

Department of Higher Education and Training, South Africa

Local Content, Global Reach: the value of local scholarly book publishing in South Africa

National Scholarly Book Publishers' Forum (NSBPF) Conference

25 July 2022

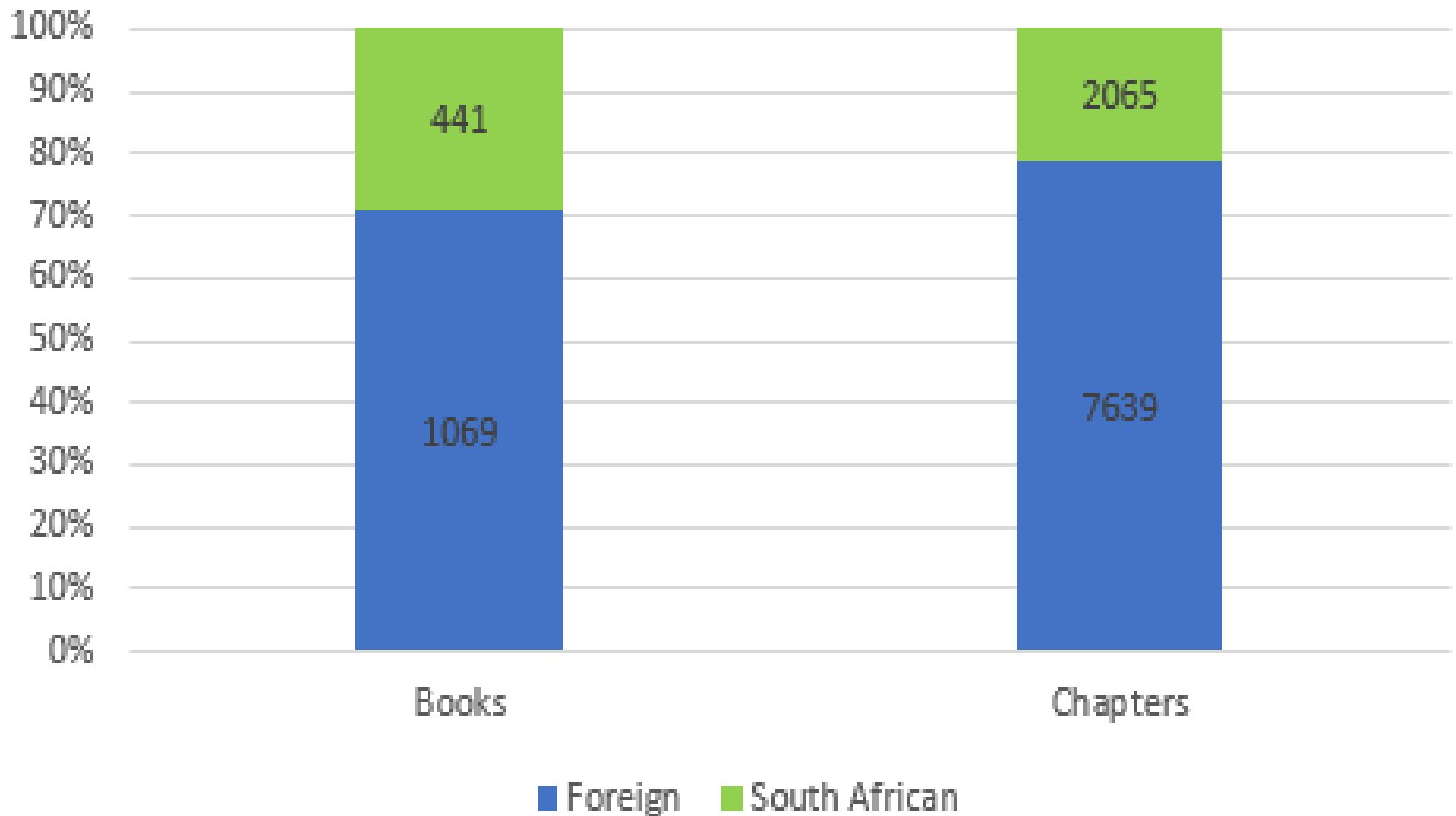


The value of scholarly publishing

- Facilitates knowledge generation.
- Enables dissemination of research findings.
- Facilitates validation of research results.
- Facilitates the use of knowledge for career advancement, especially among novice researcher.
- Facilitates the advancement of education and knowledge society in generally and, specifically, curricula.
- Facilitates participation in the process of knowledge production, either as researchers, authors, peer-reviewers, editors, publishers, librarians, curators of knowledge, or a combination of these and more.

Local v. Foreign scholarly publishers

Submissions: 2005 to 2017



Challenges

- Institutional research policies are not meant to promote research, let alone local publishing.
- University managers are absorbed into the horoscopes called university rankings.
- Academics, propelled by their managers, seek ratings at all cost, sometimes even through unethical means.
- Creeping in of predatory publishers and the progressive bad influence they have on the reputation of commercial and scholarly publishers.
- SA publishers have a miniscule role in academic publishing as they do not publish journals.
- Credentialism.
- Open Access publishing not featuring prominently and, to some extent, not well-understood.

“...the high-quality work that Editors-in-Chief, Managing Editors, and Technical Editors provide has never been so important. It is their work that will attract the best papers and distinguish the quality journals from the predatory ones”

(Jeffrey Beal, 2014)

The value of publishers

1. The key nodal points in scholarly publishing are scholars/authors; peer-reviewers; editors; publishers and subscribers (libraries). Publishers have a responsibility to **safeguard scholarship** (as it ought to be) through all its nodal points;
2. An anchor for every phase in a research process, from conceptualisation through its methodology to compilation of a report and findings, is quality. The process of publication of research report/findings, therefore, must guarantee **quality**;
In turn, quality publication instils **intellectual reputation** and respect to the author, the institution of affiliation and to the publisher (not to be conflated with academic rating; citation index; impact factor; etc.).
3. Similarly to universities, publishers must **safeguard state subsidy** system (as it is the fundamental support to research and subsequent scholarly publications);

The value of publishers

4. Must assist in making knowledge being disseminated easily **accessible** (physically, electronically and epistemically). What value is inaccessible knowledge to society and to the publisher?
5. As with many aspects of life, knowledge generation too, at least in humanities and social sciences, is context based as is research. Scholarly publications too require intimate understanding of the context and/or environment of the knowledge to be disseminated/published. Local publishers, therefore, must ensure their **knowledge and/or familiarity with the context and/or environment** of knowledge generation and dissemination.
6. Must serve as **reservoirs** of their generations of publications.



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Thank you