

Archie Mafeje

The Rethinking of Knowledge in and on Africa: Past, Present and Future

A Proceedings Report on the Launch of the Archie Mafeje Research Institute (AMRI) at Unisa

Compiled by Professor Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni

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ARCHIE MAFEJE RESEARCH INSTITUTE (AMRI) AT
UNISA

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The Archie Mafeje Institute for Applied Social Policy Research, in short Archie Mafeje Research Institute (AMRI), is a policy research institute based at University of South Africa. It is dedicated to promoting the legacy of Archie Mafeje in terms of innovative knowledge production for applied social policy in pursuit of progressive change in African society through the provision of fresh thinking and novel policy ideas for the fight against poverty, inequality, social disintegration, lack of social justice, weak citizenship, collapse of institutions of community and family and other societal ills. It conducts research and facilitates scholarly and policy debates based on a rigorous understanding of African social formations and a clear definition of societal transformation aimed at social justice and poverty eradication in Africa. In particular, AMRI is concerned with change that results from knowledge garnered from the experiences and thought patterns of ordinary Africans.

A Short Biographical and Intellectual Sketch of Archie Mafeje

Prof Fred Hendricks

Archie Mafeje was born in South Africa in 1936. His distinguished educational pursuits started at a primary school in Peulton, near King William's Town in the Eastern Cape, where he shared a class with the late former Minister Steve Tshwete's sister. He went on to matriculate at the well-known missionary school, which also happens to be Nelson Mandela's alma mater, the Healdtown Methodist Boarding School. After a short stay at the University of Fort Hare (UFH), he was expelled for political activities, like many other students at the time. He went on to study for a BSc degree in Biological Sciences at the University of Cape Town (UCT) in 1957 and he immediately proceeded to complete a BA with Anthropology as his major. His BA Honours degree was in Urban Sociology and his MA, which he achieved cum laude, was in Political Anthropology. Mafeje's academic accomplishments at UCT were rewarded when he was granted a fellowship to study towards his PhD at the University of Cambridge. At the young age of 26, Mafeje, together with his professor, Monica Wilson, published a seminal book on Urban Anthropology in South Africa in 1963. Entitled *Langa, a study of social groups in an African township* the book was the result of a fruitful collaboration between Wilson, an experienced anthropology professor, and Mafeje as her interpreter and interlocutor of events and experiences in the townships. He dedicated the remaining part of the 1960s to a detailed anthropological study of the concepts of leadership, social change and economic development in Eastern and Southern Africa.

Mafeje's illustrious career took him all over Africa. He held the Chair of Sociology at the University of Dar es Salaam and the American University in Cairo, he

was a visiting lecturer at Makerere College, consultant to the Southern African Political and Economic Series (SAPES) in Harare, and visiting Professor of Sociology and Anthropology as well as Director of the Multidisciplinary Research Centre at the University of Namibia. He became intimately involved in the intellectual work of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) based in Dakar, Senegal, charting an Afrocentric approach to the study of African social, economic, cultural and political problems. Outside Africa, he also had prodigious experience as a research fellow of the African Studies Centre at the University of Cambridge; as visiting senior lecturer, reader and professor at the Institute of Social Studies at the Hague in Netherlands; as visiting Research Professor at the Institute for Development Research at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark; as guest Professor to Scandinavian universities, sponsored by the Nordic Africa Institute in Uppsala, Sweden; as a consultant to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in Rome and a visiting fellow of the African Studies Program at Northwestern University in Evanston, USA. He was undoubtedly the doyen of the emerging community of African social science scholars.

His work during the 1970s spanned epistemological, theoretical and empirical concerns. He grappled with issues of historical explanation, of how to relate science and ideology to development, how to understand the constraints confronting the neo-colonial state in Africa, how to combine social history with ethnographic experience, and generally how to marry scholarly pursuits with political commitment. During this time, he wrote a path-breaking article on *The Ideology of Tribalism*, and entered numerous discussions challenging the concept of a dual economy, on the nature of the agrarian and land questions in Africa, and on the significance of the Soweto uprisings in South Africa.

Throughout his intellectual career, Archie Mafeje was engaged in a range of different debates. His entire scholarly makeup was defined by his willingness to subject his ideas to criticism by others and to similarly subject their ideas to his criticisms. Some of his most significant contributions to our understanding of Africa emerged from an engagement in one or other intellectual contestations such as; his arguments with Ali Mazrui on the self colonisation of Africa, his criticisms of Jibrin Ibrahim on the nature of democracy, his attack on Ruth First on the meaning of the Soweto uprisings, his scolding of Nnoli on his understanding of ethnicity in Africa, his thesis on the ideology of tribalism, his sustained critique of the notion of the dual economy, his attack on Joe Slovo's article *Has Socialism failed?*, in his demolition of Michael Neocosmos's notion of accumulation from below. Mafeje's discourse fits the metaphorical concept of argument as war perfectly. His polemics are suffused with metaphors of battle and in debate he gave as good as he got. He was undoubtedly combative, a potent opponent, gifted with eloquence and his commitment to the broader project of African emancipation permeated his scholarship as well as his politics.

His combative style of engagement emerged most poignantly in his approach to the discipline of anthropology which also represents one of his most enduring contributions. In the 1970s he deconstructed the compromised role of anthropology in the colonial project in Africa. His critique of the discipline was premised on the notion of alterity as it was steeped in the deeply racist discourse of the white anthropologist studying the black 'other' in order to better ensure colonial domination. Mafeje had a double advantage in this regard. On the one hand, his anthropological training allowed him a unique insight into the internal workings of the dominant discourse and on the other he was an insider, not only in the

sense of being an oppressed black, but also by being part of attempts from within the liberation movement to re-write history in ways which were more accurately reflective of the colonial experience from below and the agency which this implied. He had a rare understanding of the discipline because he inhabited its hallowed halls. In addition he also knew the world and the people it sought to objectify, by virtue of his being an intrinsic part of it. His critique of anthropology found its most poignant expression in his trenchant review of Sally Falk Moore's book *Anthropology and Africa*. The debate was appropriately published in the first issue of the *African Sociological Review* which in itself represents an effort to establish a community of self-referring African social scientists. His wide-ranging review of Moore's book was a frontal attack on the manner in which the discipline is constructed and structured around metropolitan interests. He developed his earlier deconstruction of anthropology into a fully-fledged treatise on African claims to study, understand and interpret their own reality. While issuing the challenge to African anthropologists to become makers rather than objects of knowledge, he also insisted that they should be centrally involved in a project to produce images, understandings and analyses of and for themselves. Mafeje's driving questions are the manner in which the supposed makers of anthropological knowledge position themselves vis-à-vis the assumed objects of their discipline; they are necessarily an unequal encounter in which the concept of 'tribe' was manipulated to serve colonial ends.

Mafeje challenged the conventional division of the social sciences and he linked the historiography of anthropology directly to the colonial experience. He issued an abiding challenge to all African anthropologists to become makers rather than mere objects of knowledge. For Mafeje, anthropology is necessarily a discipline founded on alterity, on the colonial

settlers studying the native 'other'. For this reason it is intrinsically limited and therefore was driven underground by the decolonisation process in Africa. It was really only in southern Africa that the discipline of anthropology survived.

Mafeje's often-quoted statement needs to be mentioned in this respect. 'It is interesting to note' writes Mafeje in his very influential article, *The Ideology of Tribalism*, 'that the word for tribe does not exist in indigenous languages of South Africa. How often must it be pointed out that in African languages there is no equivalent for the term 'tribe' and that the concept 'tribe' is a colonial imposition in Africa? What is ethnographically known is that Africans, like everybody else, are conscious of the linguistic and ethnic group to which they belong'. As he became more familiar with anti-colonial struggles across the continent, and more fully conversant with social and political realities in other African countries, he extended this formulation to the rest of the continent. About his own ethnic affiliation, Mafeje says the following, 'I don't care about being Xhosa, I am a South African black. It does not matter to me if I'm Xhosa or Zulu or Tswana or anything else. I am just comfortable. If I had a choice, I would probably go along more with the Sothos than with the Xhosas. Just in terms of temperament and the way they do things. I am certainly not committed to something called Xhosa'.

Starting from his solid conceptual and political foundations, Mafeje's most productive years were during the 1980s and 1990s. He published very widely on topics as diverse as the articulation of modes of production, the nature of the South African transitional process, food security and agrarian systems, the household economy, African peasants, imperialism, nation-building, structural adjustment, the indigenisation of the social sciences, African intellectuals, the ethnography of the Great Lakes region in East Africa, rural development, on culture,

the discipline of anthropology, the national question, and democracy and development.

Mafeje had a very impressive record of experience with international organisations. He was a member of the executive committee of the Third World Forum, consultant to the United Nations University, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). His most consistent consultancy was with the FAO where he was involved in many research-based projects. For them he produced comprehensive reports on land tenure conditions in South Africa, the liberation movements in southern Africa, the role of women in agricultural production, settlement schemes in Zimbabwe, the land question in Namibia, common property in African economic empowerment, and the role of rural institutions.

Mafeje was a principled scholar who has made an enormous contribution to the development of the social sciences in Africa. He was persecuted for his political ideas by the apartheid regime in South Africa, being arrested while doing political work among rural dwellers in Pondoland. In 1968, he was appointed to the position of senior lecturer in social anthropology at UCT. A combination of the apartheid government's intransigence on the appointment of black staff members to white universities and deceit and complicity on the part of UCT prevented him from taking up his post. There can be little doubt that this racist decision profoundly shaped Mafeje's intellectual trajectory. He became fully immersed in the anti-colonial nationalist movements across sub-Saharan Africa. Together with his unique attention to the detail of the social and economic challenges facing the newly independent countries, Mafeje de-

veloped an encyclopaedic knowledge of Africa. We must remember him as an intellectual so that younger generations can appreciate the depth and breadth of his scholarship. The Archie Mafeje Research Institute (AMRI) is well-suited to do this.

In honouring Mafeje, we must avoid treating him as an item of anthropological curiosity as in a little booklet dedicated to him authored by Andrew Bank entitled, *Memorials, Myths and Memories: the Life and Work of an African Anthropologist (Archie Mafeje)*. It is ironic that somebody who dedicated so much of his intellectual life to the battle against alterity and in favour of Africanity, should be subjected to the very approach that he denounced in the most eloquent manner. In the booklet, Bank's (2010) main contention is supposedly to unmask myths about Mafeje, but in reality, he merely reproduces myths about Monica Wilson. I have nothing against a demystifying role. I think it is vitally important for us to engage in a scholarship which exposes inaccuracies as well as slanted interpretations. In this case however, it is not as if the evidence will speak for itself, but an accurate narrative of events in the Mafeje Affair does not permit the kind of interpretation in favour of Monica Wilson as presented by Bank. To put it bluntly, it flies in the face of the evidence.

We need to question why there has been such a pervasive failure to engage in a systematic manner with Mafeje's work in South African academic circles. The very title of the booklet is clearly a misnomer because it does not deal with the many intricate details of Mafeje's contribution to African scholarship. In fact, it does not deal with his work at all, but merely provides a rough overview premised on a limited understanding of Mafeje's intellectual oeuvre and his political foundations. The booklet was launched at the Anthropology Southern Africa's annual conference held at the UFH, East London campus in September 2010. As part of the programme, they also

hosted an opening panel discussion by the same title of the booklet and the occasion was used for an exhibition on Mafeje. Taken together, the panel discussion, the booklet as well the exhibition do not treat Mafeje as an intellectual whose work deserves to be engaged with, commented on, dissected and criticised. Instead, Mafeje is feted in an exhibition. Apartheid museums used to display life-sized body casts of San hunters usually in an idealised or stylised rural setting, complete with women tending fires with babies on their backs and straw huts in the background and the hunter with his bow and arrow and pouch poised appropriately – a racist moment frozen in time, representing the San as unchanging and without a history. The analogy with the Mafeje exhibition is striking. He is put on display as an item of curiosity, as an object of an exhibition, but his work is not taught at our universities, it is not part of our syllabi, nor are his books and articles the subjects of intellectual debate in our journals, except of course the *African Sociological Review* which published a symposium of responses to his critique of the discipline of Anthropology. Fanon's remark is poignant, 'to speak pidgin to a Negro makes him angry...But I will be told there is no wish, no intention to anger him. I grant this: but it is just this absence of wish, this lack of interest, this indifference, this automatic manner of classifying him, imprisoning him, privatising him, decivilising him, that makes him angry'. In both this exhibition and its accompanying booklet, Mafeje is treated as an artefact rather than a scholar. This representation of the man suggests that he needs to be recovered as an item of anthropological interest. Needless to say, this is a deeply problematic approach to Mafeje as it is steeped in alterity, objectifying the man while ignoring his scholarship. Bank (2010) uses a very peculiar device. He paraphrases with no direct references so that the construction can suit his particular purposes of creating and sustaining

myths around Monica Wilson rather than his purported motive of exposing myths around Mafeje.

If Mafeje's work had been an intrinsic part of the curricula for our students and if he had been recognised in engaged debates amongst our scholars, if his work had been appreciated for what it is worth, then an exhibition might have been appropriate. The studied indifference to his work in South African academic circles while he was alive suggests that there is a profound opportunism in all of this. The exhibition and its booklet are contrived precisely because Mafeje was treated like a pariah by white South Africa, his work was ignored, and he was given no role whatsoever in teaching and research. Now that he is safely dead, and his 'luminous tongue has endless possibilities no longer' there is an effort to capture his role, if only to constrain it and box it in. As Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks* approvingly quotes, 'Sarte begins Orphee Noir What then did you expect when you unbound the gag that muted those black mouths? That they would chant your praises?'

Not only does the booklet not capture the complexity of the man, it also implicitly expects some form of unproblematic uniformity and simplistic homogeneity in his predispositions. Bank (2010:4) is surprised when he '... became increasingly aware of a gap between Archie as his closest South African friends and family remembered him and Archie as UCT and CODESRIA had come to memorialise him'.

The mundane is here presented as a profound discovery. Yet, it is clear that different people would have had different encounters and experiences with Mafeje and their opinions of him would be limited by the nature of their association. Has he not heard about the multiplicity and fluidity of all identities? It seems so pathetically obvious that it does not warrant further comment. What is perhaps surprising is that he found only one gap, I would have expected that there should be many.

Prof Fred Hendricks is the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities at Rhodes University and the editor of the *African Sociological Review*.

Prof Hendricks obtained his PhD degree from the University of Uppsala, Sweden in 1990. He has worked at the Universities of Cape Town, Western Cape and has been a visiting lecturer, scholar and researcher at the Universities of John Hopkins (USA) and Uppsala (Sweden). He has acted as external examiner for the Universities of Natal, Fort Hare, Botswana, and Transkei.

He has participated in a number of public task teams, most recently the Ministerial panel of Experts investigating the impact of ownership of land by foreigners on prospects for land reform in South Africa.

He is also a member of the Scientific Committee of the Archie Mafeje Research Institute.

Celebrating Archie Mafeje, 1936 – 2007

Prof Adebayo Olukoshi

On 4 May 2012, the University of South Africa (UNISA) hosted a special event to celebrate the life, contributions, and legacy of one of the most erudite and gifted social researchers and scholars that the African continent has known in the last four decades. Archibald Monwabisi Mafeje, affectionately known in his lifetime as Archie, was easily one of the towering figures on the contemporary African and global social research terrain, achieving the rare feat of helping to reshape the parameters of the practice of his primary field of study by launching a challenge against its foundational assumptions and method. It is not a feat that is given to many, however gifted. In celebrating him, UNISA has decided to take the bold step of launching an Archie Mafeje Research Institute (AMRI) as a permanent tribute to his life and work. Properly carried forward, the decision is bound to contribute in a direct and profound way to the perpetuation of Mafeje's trademark legacy of critical and engaged scholarship in support of progressive agendas of social transformation.

The UNISA initiative is the latest in a series of efforts which have been made since the passing of Mafeje to acknowledge his contributions and honour his legacy. Within South Africa, several universities and research institutes, among them, UNISA itself, the University of the Western Cape (UWC), University of Fort Hare (UFH), the University of Cape Town (UCT), the University of the Witwatersrand (WITS), and the Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA), to cite but a few have had occasions since his death to organise different activities and post-humous programmes to memorialise him and celebrate the scientific vocation to which he dedicated his life. The different Mafeje memorial initiatives represent part

of an on-going effort to reconcile the academy, and the broader polity in South Africa with a Mafeje who, after all, was quintessentially of South Africa even whilst being eminently pan-African and humanist, but which officially, South Africa, blinded by its apartheid policy of the time, did not know and who for much of his professional life it rejected even when, against all the odds, he excelled in his scholarship and won a well-deserved academic position at home that was to be denied him.

At the time Mafeje completed his undergraduate studies in South Africa, beginning at UFH and finishing at UCT, South Africa was already well in the grip of the apartheid system. The young Mafeje inevitably combined a commitment to his academic studies with a broader political education both on the campus of UCT and, more importantly, outside the campus, in a South Africa where the battle for the soul of the country was gradually being engaged between the racist oppressor regime that hoped to consolidate itself and the mass of the black African majority whom it sought systematically to exclude from power and opportunity but who were determined to resist it whatever the cost. It was, in many ways, a very difficult environment in which to grow but the young Mafeje still succeeded in maintaining the presence of mind necessary for him to graduate with a First Class Honours degree in Social Anthropology and follow it with a Master's degree also from UCT, even as he endured police harassment and witnessed the organised and traumatic abuse of black Africans and other marginalised groups by the enforcers of the apartheid state.

Upon leaving South Africa, Mafeje enrolled at the University of Cambridge for a PhD which was awarded to him in 1969 on the basis of a thesis he submitted on large-scale farming in Buganda. His departure for Cambridge marked the beginning of a long sojourn outside South Africa that was forced on

him, as with many other South Africans, by the prevailing apartheid order. In many ways, sad though it was and remains at all levels; South Africa's loss was the 'gain' of the rest of the world, especially the academies in Europe and other parts of Africa that played host to Mafeje at different points in his life. He was to take up academic posts and build strong professional links, both visiting and resident, in countries ranging from Holland, Sweden, and Norway in Europe to Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Kenya, Namibia, Botswana, Senegal, and Egypt in Africa. He anchored himself for a period in Cairo as the apartheid system back in South Africa entered what, in retrospect and seen from the long historical *duree*, was the last phase of its era. With the formal demise of official apartheid in 1994 came an irresistible urge to reconnect directly with South Africa. When Mafeje, therefore, relocated from Cairo, it was UNISA that hosted him for the first two years as a Senior Research Professor, followed by a senior fellowship at AISA that was offered to him through a special partnership arrangement with the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA).

Wherever his academic sojourn and professional life took him, it was in the nature of Mafeje to seek out the most interesting research circles in order to engage with them. As he once explained, apart from being good practice in and of itself to aim to begin an understanding of any society from the eyes of its local academic community, it was an exercise that was central to his survival as an exile and which was also integral to the life-long learning to which he had dedicated himself. Through such engagements, Mafeje came to know and be known in the local scholarly communities of the countries in which he worked or sojourned, very quickly and affectionately considered as an engaged member of those communities, a reliable and valuable comrade-in-arms who could be counted upon in all seasons. Not a few of

these communities from Cairo to Dakar, Dar Es Salaam to Lusaka to Gaborone, Windhoek to Uppsala, and the Hague to Nairobi felt a sense of direct loss when news of his death in 2007 filtered out of his residence in Centurion, Tshwane, South Africa. His death generated a spontaneous and massive effusion of dismay, sympathy, and determination to preserve his legacy.

Engagement with local communities as a second nature fuelled Mafeje's appetite for discussion and debate. One of the enduring lessons from being privileged to spend time with him was that nothing, no matter from whom it came from, was above being subjected to serious scientific scrutiny and discussion. Out of this lesson came another one which frequently wrong-footed many of those who knew Mafeje as a truly progressive pan-Africanist and who, from his writings, many rightly assumed had Marxist sympathies; dogma could never be accepted as a substitute for science and a rigorously argued position. It was out of this second lesson that for me, and I dare say for many in my generation, the enduring impact of Mafeje resided. For he taught us to understand by his critique, always as trenchant as it elegantly packaged, that every point had to be carefully argued, backed up with properly assembled evidence and a critical engagement with the literature. Elegance of prose went hand-in-hand with elegance in dressing, and a first class knowledge of the finest wines that could only have been nurtured from his Cape Town days and a culinary skill that he enjoyed displaying whenever the opportunity was afforded him to entertain friends and guests.

Mafeje's commitment to field work was matched by the avidness with which he read and as necessary, engaged published research results. This combination allowed him to be original in most of his interventions. The interventions came by way of books, monographs, and essays that demonstrated a breadth

of knowledge which spanned several disciplines while simultaneously striving to transcend their limitations. The subjects he covered in his scholarship were diverse though united by being focused on the challenges of livelihood and social transformation in Africa. They include agrarian change, the land question, class formation, ethnicity, religion, the African state, economic and demographic change in Africa, and democracy and democratisation, to cite just a few. His seminal work on the European ideology of tribalism in Africa has already been highly celebrated but equally significant were reflections which he published on development theory, the failings of anthropology as a discipline, African households, the National Question, the ethnography of African social formations, and the challenges of indigenising the social sciences in Africa. The debates in which he engaged around these issues saw him at his polemical best; the vintage Mafeje was also always a combatant scholar who did not suffer fools.

Mafeje was meticulous in his research and in its presentation to a community of peers. He fully subscribed and contributed to CODESRIA whose ideals of producing social research and knowledge that liberates was to become a 'home' for him. It was mainly on the platform of the Council, at its headquarters in Dakar, Senegal, that he was, in the last two decades of his active academic life, to test some of his ideas and engage others in what for him became a necessary and rejuvenating practice of communing with like-minded comrades and breaking with them, all without ever succumbing to uniformity or mimicry. The presence of Mafeje at major CODESRIA scholarly gatherings, including the Council's triennial General Assembly was, therefore, always a guarantee that lively intellectual exchanges would take place. For us, a younger generation of scholars, we could not hope for any better mentoring than that. Always generous with his time, Mafeje would go beyond the

call of duty to engage us late into the night, refuting our arguments, even if sometimes only to test the depth of our understanding, but also modifying his positions where he felt a stronger point of view had been articulated against his stance.

The year 2012 marks five years since Mafeje passed on, the physical person, that is. For his influence, his ideas, his style, and his spirit have abided with us, garnering him more accolades in death than even when he was alive. And, gradually but surely, across the world, as if waking up from a deep slumber, the recognition is growing that a giant of a scholar gifted with the insights of a genius once practiced his trade in our midst and we were the richer for it. Out of that recognition has emerged a duty, namely, that we owe it to ourselves to keep the flame of his legacy burning for eternity as an inspiration to present and future generations. For it is not always that we are privileged to have a Mafeje emerging out of Africa to traverse the global scholarly landscape with the magisterial authority of an inspired and accomplished academic in the way our very own Archie did. It is, therefore, right that UNISA dedicates a research institute in Mafeje's name; the proverbial prophet might yet come to find full honour in his home with science being the better for it. Long live Mafeje. The struggle continues!

Prof Adebayo Olukoshi is currently a Director of the United Nations African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) in Dakar, Senegal.

Prof Olukoshi was a Professor of International Economic Relations. Until March 2009, he was also an Executive Secretary of the Council for Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA).

He has also previously served as Director of Research at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) in Lagos; A Senior Research Fellow/Re-

search Programme Coordinator of the Nordic Africa Institute (NAI) in Uppsala, as well as a Senior Programme Staff at the South Centre in Geneva.

His research interests centre on the politics of

economic relations, an area on which he has published extensively, he is also a Board Member of International IDEA.

Preface

On Friday, 4 May 2012 the Archie Mafeje Research Institute (AMRI) was officially launched at a colourful but academically engaging ceremony held at the premier Open Distance Learning (ODL) University of South Africa (UNISA) under the relevant theme of *Archie Mafeje and the Rethinking of Knowledge in and on Africa: Past, Present and Future*. The launch was attended by a diverse community that included Professor Mandla S. Makhanya, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of UNISA who delivered the welcome and opening address on the importance of social policy in Africa. He was followed by Professor Peter Anyang' Nyong'o, Minister for Medical Services, Republic of Kenya who delivered a message of support as a personal friend of the late Professor Archie Mafeje and fellow academic who worked closely with him on a number of research projects and publications.

Dr Onalena Selolwane from the Sociology Department at the University of Botswana delivered a message of support on behalf of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA); the premier social science organization which was Professor Archie Mafeje's intellectual home for a long time. Professor Hlengiwe Buhle Mkhize, South Africa's Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training (DHET), delivered a keynote address that emphasised the relevance of Professor Mafeje's intellectual interventions for understanding contemporary African educational challenges. The family members of Professor Mafeje which included its spokesperson, Mr Nkululeko Swana, and his wives shared with the audience some of the intimate and social aspects of his life, which reflected Mafeje as a loving husband beyond being a leading academic and providing a window into the social challenges of exile.

The plurality of the audience reflected to a large

extent the networks of the late Professor Mafeje and the resonance of his scholarship across the African continent and beyond. Within the audience, there were Professor Mafeje's contemporaries who knew him personally, those whom he mentored, and those who knew him only through his ground-breaking publications. UNISA, an institution which is undergoing the most vigorous transformation and re-branding into an 'African University in the Service of Humanity' is ideally positioned to accommodate the new AMRI, partly because the institution became Professor Mafeje's academic home late in his life and partly because it is going ahead of all other South African institutions in terms of Africanisation and emphasis on endogenous epistemologies as better suited for understanding African social formations and elucidation of some of the most intractable social problems such as inequalities and poverty.

This paper is based on the intellectual proceedings that accompanied the formal launch of the AMRI. This paper is deliberately structured to follow the format of the launch activities. The first section introduces the theme under which the AMRI was launched with a view to map out its relevance as an encapsulation of the legacy of Professor Mafeje and also to briefly reflect on the scope of the work of the Institute and its rationale. The second section is a thematic synthesis of key points raised and discussed during the launch of the Institute. The launch was divided into a morning session that comprised of two parts namely opening address, tribute to Professor Mafeje through messages of support as well as a keynote address. The afternoon session was constituted by a robust panel discussion on *Archie Mafeje and the Rethinking of Knowledge in and on Africa: Past, Present and Future*, and this was followed by interactive discussions, and closed with two discussants, who further reflected on the legacy of Professor Mafeje and the future work of the Institute. The last section pro-

vides some concluding remarks including distillation of some key immediate tasks that those tasked with the practical setting up of the AMRI should begin to consider.

The panel discussion chaired by Professor Lesiba Teffo, Director of the Institute for African Renaissance Studies at UNISA was comprised of the following scholars:

- Professor Jimi Adesina, Head of Department of Anthropology and Sociology at the University of the Western Cape and a strong advocate of endogenous epistemologies;
- Professor Sam Moyo, Executive Director of the African Institute of Agrarian Studies (AIAS) based in Harare and a leading scholar on land reform, agrarian change, and dynamics of rural transformations;
- Professor Puleng Lenka Bula, one of the young academics that were mentored by Professor Mafeje during his tenure at UNISA. She is currently a Director in the Office of the Principal and Vice-Chancellor at UNISA responsible for the African Intellectuals, Knowledge Systems and Africa's Futures;
- Dr Siphamadla Zondi is the Director of the Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD) and a specialist on intersections of social policy and governance in Africa;
- Dr Godwin Murunga who teaches in the Department of History, Archaeology and Political Studies at Kenyatta University in Nairobi, Kenya was one of the two discussants; and
- Professor Lungisile Ntsebeza, the second discussant, is holder of the National Research Foundation (NRF) Chair in Land Reform and Democracy in South Africa at the University of Cape Town, and is working on a book on Mafeje.

1. Archie Mafeje and the rethinking of knowledge in and on Africa: Past, present and future

The choice of the theme: *Archie Mafeje and the Rethinking of Knowledge in and on Africa: Past, Present and Future*, for the occasion of the official launch of the AMRI was meant to speak directly to its business and its core areas of research. This was also intended to guide and provoke animated panel discussions on both the legacy of Professor Mafeje and the broader intellectual agenda of the Institute. The issue of the locus of enunciation of knowledge, that is, the privileging of Africa as an independent epistemic site pre-occupied the mind of Mafeje and informed his critique of anthropology, his motivation for combative ontology and his rebellion against alterity and extroversion (Adesina 2008; Nabudere 2011). Mafeje emphasised the need for African scholars to 'study their society from inside' adding that:

Afrocentrism is nothing more than a legitimate demand that African scholars study their society from inside and cease to be purveyors of an alienated intellectual discourse When Africans speak for themselves and about themselves, the world will hear their authentic voice, and will be forced to come to terms with it in the long-run If we are adequately Afrocentric the international implications will not be lost on others (Mafeje 2000: 66-67).

It is in accordance with this scholarly legacy, that the AMRI aspires to become a dynamic pan-African research institute and a repository of knowledge on African social formations – past, present and future – with the aim of influencing progressive social transformation in Africa. Its mission is to become an African knowledge production think-tank that would provide thorough and ongoing basic and policy-oriented research in areas of social change, with a view to contributing towards Africa's renewal informed

by alternative epistemologies, alternative knowledges, dynamic academic and policy conversations, cutting-edge publications, seminars, workshops and conferences. Its main niche area is to enhance endogenous and pan-African research for application in resolving Africa's social challenges. Therefore, the Institute's objectives are:

- To create new and alternative knowledge through critical research on Africa, based on theories and epistemologies reflecting endogenous thought;
- To build, sustain and strengthen Pan-Africanist research communities in order to leverage a critical mass of endogenous scholarship for social transformation; and
- To promote innovative ways of influencing change on the continent through research that informs policy processes, training and community empowerment and information dissemination.

Given the Pan-African outlook of the Institute, its remit of research primarily entails:

- Generating knowledge that affirms Africa and contributes to the renaissance of Africa;
- Understanding the social condition of the people of Africa on the continent and globally;
- Enhancing an Africa-centred perspective on social transformation, based on endogenous knowledge and the articulation of local experiences; and
- Promoting applied policy research in African countries and the diaspora, including comparative studies.

The broad thematic areas of research of the Institute include:

- Critical enquiry into African knowledge production and epistemological systems, with the aim of generating endogenous Afrocentric perspectives and paradigms;
- Understanding African families in the context of demographic change, based on rigorous ethno-

graphic approaches;

- Understanding the social institutions that are relevant to transforming the African state;
- Conceptualising the land and agrarian reforms that address inequality and eradicate poverty; and
- Rethinking the concepts and processes of inclusive development in the 21st Century.

2. On Afrocentric scholarship, knowledge and the African condition: Summary of presentations

The tone of the launch was set by Professor Mandla S. Makhanya's welcome and opening address, which delved deeper into the meaning, function, importance and application of social policy in general. According to Professor Makhanya, social policy research was important because it is basically a study of human well-being and how humans cared for each other. Drawing from his academic training as a sociologist, Professor Makhanya elaborated that social policy sought to achieve human well-being through harnessing of interdisciplinary perspectives to reflect on such issues as global hunger and poverty. He emphasised the reality of human interdependency in an age of globalisation as well as the crisis of humanities and social sciences as informers of social policy. As a concerned educator and leader of a premier university, Professor Makhanya reiterated the potential role of the AMRI in taking a lead in resolving the epistemological crisis haunting the humanities and social sciences today.

Professor Makhanya lamented the corporatisation and commodification of life from neo-liberal practices which were eroding all other forms of human imagination in the world besides those ideologies that served the interests of capital at the expense

of human life. Professor Makhanya indicated the connections between humanities, social sciences and social policy while emphasising the unique position that the AMRI would occupy within UNISA as a research convergence zone for all colleges engaged in humanities and social sciences. He emphasised the need for the Institute to connect with communities drawing strength from Africa's cultures of caring and social justice. To Professor Makhanya, the late Professor Mafeje was a committed fighter for social justice, including cognitive justice; hence an Institute named after him should indeed focus on how to resolve the socio-economic ills consuming human lives.

In his address, Professor Anyang Nyong'o zoomed in on the life of Professor Mafeje, revealing that he was 'three men in one': family man; wine expert and renowned academic, with a very deep appreciation of the work of arts informed by a detailed anthropological and ethnographic know-how. He described Mafeje as a scholar that was consistently critical of received Euro-American wisdom to the extent that he turned against his own discipline of anthropology as he challenged Euro-American epistemology. Professor Nyong'o emphasised that Mafeje was a severe critic who never spared friends and foe alike, neither right nor left-wingers escaped his sharp criticism, while remaining a true pan-Africanist ever concerned about the future of the continent and its people that led him to review the character of African struggles for liberation and to explore the relevance liberal democracy in Africa. He revealed that Mafeje was also concerned about what intellectuals had done for the continent. With Mafeje's passing on, Africa has been robbed of one of its very critical intellectual voice, said Professor Nyong'o.

In CODESRIA's message of support, Dr Onalena Selolwane reinforced the fact that Professor Mafeje was always against any signs of foreign domination.

This is why when Professor Ali Mazrui called for stronger African countries to colonise weaker ones, Professor Mafeje rebuked him severely. In his critique of Mazrui, Mafeje posed the question: 'If Professor Mazrui is the leading African scholar, who is he leading and where to?'¹ His deconstruction of colonial anthropology, led Mafeje to lock horns with the Harvard University's anthropologist Sally Falk Moore. He was known in CODESRIA for his unrelenting devotion to help African people to understand their own condition better as a means of fighting back the neocolonial institutions and structures that have marginalised them economically and disenfranchised them politically.

Professor Hlengiwe Buhle Mkhize's keynote address concentrated on isolation of key socio-political challenges that were faced by Africa, stressing their colonial roots. Professor Mkhize boldly stated that the colonial encounters resulted in Africa losing its dynamism, with such inimical processes as the slave trade and colonialism resulting in erosion of African social formations that Professor Mafeje was concerned in understanding. To Professor Mkhize the AMRI should be part of the drivers of the national transformation agenda as well as laying a firm foundation for the African Renaissance. The issue of the decolonisation of the African minds was also raised as an important issue that needs urgent attention as part of the research agenda of the AMRI.

This is in line with the legacy of Professor Mafeje who was a committed radical that consistently paid attention to deconstruction of colonial anthropology as well as external ideas and knowledges. In a way, Professor Mafeje's research led the way in the direction of decolonisation of the African mind. This emphasis by Professor Mkhize on issues of decolonisation was not off the mark at the launch of the AMRI because Professor Mafeje consistently pushed for decolonisation including decolonisation of knowl-

edge and achievement of cognitive justice. He lamented how such euphemisms as globalisation and free markets were used to subordinate and displace ideological interrogations of capitalist exploitation and imperialism. Professor Mafeje noted that during the era of neoliberalism it was fashionable for even former imperialists and colonialists to talk of social injustices of the past without necessarily changing the global policies that reproduced the same socio-economic injustices.

3. Panel discussion: Archie and the rethinking of knowledge in and on Africa: Past, present and the future

The panel discussion commenced with Professor Jimi Adesina's presentation entitled 'On the Afrocentric Epistemologies for Progressive Social Change in Africa.' This presentation was prefaced with a decoding of three core research issues that pre-occupied Professor Mafeje namely: agrarian issues; state, democracy and development; and epistemological questions. While Professor Mafeje did not frequently use the term 'Afrocentric' in his scholarly interventions he made it clear that there were differences between Africanity and Afrocentricity. The former he defined as combative ontology enabling a rebellion against slavery, imperialism, colonialism and racism. The latter, he articulated as a methodology that enabled a legitimate demand by African scholars to study their societies from inside.

Professor Adesina made it clear that he preferred the concept 'endogeneity' to 'Afrocentricity' as capturing the methodology of researching and reading African social formations from inside. In his motivation for endogenous research methodology to underpin the work of the AMRI, Professor Adesina rebutted those scholars who caricatured this methodology

as part of what is called 'navel gazing' and 'nativism' (examples include Mbembe 2002a, 2002b). To him, those who easily embraced cosmopolitanism and universalism and abandoned Afrocentrism were merely rushing to embrace 'empty free floating signifiers.' Professor Adesina following in the true tradition of Professor Mafeje made it clear that it was impossible for anyone to think outside history and society. Those who pushed the agenda of universal knowledge were trapped in contradiction because all knowledge begins as local. Professor Adesina stressed the point that transformation in Africa should commence with decolonisation of the mind, the training of young African people on epistemological issues, and the conversion of colonially inherited institutions into national ones serving African nations. What needs to be resisted is Euro-American hegemony and practices of extroversion in place since the time of colonial encounters.

Professor Puleng Lenka Bula's presentation was on 'African Intellectuals and Knowledge in a Changing Society'. She identified three thematic areas that resonated with Professor Mafeje's legacy. These were the pursuit of endogenous knowledge and research; the pursuit of social justice and speaking truth to power; and the interrogation of political and moral basis of society and intellectual interventions. Just like Professor Adesina, Professor Lenka Bula emphasised the fact that African universities have to take into full account the local exigencies while African intellectuals have to free themselves from operating as consumers of Euro-American knowledge so as to successfully resist those knowledges that were in service of the empire. Professor Lenka Bula interrogated the current context within which the AMRI was being launched as dominated by corporatisation and commodification of knowledge. Drawing from the work of Professor Mahmood Mamdani and Professor Adora Hoppers, Professor Lenka Bula railed against

the proliferation of consultancy cultures pervading African institutions of higher education to the extent of disabling basic and diagnostic research and production of robust knowledge cascading from a deep appreciation of African lived experiences.

Dr Siphamandla Zondi who spoke on 'Rethinking Governance and Democracy in Africa' made as his entry point the statement that Professor Mafeje became known after his death when his legacy became a commodity and how during his undergraduate studies at the then University of Natal in Durban Africanist literature was marginalised in the curriculum. Those radical scholars like Ashwin Desai who began to introduce students to the work of Professor Mafeje were easily accused of politicising students. Dr Zondi's experience speaks to a wider problem pervasive in South African universities, including UNISA, where the works of African scholars remain very marginal and not part of the core curriculum in both humanities and social sciences. This reality has made it difficult for African students to develop Afrocentric methodologies that enabled them to engage with African reality from inside.

It was, therefore, Dr Zondi's hope that the launch of the AMRI would provide an intellectual centre of research excellence that espoused and fully promoted Afrocentric approaches that enabled scholars to be engaged with pertinent questions of indigenisation of modernities, Africanisation of democracy, mainstreaming of African literatures produced by African scholars like Professor Mafeje, and eventually resulting in a paradigm shift in researching Africa. Dr Zondi emphasised the need to build on Professor Mafeje's legacy to delve deeper into issues of governance, democracy and human rights from an African perspective so as to avoid being taken away by illusions of the current neoliberal democracy, which has not lost its Western genealogy and orientation. According to Dr Zondi, Professor Mafeje had a broader view

of democracy and governance that transcended the narrow neoliberalism and its emphasis on efficiency. He understood democracy as linked to decolonisation and liberation. Democracy implied two important things: empowerment of the African people so that they made decisions that would transform their life chances, and secondly, guaranteeing the peoples' means of livelihood. This means that Professor Mafeje motivated for social democracy that would ensure equitable distribution of resources as well as ascendancy to state power by a national democratic alliance accountable to the popular forces and classes. In the end, Dr Zondi highlighted that Professor Mafeje's emphasis on understanding the ontology of local African social formations must not be misread to mean that he advocated for insularity of African intellectualism because he did not ignore engagement with global issues that are equally pertinent to a deeper understanding of Africa.

The last speaker was Professor Sam Moyo on 'The Transformation of Land and Agrarian Society in Africa.' Professor Moyo focused his presentation on the importance of research into the transformation of small scale agriculture in Africa, arguing that transformation of the small scale family producers was an essential pre-requisite for broader transformation in Africa because the bulk of the population is engaged in this form of production. He emphasised the need for land reform in Africa as part of unleashing the developmental potential of small scale farming, noting that not only former settler societies but also non-settler societies require land reform if improvement of production at the family level is to be realised. He lamented the neglect of transformation of the small scale producer by postcolonial governments and the lack of research institutions that were fully committed to serious research into how to transform small scale agriculture.

Professor Moyo characterised Professor Mafeje as

a committed empirical researcher who carried out extensive research on rural transformation not only at Langa in South Africa but also in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Egypt and the Interlacustrine region. To him, Professor Mafeje's research work was predicated on the use of good theory to understand socio-economic transformation across pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial social formations. According to Professor Moyo, Professor Mafeje always told his African academic colleagues that they did not fully understand the dynamics of African social transformation and the changes that they had undergone since the pre-colonial times. His deep understanding of African social formations and their political economy including the kinds of tribute enabled him to disagree with such scholars as Professor Samir Amin who associated tribute collection with specific reference to Western societies. Professor Mafeje had over the years developed sophisticated understanding of minute details of land and labour relations within specific African political formations to the extent that he competently challenged those who peddled teleological arguments such as that which stated that Africans needed to follow the footsteps of Europe to achieve economic development.

Professor Moyo indicated that the current model of parceling land into big farms as owned by whites in South Africa has proven to be politically unsustainable as the case of Zimbabwe has amply demonstrated. He emphasised the need for vigilance by African scholars to make sure that their research does not degenerate into answering questions posed by other people. Professor Mafeje was capable of raising not only original questions but also effectively use 'counter-factuals' that enabled him to draw on comparative examples and evidence to consolidate his arguments on a world scale.

Knowledge, intellectuals and policy: Insights from the interactive discussions

The panel discussion provoked active interactive discussions and animated debates when the floor was opened to pose questions. Among the key questions that emerged from the floor was how the AMRI was going to ensure that correct research questions drove its work and produced usable knowledge that would enable African people to solve their socio-economic and political problems and challenges. The point was that if the Institute's work was not informed by correct questions, it would not effectively contribute towards a deeper understanding of African social formations, which is its core mandate and would not produce usable knowledge to inform social policy. The issue of formulation of correct research questions was identified as an essential pre-requisite for the production of relevant knowledge.

The second question was on the role of intellectuals and how the Institute would promote and reproduce a new generation of intellectuals. The future of the AMRI was said to lie in its ability to reproduce a new generation of intellectuals who would take forward research from where Professor Mafeje and other first and second generation of African scholars left in terms of their interrogation of African social formations and knowledge production. The third question was about why was there a paralysis in postcolonial Africa with regard to transformation of the agrarian sector in the direction of launching sustainable rural development and the promotion of domestic production.

The responses from the panelists included an emphasis that the AMRI should not be captured by the dominant cultures of consultancy which have tended to reduce intellectuals and academics to 'workers for policy' instead of being pace-setters in research including raising critical questions. What

was preferred was research-driven policies rather than policy-driven research. Therefore, the university should provide sufficient funding to sustain the intellectual agenda that many alternative funders would want to either destroy or dilute for it is inimical to their very *raison d'être*. Whatever external funding is sought must be sourced without compromising the Institute's purpose. To ensure that this vision was adhered to, the work of AMRI has to crystallise around three core areas: future studies; basic research; and policy-oriented research. This entailed the AMRI boldly and fearlessly embarking on an exposition of the fetish or fallacy of existing knowledges that are informed by Euro-American epistemologies, which have pretended to be disembodied, universal, and truthful since the dawn of modernity. In this process, the AMRI should aim to produce relevant and new knowledge.

In his remarks as a discussant, Dr Murunga emphasised that since Professor Mafeje was a true pan-Africanist, an Institute named after him has to be truly pan-African in its outlook and research activities. Professor Ntsebeza emphasised the need to go beyond celebrations of Professor Mafeje and for the beginning of a robust engagement with his ideas. He emphasised that his preliminary research into the intellectual and political life of Professor Mafeje is leading him to conclude that his boldness, sharp criticism, and sometimes polemic interventions originated from his involvement with the Non-European Unity Movement that treasured these values in its opposition not only to the apartheid regime but also to the African National Congress (ANC), particularly its Marxist-sounding notion of a 'two-staged' revolution. Professor Ntsebeza also posited that the AMRI should begin its research activities by delving into the question of why Professor Mafeje was not popular in South Africa during his life time, only to be popular after his death.

Reflections and implications: Looking into the future

What is not clear in Professor Mafeje's work is whether his deep Afrocentric approaches drew from the work of Professor Molefi Kete Asante (2007) who is considered the father of Afrocentric thought and remains its key exponent. Asante (2007: 2) defined Afrocentricity as 'a paradigmatic intellectual perspective that privileges African agency within the context of African history and culture transcontinentally and trans-generationally.' He defined Africanity as referring 'to the traditions, customs, and values of African people' (Asante 2007: 11). Professor Mafeje was at pains to explain that Afrocentricity was not 'vindicationist' and as such railed against those who had tendencies of ideologising it in the same manner that he criticised those who demonised it as entailing looking for mythical African roots. To Professor Mafeje, Afrocentricity was a scientific methodology that enabled a deeper understanding of African social formations from inside.

The official launch of the AMRI not only afforded an opportunity to begin a reflection on the intellectual legacy of Professor Mafeje but also dealt extensively with the important issue of the purpose, research agenda, and values of the Institute. A concern was raised about consultancy cultures that the Institute should be careful of if it is to live up to the deep and engaging scholarship of the man it is named after. Those tasked to make the Institute work were left with enough ideas on which to practically launch its intellectual agenda. It was clear from the panel discussions and interactive discussions that there is a push for a unique Institute that would fully embrace Afrocentric/endogenous research methodologies; commit itself to a deeper understanding of African formations from inside; inform social policy through thorough basic research; and produce good theories

that would contribute to a better understanding of African socio-economic and political phenomena.

The launch of the AMRI provides a site for full engagement with what Professor Claude Ake (1979) described as the problem of ‘social science as imperialism.’ Professor Ake just like Professor Mafeje was concerned about methodological and ideological biases embedded within dominant Euro-American epistemologies. Taking this context into account, what the AMRI must set as its point of departure is transcendence of what Professor Ake (1979: 132) termed ‘sciences of equilibrium.’ This is possible because the AMRI is being launched at a time when Euro-American modernity and the sciences it produced have been hit by a crisis of relevance resulting in its inability to even predict the advent of the credit crunch. This crisis is captured by Arturo Escobar (1995: 209) as that modernity which created modern problems such as inequality, poverty, and climate change, but is failing to provide modern solutions to them. The AMRI is therefore summoned to rise above the tradition of ‘rethinking’ issues into the higher domain of even ‘unthinking’ some issues. On this point, Professor Immanuel Wallerstein informs us that:

It is quite normal for scholars and scientists to rethink issues. When important evidence undermines old theories and predictions do not hold, we are pressed to rethink our premises. In that sense, much of nineteenth-century social science, in the form of specific hypothesis, is constantly being rethought. But, in addition to rethinking, which is ‘normal,’ I believe we need to ‘unthink’ nineteenth-century social science, because many of its presumptions—which, in my view, are misleading and constrictive—still have far too strong a hold on our mentalities. These presumptions, once considered liberating of the spirit, serve today as the central intellectual barrier to useful analysis of the social world (Wallerstein 1991: 1).

Research in Africa just like postcolonial political practice has been compromised by what Frantz Fanon (1968) termed ‘repetition without change’ which results in intellectual mimicry. This was partly due to African scholars putting too much confidence on the emancipatory and liberatory potential of Euro-American epistemologies to the extent of being uncritical of its universalist, objectivity, truthfulness and neutrality claims, that served to globalise Euro-American hegemony. Therefore, an Institute that should also carry the burden of producing a new generation of scholars, the AMRI must not be colonised by ‘sciences of equilibrium’ but must be free to innovate and formulate new and innovative methodologies informed by what Professor Mafeje termed ‘combative ontology.’

Since the AMRI is located within UNISA, the Institute is expected to contribute to the ongoing agenda of decolonising knowledge, decolonising curriculum, and formulating new research methodologies with the express potential of informing the broader African agenda of decolonisation of the minds of both faculty and students in line with the vision of an African University in the Service of Humanity. This point has implications for the next immediate task of recruiting relevant research and administrative staff that is capable of living up to the broad intellectual agenda and the academic rigor of Professor Mafeje. To enable the AMRI to fulfill its mission, its research mandate should be driven by a decolonised cohort of researchers whose locus of enunciation is African and the Global South.

Those tasked with running the Institute must also immediately think of the ideal location of the Institute within the UNISA structures making sure it is not immediately consumed by the expansive and cumbersome bureaucratic structures that would hamper its operations. Thinking about the location of the Institute must take into account that it forms

a convergence zone for all those from different disciplines who were committed to the promotion of a deeper understanding of African social formations from inside. UNISA is increasingly becoming a home of the growing research institutes concerned with such pertinent issues as African renaissance; African intellectual production of knowledge; mainstreaming of African languages and African thought; as well as expanding the frontiers of knowledge in the science and technology that is relevant to Africa. The AMRI must, therefore, clearly spell out what its niche areas of research should be, to avoid replication of mandates while emphasising collaboration on common research agendas. What emerged at its launch is that the AMRI's areas of research would crystallise around:

- Afrocentric studies of African social formations and phenomena from inside;
- The science and modes of knowing (epistemological questions), politics of knowledge production, transcendence over Euro-American epistemologies, and privileging of endogenous knowledges;
- The challenges of governance and democracy including democratisation of the dominant neoliberal canon; and
- Natural resources ownership, socio-economic transformation and distribution, including land and agrarian reform as an engine of development.

In short, the AMRI is being entrusted with the major burden of championing the broad agenda, which the Ghanaian philosopher Kwasi Wiredu expressed in these words, 'conceptually speaking, then, the maxim of the moment should be: "African, know thyself." This expression encapsulates the broader research practice of the late Professor Archibald Mafeje and the AMRI must brace itself to the mission of enabling Africans to know themselves and the world so as to formulate social policies that are well informed by research. In order to reproduce Mafeje's rigorous and combative scholarship in Africa the AMRI should also be a centre of critique of Euro-American epistemologies, formulation and deployment of epistemologies from the Global South, and learning for young academics through an Archie Mafeje Young Scholars Development Scholarship for Masters and PhDs.

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Endnotes

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The Archie Mafeje Institute for Applied Social Policy Research, in short Archie Mafeje Research Institute (AMRI), is a policy research institute based at the University of South Africa. It is dedicated to promoting the legacy of Archie Mafeje in terms of innovative knowledge production for applied social policy in pursuit of progressive change in African society through the provision of fresh thinking and novel policy ideas for the fight against poverty, inequality, social disintegration, lack of social justice, weak citizenship, collapse of institutions of community and family and other societal ills. It conducts research and facilitates scholarly and policy debates based on a rigorous understanding of African social formations and a clear definition of societal transformation aimed at social justice and poverty eradication in Africa. In particular, AMRI is concerned with change that results from knowledge garnered from the experiences and thought patterns of ordinary Africans

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