miles south of Timbuktu, libraries and universities in Africa can hardly live up to their scholarly description. From viewing libraries in Ghana and Nigeria it is clear that the edifices exist for viewing and using books. Focusing on KNUST and Legon Universities in Ghana, Ola gave some recent first-hand observations. These libraries are often reasonably well maintained, furnished and staffed, making these often-historic structures viable places to study and borrow books. However library stacks are sparsely stocked with some editions of historic text books, but rarely contain any up to date journals or other printed matter. Unsurprisingly there are few students using the library reading spaces for study. By contrast, ‘IT’ and ‘open access’ computer suites provide banks of desktop computers in air-cooled spaces, allowing students access to digital resources online. At KNUST this was the most student-populated space in the entire library. In Ghana there is generally not a problem of low bandwidth speed. Students are working digitally. Issues are around how the spaces are used. Properly serviced space and infrastructure are needed. Not every student can afford modern technology. Campuses should be investing in space for staff and students to access information. Computer labs may already be obsolete. OA at libraries will be important; but we need to think about how OA is consumed. A few pages can be downloaded quite easily. The idea of the textbook is changing. Key texts will be used, but pragmatically, will Ghana ever have resources for physical books? In a developmental model, the university could be seen as providing spaces and a hub for learning, and the library as an outreach model, a physical space in which knowledge is accessed.

Issues for Ghanaian academics begin with the time to write. Most academic departments are overstretched and understaffed, and lecturers do not have the time to do more than fulfil the teaching required of them. Secondly, many academics in Africa lack the training or support to write. Until this is addressed the conference’s preceding discussions about authorship, and where the publishing is coming from, will persist. Partnerships need to be established in the academic publishing sphere. Whilst the African Studies Association of the UK has hosted a number of successful writing workshops, the example of the Wits Writing Centre at the University of the

²⁰ <https://lareviewofbooks.org/interview/the-digital-in-the-humanities-an-interview-with-franco-moretti>

Witswatersrand is more apposite because the centre is on the campus. This foregrounds the importance of writing and gives access to support to all staff and students at the university. Finally, as with the UK, in most African universities academic books are less critical for career advancement than the refereed academic paper. Books in Africa are also hard to publish because of the vagaries of production, editing and printing in the African setting. There are publishing houses, but their focus is not on academic books.

What might the future look like for academic publishing in Africa? Thinking about the future 21st century primary and secondary classroom has some relevance to the tertiary sector. If we start from the premise that academic material for student study will need to be provided, and that the current system of distribution, via the academic textbook either individually purchased or available for loan via university library outlets, no longer works, then we need to explore what the future learning landscape might be. The idea of the ICT-linked classroom comes to the fore, where students learn through networked cheap personal tablet readers to which material is downloaded in 'packets'. These are small units of material such as chapters or homework/task exercises, which can be downloaded by students using cut-price mobile devices. This is predicated on the further spread of wireless hotspots to more inaccessible areas through the use of GPS satellite technology already in use by health and aid organisations in remote regions of the world.

Taking this idea to tertiary education the concept translates to publishing being produced in smaller 'packets', likely to be chapters or sections, which student mobile devices would be able to deal with. Thus instead of purchasing a 7-chapter e-book on anthropology, this would be distributed as separate downloadable chapters, either for purchase or borrowing using a university server. The facilities needed for this would change the face of library facilities. Book stacks would disappear, with only a limited reserve section left, whilst there would be significantly less investment in computer hardware and more in ethernet and wifi infrastructure needed to support better, high speed access and download rates. In the West this would be termed a 'BYOD' or 'bring your own device' policy, which takes the responsibility of the hardware required for online access to the students and users of the material. In Ghana, most tertiary level students have both computers and also smartphones, so this might easily take place, although it would take longer to institute in poorer countries.

Questions reflected on whether this model only catered for the 'digital elite'? But there will still be books and universities are not going to stop buying computers for students. Africa also has a large penetration of phones. Downloading chapters rather than a whole book is becoming the norm. Granted, this does not deal with browsing books; it is a 'search-led culture'. The 21st century library needs to be designed to replicate digital browsing. Printed books are not going to come back.

The keynote speakers were invited to give brief final comments.

Walter Bgoya commended the conference as a place to meet people whom he hoped to connect with in the future. Northern and Southern publishers must find ways of working together, particularly on rights and pricing, otherwise acrimony and piracy will persist. We need negotiating spaces to make this possible, to ask whether print books could be cheaper and make them more affordable.

Shamil Jeppie feels we need to push further the comparative discussion between areas of the South. The Internet is revolutionising the way people use manuscripts. Comparative and interdisciplinary aspects are important. There are manuscript studies in UK, Africa, India, and the Middle East. But book history researchers are separated from librarians and archivists. It is therefore good to be

meeting together. We should remember there are cataloguing problems in European collections also.

Sukanta Chauduri felt the North-South contact needs to continue. And he hopes that South-South contact can be carried forward. We cannot talk about the 'academic book' in the South, the last stage in a process, where the earlier stages, archiving and preservation, are still to be dealt with. Otherwise the production of monographs on the basis of the available material is not going to advance.

We also need to think about alternative socialised form of knowledge creation. There are problems of permanence of material and also of exactitude. 'We don't want to lose the virtue of careful editing in the electronic.'

Sukanta also warned that some of the problems in the South might extent to the North. Journals and monographs are being priced out of the reach even of the wealthiest institutions. With even Harvard feeling the pinch, we need to think about 'the question of the costing of academic activity'.

Sari Hanafi stressed the social condition of knowledge production. The 'temporality' of books is different from journal articles. We need to stop fetishizing the form of publication and measure the life of research, not just articles. Conversations take place through books. There also needs to be better dissemination to policy makers. 'The quantitative mentality of benchmarking needs to be changed.' Universities in Lebanon are increasingly becoming 'Americanised'. We also need to recognise that civil society is producing more and more knowledge, in Syria for example where there is little access for the professional researcher.

Akoss Ofori-Mensah admitted that Africa's contribution to knowledge is still quite minimal. There is not much evidence globally of books produced in Africa. Even holding a book fair in Africa can be difficult.

Padmini Ray Murray felt we need to focus on developing and sharing digital resource and to acknowledge there is literary culture outside academia and other forms of knowledge sharing.

Ola Uduku thought more needs to be done to support publishers. The KU model needs to be investigated more. We also need to think about how we deal with the digital, and there needs to be more partnering.

Marilyn Deegan gave some background on 'Academic Book Week', which involves booksellers as well as academics. There is discussion about making this an annual event. Perhaps there should be events in the South? And there need to be more events like this one.

Caroline Davis thanked all the presenters and panellists and the BL was thanked for providing financial support. The reports and recordings of the conference would be made publicly accessible.