

than any adopted practices ‘out there’. Whilst I do not suggest that the adoption of stereotypical western approaches is wrong or detrimental to the decolonisation of localised practices and knowledge, what I point to is that possibilities of constitutively appropriating and regenerating situated practices of practitioners in Nigeria, translocally or largely a transition of cosmopolitan localism [12].

In understanding software project work in the multicultural context of Nigeria, the case study emphasises findings widely reported in the literature concerning the implication of doing agility in collaborative and distributed project work [37, 39], and specific to developing countries [20]. It also identifies similar trends to [24, 26, 28] findings that the Nigerian software industry work practice is more concerned with automating manual work than of creating a whole chain of system. Findings also point to lack of awareness of end user’s positionality in shaping and subsequently ensuring acceptability of deployed end products [10, 20], the rampant adoption of development methodologies mainly because that’s what the ‘key players’ in the industry are adopting [28], and the likelihood of abandoning situated practice for Western conventions [26]. There was an emphasis on the informality of project processes and activities, the over-politicisation of design decisions, and the trade-off of profitability over nurturing local capabilities, explicating earlier findings by [39]. These factors can be relatively attributed to the political instabilities and economic difficulties practitioners face in their work, which characterises the complexities and volatility of the Nigerian software industry.

Apart from the implications of the themes developed, findings point towards the idea that designing and producing software using agile is an expensive gamble at the crossroad of one’s organisational practice of doing agility and of one’s personal productivity and professional development [5, 37]. As it stands, practitioners are innovating for survival and from below the radar, which might suggest the ‘darker side’ of project work, and in particular agility [5, 6]. It also shows the imbalance between standardization of practices (through following of rules) and the needed flexibility that agile espouses – restating some of the classic problems of CSCW as emphasised by [37]. This might suggest that project work is not entirely an engineering phenomenon (the focus has shifted to software projects), but also a thread of socio-cultural, economic, political, and material concerns that are ultimately determined by power relations. It also emphasizes the classic understanding that software development is an iterative process of reasoning, decision making, reflection, negotiation, and validation, which ought to be approach and contextualise as such.

Within the framing of translocality, the insights that came out of the consideration of the concept of ‘remixing’ and ‘playfulness’ are meant to reframe widely held assumptions about design innovation in Africa. By showing how Edusoft projects practitioners innovate within the transient spaces accorded by transitionality, I have attempted to indicate the politics and materiality of innovating from below the radar – somewhat thinking and making from the borders. The orderly and messy features of distributed and collaborative work evoke by the case are to serve as (or can serve as) both political (in the sense of identifying and focusing on neglected blind spots) and analytical strategies for critiquing and unlearning dominant and neo-colonial practices of design innovation in non-western context [38].

Within the wider context of the literature, accounting for the lived experiences of doing Edusoft projects has moved towards showing the myth of design innovation in/from Africa – the localised practices of practitioners and their circular processes of diffusion, appropriation, translation, and contestation are innovative [22, 40]. The practitioners I worked with rely on their experiences and the understanding of the conditions and circumstances of the present in identifying and developing new ways of doing work that would further inform their present and future practices. Practitioners reflexively think and act along the learning paths accorded by their shared experiences and knowledge of the people that they design with/for and social context they deploy to, not some idealised and grand narrative of reacting to dominant practices and standards. The juxtaposition of different procedures, strategies and technologies available to them productively open up new possibilities outside current binaries of what is ‘best practice’ and ‘doable practice’; thereby outlining propositional offerings for making meanings and senses of the approaches widely considered for framing and ordering project work. To end on Escobar’s note, transitional and translocal design can be considered as a “means to think about, and to contribute to the transition from a hegemony of modernity one-world ontology to a pluriverse of socio-natural configuration, in this context, design for the pluriverse becomes a tool for reimagining the reconstructing the local world” [12, p.4].

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I am a Nigerian interested in postcolonial approaches to developing indigenous pedagogies and the design of indigenous technologies that embodies them. It is presumed that accounting for one’s positionality might situate the researcher and the research participant as subjects of interactivity in knowledge production (I thank a reviewer for bringing my attention to this – a matter of greater importance to standpoint theory which I subscribe to). I am indebted to my supervisors, Mark Rouncefield and Philip Benachour for the usual advice to ‘put more data’, and ‘tighten up the argument a bit’. I am also grateful to the participants that inform this project and thank the anonymous reviewers for insightful comments on early draft of this paper. This paper is part of a PhD research funded by the Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF), Nigeria.

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