

# Compassionate Research and Curricula? The Bible, Disability, and 'Cognitive [In-] Justice'

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# A Good University? Cognitive [In]-Justice

(a) North/South Inequalities

(b) Invisible Disabled Bodies



# Disability and Embodiment in Namibia

A University of Exeter and University of Namibia partnership, the 'Disability and Embodiment in Namibia: Religious and Cultural Perspectives' project is funded by the UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council



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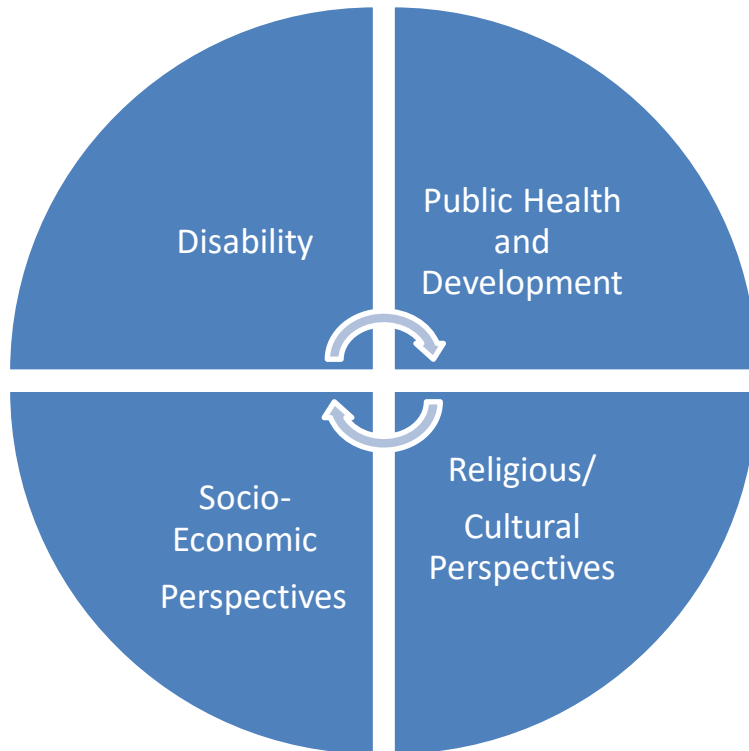
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# Disability and Embodiment in Namibia: Religious and Cultural Perspectives



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Kufamosha Drama Group, Namibia



- North



- Windhoek



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN NAMIBIA (NFPDN)

"NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US"

# Research Questions

1. In what ways does disability (and different types of disability) lead to marginalisation and poverty in Namibian society?
2. What role do religio-cultural narratives play (drawing upon the Bible, Christianity, and African Traditional Religions) in the marginalisation of those of diverse embodiments in Namibia?
3. How might religio-cultural resources on diverse embodiments in Namibia be employed to promote inclusion of people with disabilities?
4. How can research collaboration between scholars in the Global North and Global South address cognitive injustices? What are the challenges in enacting cognitive justice as a guiding principle in research?

# Qn1. In what ways does disability (and different types of disability) lead to marginalisation and poverty in Namibian society?

- Poverty (economic, but also challenges to human dignity)
- Societal attitudes (stigmatisation)
- Unemployment
- Low levels of education
- Multiple marginalisation: disability and gender

# Qn2. What role do religio-cultural narratives play in the marginalisation of those of diverse embodiments in Namibia?

## Bible and Christianity:

- Stigma, Ableism, Sane Privilege & 'Disabling Theologies'
- Stereotypes of disability: defiled evil-doer, virtuous sufferer

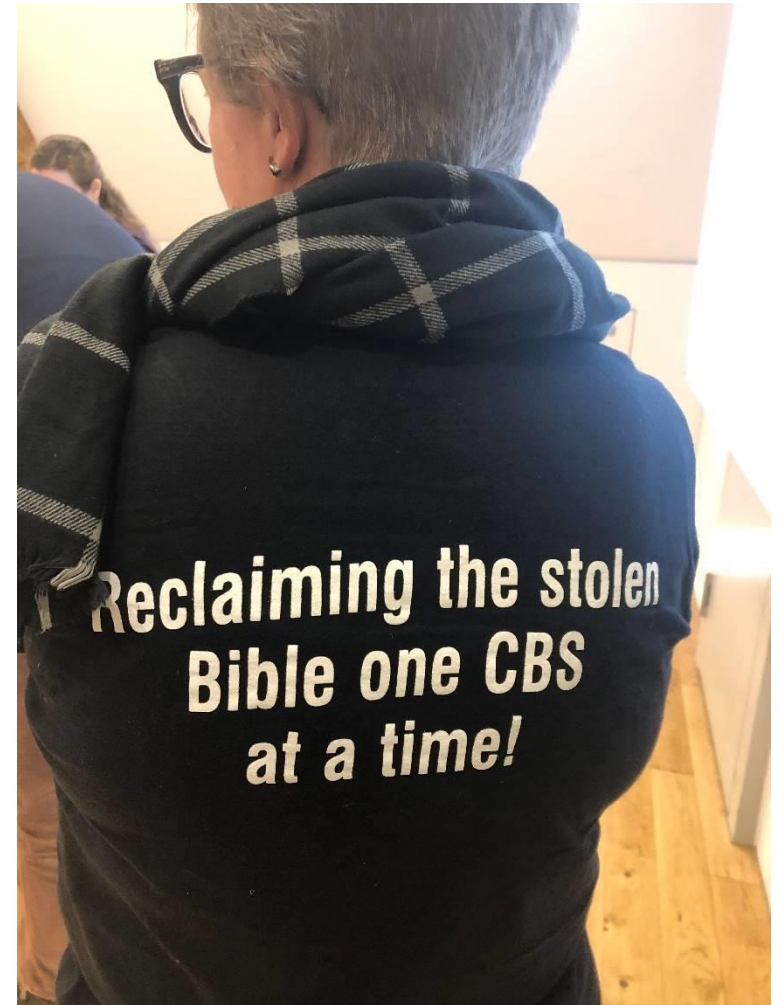
## African Traditional Religions:

- Witchcraft, Punishment, Curses by Ancestors
- Cultural Beliefs: 'Having sex with a white man or a ghost' (albinism)



### Qn3. How might religio-cultural resources on diverse embodiments in Namibia be employed to promote inclusion of people with disabilities?

- Local proverbs and sayings (including gift of disability to community/collective)
- Africa-Centric perspectives on interconnectedness of peoples
- Contextual Bible Studies: Voices of disability experience refiguring biblical interpretations



4. How can research collaboration between scholars in the Global North and Global South address cognitive injustices? What are the challenges in enacting cognitive justice as a guiding principle in research?

- (a) Unexamined Contexts (of North)?
- (b) '*Global Readings*' ?
- (c) Research Ethics: Anonymity and Names
- (d) Disability, Colonialism, and Southern Bodies
- (e) Africa-centric Epistemologies and Perspectives

## (a) Unexamined Contexts (of North)?

‘academic settings, masculinity, the dominant race, ableism, cisgenders, “liberal” assumptions . . . Why is there resistance to contextualizing these contexts? [What] pitfalls [are there] in doing contextuality? How might our (lack of) response to hidden contexts expand or limit scholarship?’

(SBL, 2019)



## (b) 'Global' Readings?

- By-word for 'Other'?

## (c) Research Ethics: Anonymity and Names

- Changing or masking names perceived as oppressive act
- Importance of avoiding further 'muting' or voices

# (d) Disability, Colonialism, and Southern Bodies

CULTURE

## Namibia Wants Back Skulls Held at German Universities

Namibia's government is calling on Germany to return dozens of skulls stored in German universities since the colonial era.



Do university skull and bone collections represent a "cultural heritage?"

The Namibian government in a statement on Tuesday, Oct. 21, said it wants Germany "to pay for the repatriation of the remains and all related costs."

The skulls are those of indigenous Ovaherero, known also as Herero, and Nama victims of the uprising of the tribes against German colonial rule between 1904 and 1908.

Thousands of indigenous people perished as a result of the extermination order of the chief of the German colonial armed forces or Schutztruppe, general Lothar von Trotha.

- ‘Disability studies *almost never* cites non metropolitan thinkers and *almost never* builds on social theory formulated outside the metropole’

– Helen Meekosha, ‘Decolonising disability: thinking and acting globally’ *Disability and Society* 26 (2011), 667–682, 669.



# (e) Africa-Centric Epistemologies and Perspectives



# Towards Compassionate Research and Curricula

